



Montgomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center

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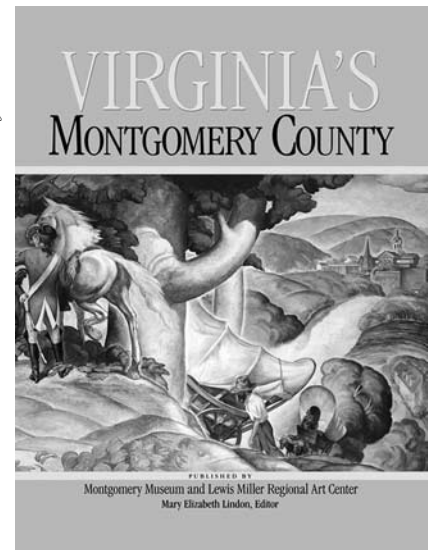
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NEW COUNTY HISTORY BOOK

Virginia's Montgomery County

**INCLUDES PREVIOUSLY
UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL**



A Great Holiday Gift

The newly published Virginia's Montgomery County surpasses all previously published Montgomery County histories in its scope and scale. Particularly notable within its eighteen interesting chapters is material that is being published for the first time.

The book offers new details about Daniel Boone and his early travels across land that is now Montgomery County. Some earlier authors write that he stayed at Ingles Ferry, camped near present day Radford, and may have visited Smithfield. Boone certainly traveled through Fincastle County, which ceased to exist in 1777 when a large portion became Montgomery County. Boone was sought for an unpaid debt to Alexander Baine, a store owner somewhere in Fincastle County. As a result, a warrant was issued for his arrest. Copies of photostats of the warrant were published in newspapers in the 1950s. Two additional related documents, thought to be previously unpublished, are included in the new county book as are documents indicating the location of the Baine store and court records regarding court proceedings and attempts to collect the debt.

The book offers a fuller explanation of a **Crush and Wade Confederate sword** with records of manufacture for the Christiansburg factory, as well as purchase records for swords. This has provided new detailed information on the local war effort and the cost of armaments and other supplies in this region.

The **covered bridge at Ingles Ferry** was destroyed by the Confederates to prevent its use by advancing Union troops. Two Lewis Miller sketches of differing views of the bridge were found to exist. One of the pictures showing the bridge is included in the book.

There are no known photographs of the bridge, and this may be the first time within a publication that the bridge has been identified in this Miller sketch.

A **1790 Map of Christiansburg** is believed to be published for the first time. While the map was specifically mentioned in an earlier work, it was then dated to 1805. However, detailed new analysis indicates that the map was made by John Preston, county surveyor, in 1790.

Enlightening the life of **Lewis Miller** is a note from Samuel Small in York, Pennsylvania, to his friend Miller in Christiansburg. Printed for the first time, the note suggests Miller's poverty during his final years.

With eighteen chapters exploring separate aspects of the county's history, there is sure to be something of interest for every reader. The 772 page book with 560 images has been for sale since its release in late August. Copies can be purchased from the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center at 300 S. Pepper Street in Christiansburg.

History Exhibit . . .

GROWING UP IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

A new history exhibit at the Montgomery Museum will explore one hundred years of Growing Up in Montgomery County. The exhibit, which will be in place from November 25 through late May 2010, will cover three primary areas of childhood: school, play, and chores from about 1860 through the 1960s. These topics will be illustrated with objects and photographs representing the lives of children from birth through their teens. If you have objects that you would like to loan for the exhibit, please contact Sherry Wyatt (sherrywyatt@earthlink.net) or Sue Farrar at 382-5644.

In conjunction with the exhibit, will be a special holiday display offering a look at additional children's toys. Special children's activities are also being planned. The opening reception for the exhibit will coincide with our holiday open house on December 10, 2009.



Baby in Buggy

Glass Plate Negative, D. D. Lester Collection

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HERITAGE DAY

Heritage Day 2009 Review

Heritage Day was quite successful this year despite the rainy morning. Once the rain stopped, festival attendees arrived and everyone seemed to enjoy the day. Our long awaited new history book, *Virginia's Montgomery County*, created a lot of excitement, and copies seemed to be flying off the table.

There was live entertainment on the porch this year due to the rainy start, and it certainly was appreciated by all. We send a special thanks and applause to all the performers. Many thanks, also, to our regular

participants as well as the artists who came for the first time this year. Volunteers, we are grateful for your help and support.

We also want to send a hearty "thank you" to our sponsors. We would not be able to produce this event without their contributions.

Shelor Motor Mile

Christiansburg Parks and Recreation

Montgomery County Parks and Recreation

Horne Funeral Home

Master Gardeners

Montgomery Sanitation

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

Watch for announcements about Heritage Day 2010.

Something special may happen.

Jean Galloway

Mailing Boxes Needed

We are receiving many orders for the new history book to be mailed. Boxes are in scarce supply and large demand. If you have used mailing boxes, please consider donating them to the museum. They would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Holiday Gift Idea

As this year draws to a close, please remember the Montgomery Museum as you are selecting gifts for the holidays. A membership gift for family, friends, teachers, scout leaders, etc. could be a valuable introduction to the collections housed here as well as a benefit to the museum. Our gift shop contains our newest publication, *Virginia's Montgomery County*, as well as other books of historical interest, prints, maps, note cards and toys.

Meadowbrook Branch News

Fran & Don Poole

The Museum and Montgomery County Parks and Recreation are sponsoring a tour of four churches in our area - White Memorial United Methodist Church, Big Spring Baptist Church, Halls United Methodist Church and Congregational Holiness Church on Wednesday, October 21. The tour includes lunch at Meadowbrook Cafe. Please contact the County Recreation Dept. for reservations (382-6975).

Betty Norwood made the Old Country Store more attractive with the "vintage" lamps she added over the sink. Don Trump loaned the museum an antique shoe shining kit from the



Don Trump with the shoe shining kit from Alleghany Springs Resort

Alleghany Springs Resort. He also donated a set of leggings and a knapsack from World War II.

Meadowbrook Museum sponsored booths at Montgomery Museum's Heritage Day in August and Meadowbrook's Heritage Day earlier this month.

We want to thank all those folks who participated in the effort to identify the "Mystery Church." The two churches nominated by phone calls were the Reesedale Holiness Church and the old Shawsville Congregational Holiness Church on Boners Run.



Reesedale Holiness Church



Unidentified church school



Old Congregational Holiness Church



HISTORY CHAT

The next History Chat is scheduled for October 17 at 10:00 am at the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center. This Chat will focus on the importance of historic cemeteries, including the historic Craig Cemetery that is under the care of the museum. The discussion will also look at the role of cemeteries in genealogical work, and the significance of grave markers as historic artifacts. Several local historians will be on hand to contribute to the discussion and answer questions. Join us for this enjoyable, informal, and informative program. Light breakfast will be served.

Crab Creek Communities: Belmont, Vicker, and Walton

by April Martin Danner

PART 1

The quick flow of a small waterway named Crab Creek cut through the Allegheny Mountains many years ago. It carved a deep rich valley stretching from the headwaters at Hans Meadow westerly to the New River. Along this beautiful creek flourished the community of Belmont. With the construction and development of the Virginia and Tennessee railroad, Vicker and Walton, two supporting hamlets, also developed along its banks.

The Belmont community evolved early. Land grants in the western reaches of Virginia had been handed out in large plots prior to 1750. This was done to keep settlement down until the “native problem” was solved. James Patton had the original land grant rights to 1096 acres along the valley of Crab Creek. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 ended the French and Indian War but also ended colonial settlement west of the Allegheny Mountain range. These two criteria combined to increase land purchases around Crab Creek. George Taylor purchased the first creek land in 1768. On May 21, 1769, Abraham Chrisman proposed to build a grist mill on Crab Creek. The intended mill, and already established Pepper’s Ferry on the New River, encouraged more settlement. Joseph Copler purchased land in 1775, John Hornbarger in 1787, Matthew Smith in 1785, and William Bowles in 1788.

As the lands along Crab Creek developed, the United States was a newly formed entity. Several residents of the fledgling Belmont community helped win the American Revolution. James, John, and Francis Charleton along with Peter Hawley were recorded in their family histories as having have fought in the War for Independence.

The early Belmont community was in reality only a group of family farms in the early 1800s. The only official business was Chrisman’s grist and saw mill. At the confluence of the New River there were two transportation related enterprises that maintained operations into the 1900s. Pepper’s Ferry became a business in 1750. John Taylor built his home “Rockford” on the river near an old trail in 1765. During low water period a rock ledge was used to cross the river. The location drew a lot of foot traffic and Taylor occasionally rented rooms and served food.

Residents along Crab Creek worked hard to build successful farms along the banks of the tributary. They, however, also relied on slave labor to maintain their lifestyle. The Charltons, Eskridges, Hornbargers, and Harmons all owned slaves.

The question of slave labor led to the American Civil War, and many residents of Crab Creek fought in the conflict. The roster records sadly show that the



This view shows the old rail bed as it followed Crab Creek and the stone base of the bridge.

war was not only a community endeavor but also very much a family affair. Pembroke Charlton enlisted with company G of the 4th Virginia Infantry, while his brother Milton served with company C, 54th Virginia Infantry. James Peary Charlton earned the rank of 1st Lieutenant with Stonewall’s 4th Virginia Infantry. The 14th Virginia Cavalry claimed their cousin, Andrew Jackson Robinson. The Harmon brothers joined separate units also. Milton Hall Harmon went with the 4th Virginia Infantry, company G, with brother Hannibal following in his command after Milton’s death. Younger brother David enlisted in the 11th Virginia Infantry, and brother William enrolled with Wade’s Brigade. The four Hornbarger brothers enlisted en masse with company C of the 54th. Daniel, Hiram, Peter, and William Parker left together to watch over each other. Hiram was detailed as a cooper, and Peter got assigned as a teamster. James Chrisman also answered Virginia’s call for troops. He too joined the 54th Virginia and marched to war with his neighbors. Gordon Linkous also served; he had the honor of being the fife-major for the 4th Virginia and was one of the few to make it to Appomattox with the remnants of the Stonewall Brigade.

The twin Roberts brothers, however, marched in a different direction. James and Henry Taylor Roberts decided to join Northern commands. Two stories exist as to why the boys went North. One story states that the Confederate Military Police came to their house to encourage enrollment, and while there they shot the Roberts’ dog for barking incessantly. This brutal act

(Continued on the next page)

History Exhibit . . .

The Mountain Lake Workshop 1983-2009: A Phenomenon of Collaborative Artmaking

EXHIBIT NOW BEING HELD AT MUSEUM MAY HAVE NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

The Mountain Lake Workshop 1983-2009: A Phenomenon of Collaborative Artmaking exhibit running from September 17 through October 31 2009 was made possible through a collaboration between the museum and the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge. The purpose of the exhibit is to highlight the Mountain Lake Workshops and Symposium of the 1980s and 1990s. The Mountain Lake Workshop evolved from the Mountain Lake Symposium, a series of interdisciplinary art criticism conferences that began in 1980. The exhibit will help define the influence of the Mountain Lake experience on the regional art and artists of Southwest Virginia. The emphasis will be on small works by acclaimed artists and workshop presenters: John Cage, Howard Finster, and Ray Kass. There will also be works from regional artists who were among the workshop participants. This exhibition is the first since 1995 when the Anderson Gallery at VCU organized a comprehensive Mountain Lake Workshop exhibition and a catalog by Dr. Howard Risatti. The Mountain Lake Workshops hold a place of national importance within the art community, and the museum is privileged to be showing this exhibit. Of special note is the companion Mountain Lake "PATHWAYS" Workshop directed by artist and Mountain Lake Workshop presenter, Joe Kelley on Saturday, October 24th. If you would like to participate, please call the museum at (540) 382-5644 to register.



John Cage, Mountain Lake Workshop

Mark Your Calendar

September / October Art Exhibit ~
Ray Kass and Mountain Lake Workshop

October 17 at 10 AM History Chat ~
Exploring Local Cemeteries

November 6 at 6-8 PM ~ Membership Holiday Exhibit
Opening Reception

December 10 at 6-8 PM ~
Holiday Reception and History Exhibit

Crab Creek Communities: Belmont, Vicker, and Walton (continued)

precipitated hatred in the youngsters, and they refused to fight for such men as the Confederate patrol officers. The account also alluded to the treatment received by Henry Taylor from Alexander Eskridge. Taylor felt his wages and treatment was similar to those given to slaves.

The other explanation passed down through neighborhood lore included robbery. Accordingly, Taylor Roberts stole money from Curg Harmon and when confronted, he denied the charge, only to have his dog dig up the evidence in front of the accusers. Upon this discovery, imprisonment was threatened, but if he

joined the army he would not be taken. However, the deal made did not specify which army, and the Roberts twin went to the Union. In the post-war years, Taylor came back to the Belmont community and received a generous pension from the United States Government. This disparity upset the local Confederate veterans who received very little in compensation.

Source information is available from the author

(To be continued in the next newsletter)

