Gateway to the West

Lee County Historical and Genealogical Society P. O Box 231 Jonesville, Virginia 24263 ***January 2014***

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Lee County Historical and Genealogical Association

P.O. Box 231
Jonesville, Va. 24263-0231

Office Hours by Appointment

PHONE:
(276) 346-0005

FAX
(276) 346-0225

E-MAIL:
Leecovahistsoc@hotmail.com

President's Report

By Becky Jones

2013 has been a good year for the Lee County Historical Society. Our building is looking great with new siding, new windows and the basement is finished. Our first Society employee, Libby Laforce, has done a great job setting up show cases, organizing and filing material.

We have had excellent programs and good attendance. At our July meeting artist Teresa Robinette from Norton brought her painting depicting Senator Lloyd M. Robinette's life. Teresa, a relative of the late Senator, is a professional artist and has just recently returned to the area from New Mexico. The Robinettes came to Lee County in the 1800's and settled in the Blackwater area. Lloyd served in the Virginia Senate from 1933-1950. Lloyd had an office in Jonesville and lived here. He is buried near his family home in Blackwater. We had 53 in attendance for our July meeting.

Retired Circuit Judge Birg Sergent spoke to us in August about Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, the founder of Osteopathic Medicine. He was born a few miles east of Friendship Church. The cabin in which Dr. Still was born was moved to the Campus of the Kirksville Osteopathic School at Kirksville, Missouri in 1928.

Our treasurer, Greg Edwards, told us about Confederate Colonel Vincent A. "Clawhammer" Witches who terrorized the south after the Civil War. Vincent had been a Colonel in the 34th Va. Calvary.

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Movie Theatres – A Walk In The Past

by Libby Laforce

Lee Theatre in Pennington Gap recently renovated and reopened its' doors after being closed for many years. Other theatres in the area were located in Jonesville (former Western Auto building), Ewing, Rose Hill and St. Charles. Theatres were built to entertain families in a wholesome environment. They offered an escape from the everyday mundane and hard times.

During World War II and the Korean War, movies helped to escape troublesome times because news of the war was only told by use of the radio or newspapers. Before movies started they showed news reels showing what was happening overseas. The President often gave a brief speech. Reels were also used to promote War bonds and tell people on the home front how they could support the war effort. This often helped families to feel closer to the fathers and sons who were serving overseas.

Some news reels took you to exotic places to share the beauty and culture of that area. Then there were 1 or 2 cartoons before the main feature came on. Prices to get into a movie often varied in different cities or rural areas. Many tickets

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Faith Healer Suffers Agony After Exposing Self to Reptiles

Bitten three times by snakes.

During a demonstration at a Holiness meeting here Sunday, The Rev. H. C. T. Anderson, 63 year- old "faith healer" died early today after 48 hours of agony. "I may not recover, but that makes no difference to me," he told his son, Hugh, between periods of delirium. "If I die I'm going to Heaven and if I live I'll continue to serve God."

Bitten several times before by reptiles in similar demonstrations, Anderson told friends that the poison of a copperhead snake once relieved him of high blood pressure. He permitted a copperhead to bite his right hand once Sunday morning at farm home services, and then let two rattlesnakes bite the same hand later that day.

His son said Anderson never believed in physicians, "saying they were misleading," and had never received medical attention for previous bites. A daughter called Dr. T. B. Ely Tuesday, but he said he was summoned too late. Members of his family said he "fought gamely," but that the pain grew steadily greater and that by nightfall Tuesday his body had grown discolored and spotted. "I am going to rest," his son quoted him as saying a short while before his death. Breaking into tears as he told of the aging minister's closing fight, the son said "he could not understand why God took him away from us so sudden." Anderson, a graduate of the now abandoned Cury College, an old Virginia institution, once was a candidate for the nomination to the state legislature from his home county but was defeated.

The son of A. R. Anderson, a former member of the board of supervisors and wealthy farmer and Mrs. Anderson, sister of Colonel O. Moore, of Scott County the "faith healer" himself owned a large farm.

State Senator Lloyd Robinette said Anderson was his school teacher in 1893. The minister was well known through this section. Two weeks ago he preached an hour from the lee County courthouse steps as the September term of court convened.

Mrs. B. Sewell, circuit court stenographer, said today Anderson told her he had told noted scientists of his "great discovery" and recently exhibited a badly swollen hand during a visit to Pennington Gap with the announcement he would permit himself to be bitten again soon.

His body remained tonight in his two-story farm home seven miles west of Jonesville. Surviving are his widow, four sons and three daughters. Burial will take place tomorrow in a small cemetery within sight of his home.

This appeared in the Winchester, VA, Evening Star October 1, 1936. This article was submitted by his grandson, Larry Anderson of Jonesville.

1987 - Bowling Chapel Church 100th Anniversary

Bowling Chapel Church was constructed in 1897, by Rev. D. V. York, who was pastor of the Jonesville Circuit. He saw the need of a church in the rural area and suggested to some of the community leaders that one should be built. His suggestion was met with happy response! James Bowling, who had a large farm nearby, proposed to donate an acre of land for the purpose. He had recently assigned a part of his farm to T. L. Bowling, his son, who had built a house nearby where he lived with his family. Thus, it could be called a "mutual donation" of father and son, which would be located on the southeastern corner of the farm.

There was hearty cooperation throughout the community, and a campaign was immediately conducted to raise funds. David Mink and his son donated timber land nearby, and they also donated timber. Other men helped in logging. Others quarried the stones, laid the foundation, and made shingles for the roof. The work progressed rapidly. (Recorded by W.S. Cox)

The first recorded Sunday School is for April 18, 1897. At the time John Hines was superintendent and E. S. Roberts was secretary. Forty people were put on roll, which was broken down into 4 classes. Several pages of early recorded church sessions are still in the possession of the church. These records indicate the date, weather, attendance, songs sung, scripture readings, and other business at hand. The offerings are also listed, ranging from 3 cents to $2.10. The "little people", as they are referred to, are all gone now, On one particular Sunday, a discussion was held concerning "absences". It was decided that after a person had missed 3 straight Sundays, he would be automatically dropped from the church roll. On this particular day, 1 teacher and 5 children were dropped.

On August 22, 1897, the first church session was held in the new church. (The previous sessions had been held elsewhere). It was decided that the 100 year homecoming should be held as near that date as possible. It was also suggested that the same scripture be read and songs sung as were done on that day.

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If Tombstones Could Talk *by Kim Hendrick Hurst*

After the death of my parents, I spent a lot of time at Bethel Churchyard Cemetery on Sugar Run Road in Jonesville, VA. As I wandered throughout the cemetery, I developed an interest in the stones themselves and began to wonder about the people buried there. I spent over a year transcribing the cemetery and am currently 80% finished with photographing this cemetery for findagrave.com, an online "virtual cemetery" used for genealogical research. This endeavor became a healing process for me.

I realized during this process that many things in regards to genealogical research can be learned from a person's tombstone.

In this article I will share 5 of those things.

1. Birth and death dates; which are the most obvious and are a good starting place when tracing a family tree.

2. Relationship in a family or community. Often other family members are buried near-by, children's grave which are not documented elsewhere or a family member's name will be listed on the tombstone such as wife of; daughter of; parents of, etc. which is a bonus when tracing your family tree.

3. Style of stone can indicate a persons' economic situation. Field stones, which are common in our area, indicate someone who could not afford a stone whereas larger memorials may indicate someone more well to do, or someone with a higher social status in the community.

4. Cause of death. Sometimes the year of death can indicated a possible cause of death, based on what was going on at that time in history in regards to epidemics and pandemics; such as influenza which was prevalent in this area in 1918.

5. Tombstones can reveal specific personal facts or traits. This is characterized by epitaphs and symbols found on the stones themselves. They can reveal if someone was a member of a fraternal organization, armed forces; whether they are religious and can give some insight into the type of person they were. The stone carvers were artists and the carvings on tombstones are not random; each carving is symbolic and tells its own story.

Tombstones can be an important source of genealogical information if we take the time and are will to listen to the tombstones talk.

Bowling Chapel Church - continued

The minister's message was "Witness of the Spirit". The opening song was" Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" and the scripture came from Ephesians 4. On the last Sunday in December, it was recorded that the average attendance for the first year was 20.7 with 6 members having perfect attendance.

As one reads these long-ago records, names, faces, and memories come to our minds. Most are close relatives to those of us yet attending Bowling Chapel. We shall always cherish their down-to-earth simple values that took shape and, formed our little church 100 years ago. The new church at Bowling Chapel was built in 1962 near the older building. The minister at that time was Herbert Daugherty. The first funeral to be held at the new Church was that of Henry Cave.

To the present time Bowling Chapel has been served by 30 ministers. Reverend Henry Lane served the most years (8), with L. D. Perkins a close second (7) and Ogleva Street serving 6 years. Our present minister is Reverend Walter Waddey, who we hope will lead and direct us for many years to come.

When we think of homecomings, especially those dating back 100 years, it becomes difficult to put thoughts and emotions into words. As we celebrate the 100th birthday of Bowling Chapel today, may we not only look back but forward. The future we leave to God's will. Today, let us all bow humbly together to thank God for those who came before us to create and preserve the little country church called Bowling Chapel.

Prepared by Church Historians: Adeline Hines, Betty Crumley and Randi Sigmond

Artist Teresa Robinette (left) speaks with Colonel Claude Davis and Jean Martin

Circuit Court Judge Birg Sergent

President's Report *from page 1*

In October, Ron Carson gave us a history of Saint Charles Health Clinic, which is now Stone Mountain Health Care. He showed a tape of the community people getting together to start the Clinic and how the Clinic has grown and has helped develop three other clinics in the county. Stone Mountain Health Care is getting ready to build a new and bigger clinic in the Jonesville area. With our hospital closing, these clinics will make a difference.

At our November meeting Ada Vandeventer gave a history of the Vandeventer family including their coming to America and migration to Lee County.

You can tell a lot about a person by their tombstone, according to out speaker in December, Kim Hurst. Kim is one of our new members and has been active helping with Queries we receive. She also has a special interest in Cemeteries and is very knowledgeable about those in our area.

If you are in the area and would like to come to a meeting or visit our building you can call or e-mail us. We still met the second Saturday of each month at 2 P.M. at the Old Friendship Church Building.

Our local members are working hard as we are in the process of scanning photos for a second pictorial history book for the County. We will be scanning photos again beginning in March and probably will continue until the end of April. We have already been working with a photo editor and publishing company **so we need you to get your photos to us before it's too late**!

It is time to renew your membership. Our dues are still $10.00 per year. And Life Membership is $100.00. We can also use your donations of money, family genealogical records, books and artifacts for our museum. We have several other projects we would like to get started on.

Mr. Ron Carson

Book Re-print

The Historical Society is considering re-printing
The first Pictorial History of Lee County
and the 2 volume set of
The Early Settlers of Lee County, Virginia and Adjacent Counties.
If you are interested in purchasing any of these please send us an email at:
Leecovahistsoc@hotmail.com
or contact Judy Davidson (276) 346-2335
or Becky Jones at (276) 346-2010

Society Books Still Available

Bicentennial History of Lee County……..$65 + $5 shipping (Va. Residents add $3.25 sales tax)

Cemeteries of Lee County

Volume I…….$40 + $5 shipping (Va. Residents add $2.00 sales tax)

Volume 2…….$45 + $5 shipping (Va. Residents add $2.25 sales tax)

Volume 3…….$50 + $5 shipping (Va. Residents add $2.50 sales tax)

If you would like to purchase any of these books please send a check to Lee County Historical and Genealogical Society, P. O. Box 231, Jonesville, VA 24263.

The Vandeventer Family of Lee County *by Ada Kinser Vandeventer*

Van means "man of or from." The name, Vandeventer, is derived from the ancient city of Deventer, Holland of The Netherlands. Various pronunciations and spellings have been used. In Deventer, the name is pronounced Vahn Dayventer. It is a well-recognized family name dating back to 1376.

The Lee County ancestry line begins with the fourth generation emigrating from Holland to America in 1662. To date, there are fifteen generations. Jan (pronounced John in Dutch) was founder of the Vandeventer family in America. He was born in 1627, married in 1652 and died in 1692. The church where he married Maria Hoogeboom was still in use when the family history was published in 1943. Jan, his wife and three children sailed on the ship, "Hope", in 1662 and arrived in New Amsterdam, Long Island on April 8th. The area was later named New York. Jan and family soon settled in Brooklyn. His boarding ticket for the family was purchased for $126. His occupation was listed as kleermaker (tailor).

He and his wife participated In the organization of the Reformed Dutch Church. They were listed as original members. He was also listed as a Deacon. Records mentioned that he was a substantial citizen, owned various farmland tracts and held public office under Dutch and English governments in New York

By the fifth generation, migration had begun for some of the family. Peter Jansen, son of Jan, bought land and moved to Monmouth County, New Jersey. He died in 1709 and was buried there. Isaac, 6th generation, was born in 1697 in New York, later lived in New Jersey, moved to Bucks County, PA, where he leased 320 acres of land. In 1771, he moved to Loudon County, VA. He was a patriot in the Revolutionary War. He was captured and died a prisoner of war in 1776 at Old Sugarhouse Prison in New York. Isaac's son, Abraham, 7th generation, was born, in 1753, in Readington, New Jersey. He lived in Pennsylvania before going with his father in 1771 to Loudon County, VA. Westward migration toward the Allegheny Mountains and beyond had begun. He left Loudon County, VA and settled in the Holston River area of Sullivan County, NC (later became Tennessee). He died in 1837 and was buried near Blountville, TN. Thomas, 8th generation, was born in 1779 in Loudon County, VA and died in 1855 in Hancock County, TN. He went with his father to Sullivan County, TN about 1780. He settled in Claiborne County, TN around 1805 (later became Hancock Co.) He built a hewn log house with double chimneys that stood for over a century. He and his wife became members of Thompson Settlement Baptist Church in 1822. In 1829, he became a charter member of Mulberry Gap Baptist Church which he helped organize. He served as Deacon until his death. He was buried in the churchyard adjoining the church.

Ada and John Vandeventer with a Model 1873 Winchester rifle that belonged to his Grandfather James Alexander Vandeventer.

Larkin, 9th generation, was born September 22, 1824 in the mountain home. He died August 31,1886, in Lee County. He is buried in the Vandeventer Cemetery on the Vandeventer Farm. Larkin lived with his family in the log house his father built on Powell Mountain. He served in the 50th VA INF., CSA Army of Northern VA in which his 19 year old nephew, Alexander Spotswood, was a Colonel then Brevet General in the Battle of Chancellorsville. Larkin was a courier for General Grumble Jones. An incident that happened during the war caused his tiny son to become a war casualty. His wife had just made him a new coat to use in the army. A raiding soldier took possession of it. Holding the infant in her arms, she requested the soldier to leave it. He knocked her down and the baby fell from her arms.

In the turmoil of reconstruction after April 1865 when his property was often raided by looters from the South, Larkin moved his family into Virginia in the Natural Bridge area Southwest of Jonesville. Later he bought a farm which is the Virginia Century Farm where we now live. To qualify for this designation, the farm must have been owned and actively farmed by the same family for at least 100 years. This Vandeventer farm has been in the family for over 150 years.

James Alexander, 10th generation, was born in 1863 in Claiborne County, TN in the mountain home built by his grandfather, Thomas. He died in 1946 and is buried in the Vandeventer Cemetery on the farm. He was a farmer, teacher and deputy sheriff. He lived on the family farm which his father, Larkin, bought at the end of the Civil War. He raised nine children and two orphan granddaughters of which seven were school teachers.

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Movie Theatres – A Walk In The Past - continued

were 15 cents for double features. That money was not so easy to come by for many families, but it was a real treat for those who got to go and one they won't forget.

Some of the people who shared their memories of attending a local theatre are:

Phil Hensley - Early 1950's saw a western starring Roy Rogers and his horse Trigger. Phil was personally impressed with Trigger. At that time there were the singing cowboys like Roy Rogers and Gene Autrey. You not only got to see an action packed movie with shoot outs, stagecoach robberies but also got to hear some good singing. Good guys always won.

Ada Vandeventer - Remembers as a teenager in the 50's going to the movies. Ushers would walk around the theatre with a flashlight to make sure young couples, who may be courting, did not hug or kiss. She also remembers seeing "Trail of the Lonesome Pine" with the Carter family. She remembers them talking about June. She thought they were talking about her Uncle June who was related to the Carter family.

Ronnie Montgomery - Remembers being in the 3rd grade and riding to the movies in the back of a cattle truck. Smell didn't matter - he was going to the movies. In those days it was common for children to ride in the back of a pick-up truck or standing up in the back holding onto a cattle rack. Ronnie does not remember the cost of the ticket, but knows it could not have been much.

Virginia Spence - Recalls going to see "Love Me Tender" starring Elvis Presley. A long line of people waited to get into the movie. The ticket was about 25 cents. Popcorn and soft drinks were also reasonable. She also remembers seeing "Old Yeller" and all the kids crying at the end of the movie. She remembers her brothers going to Pennington to see "Lash LaRue" in person. He was another cowboy who used a whip. These cowboys often made personal appearances in theatres.

Another person who wishes to remain anonymous remembers going to the theatre with his cousin. They had filled their pockets with corn kernels from home. They sat in the balcony flipping corn in the air in front of the projector. Ushers found them and they were quickly escorted out of the theatre by their ear. The fond memories of people from our community echoed in the memories of others who were lucky enough to experience this when we lived in a more innocent time and were lucky enough to cherish the small things.

It is our hope that with the reopening of the Lee Theatre another generation of kids will get to enjoy movies on the “big screen” and one day have their own happy memories to recall.

The Vandeventer Family - continued

While he served as deputy sheriff, he carried a Model 1873 Winchester rifle which remains in the family. A brass plate with initials JAV, 1890 is attached to the gun. Older family members, talking about the gun, said that the County bought 6 of these rifles. Family fondly remember their father and grandfather taking time after lunch to teach the hired help reading and writing lessons before returning to the fields.

Thomas, Larkin and James were active in forming Baptist churches and promoting their work in the pioneer communities at Mulberry Gap, Thompson Settlement and Lone Branch. William Luther, 11th generation, born May 2, 1900, died August, 1962, Lee Co., buried in the Vandeventer Cemetery on the Vandeventer farm. He was a farmer and he was active in the Lone Branch Baptist Church and community. He and his wife, Bobbie Lamb Vandeventer, raised five successful children who moved away from Lee County to find better employment.

John, the youngest, returned to the farm with his wife, Ada Kinser Vandeventer, and children, Brian and Brenda, to continue operation of the Vandeventer Farm. The 12th generation, John Larkin, born September 13, 1936, sadly, is the last Vandeventer by the name, living in Lee County. John is semi-retired. As stated earlier, he continues to operate the Vandeventer farm on a limited basis. There are still other relatives in Lee County, but not by the Vandeventer name. Generations 13 through 15 have moved to Ohio and Michigan for better employment Opportunities Vandeventers have served in all wars--some as commissioned officers and many more as enlisted men and women.

One of the largest Vandeventer genealogical records in the US is in St. Louis, MO. The Vandeventer Family History, published ill 1943, is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Willis Vandevanter, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. He sat on the Court twenty-seven years, served with three chief justices, six presidents, during two depressions and one major war. The Chief Justice in his eulogy remarked that Willis was a man of sterling character and of rare sagacity, a wise counselor, and a faithful friend. In his earlier days, Buffalo Bill was often his companion on hunting trips.