



Gateway to the West



Lee County Historical and Genealogical Society P. O. Box 231 Jonesville, Virginia 24263-023

January 2023

President's Report

By Becky Jones



We hope we are all totally recovered from Covid and on our way to do great things for Lee County History. Attendance is down but the members coming do seem to be eager and ready to get things done.

We have credited much in interest in the GPR Survey we did at the County Poor Farm Cemetery. Ken Roddenberry has done an excellent job of researching the Poor Farm. We will have more on our findings when all the information is in. Each County had their Poor Farms. This predates the welfare program. 1970s - 1950s

We also GPR Surveyed a spot on the Baker Farm west of Jonesville where many of our Civil War relics were found. We think this sight will proceed the Civil War. The information is not yet in.

Greg Edwards gave us an American History lesson for December's meeting. It was very interesting, but I did not do very good on it.

History of the Lee County Historical Society: a continuation from last Newsletter. We continued to work on our building to get ready to have our meetings there. We had been meeting at the Methodist Church in Jonesville. In March 2006 we had our first meeting in our building. Author, Joe Tennis was our speaker. We met in the large room that is our library now.

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Member Virginia Spence Passes *by Libby Laforce*

Our Society has lost one of our faithful lifetime members. Virginia Hedrick Spence passed away unexpectedly in January of this year. Virginia was a former teacher and principal at several of our schools. Virginia graduated from Radford College and Union College. She taught at Flatwoods Elementary and Lee High School as well as Mountain Empire Community in Wise County Virginia. Virginia served as Principal and Vice Principal in Lee County. She loved history and Genealogy. She donated many items to our society along with her time in helping in any way she could as well with helping with some of our displays.

She was preceded in Death by her two sons Tim and Shane, as well as her parents Earl and Alice Hedrick. Virginia is survived by her Husband Jerry of Jonesville. She will be missed by this community and by all of those whose life she touched



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May 2006 we had an Open House and Dedication Service for our new headquarters and future museum. "The Old Friendship Baptist Church Building." One hundred people signed our guest book.

We had been given lime stone rock from the Ewing Family to replace the concrete entrance to the front doors. And an old chimney was given to us by the Cridlin Family. There was so much rock we were able to build our sign, entrance and wall on the road side of the property. The Terry brothers did a great job. We found out later that the rocks that Reed Williams and his men brought were from Wallen Creek and had been taken from the old Ewing home place across the road from the Friendship Church. How appropriate that the old rock returned home after about 75 years.

By this time, we had had a heat and air installed, 501-3 stasis and ready to get to work on our show cases for our museum. Two old cases came from the old Stickley store in Flatwoods. A member George Hopkins restored the show cases for us for life membership. Our other case came from a closed store (Cuma Hayes) in Pennington Gap. They were deep shelves and were able to fix them with glass and locks.

In 2008 we had our Security system up and running. Charles Wynn installed our system and monitored it free of charge for years.

We were able to have John Hines custom build a large book shelf, with storage in lower part, glass doors and locks for our library. Now we have a place for our cataloged books and Family lineages papers.

By 2012 we were able to replace our windows, siding and put an awning over our front door.

Jett Cory's mother had sold turkeys to buy the organ that was used in the Old Friendship Baptist Church. The organ was returned to us by the Friendship Church. Our museum was taking shape. Many families brought us things, (Old quilts, tools, clocks, and toys, and pictures, medical instruments and more). All said to be from Lee County.

We had our first paid employee, Libby Laforce, until our money ran out. She did a great job getting our show cases arranged and set up. Our museum



Mrs. Virginia Hedrick Spence

is getting full, we have had to put up more peg board for pictures. We are rearranging our library to make more room for research material.

In the last few years we have had to power wash the outside of our building and clean out the spring. We had several large trees cut and had to fill a large hole that caved in on the bank beside the building. With the help of some very generous members and covid money, we have been able to meet our expenses.

Jessica Moore has done a great job of recording our meetings and if we have a workday, she is there to help. Phillip Cheek is a great help to me getting our newsletter together. We have a group of good local members who I can call on to help get speakers and get things done at our building.

In the Spring of 2000 our President and Secretary, Margaret and Sam Berry moved to Richmond. Our Treasurer Mary Parkey died in a house fire with most our membership records. That was when I became president. We have done much in the last 22 years and still have much to do to keep our history recorded. I have had a great group of men and women to help keep Lee County Historical and Genealogical active.

We still need your support, your donations, dues, family histories and your interest in the Lee County Historical and Genealogical Society to keep us going another twenty years.