



# SMYTH COUNTY

## HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

PRESERVING AND PROTECTING  
LOCAL HISTORY

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### What We've Been Up To!



Jim and Agney King gave a presentation on the tradition of moonshining in Southwest Virginia

Our last day for the season will be October 26th before we close for the winter. Thanks so much for all the support and help this season. During the off season, those wishing to visit the museum can call or email to make an appointment and we will make special arrangements. Different operating hours will be observed from the beginning of September until we close in October. We will be closed on Sunday and Monday; Tuesday through Friday we will be open from 11:00AM until 4:00PM; Saturday open from 12:00PM until 4:00PM.

In June, Betsy Ely and Jim Gearhart gave a living history presentation by portraying Mr. and Mrs. Woodrow...  
*(...continued on page 2)*

## What We've Been Up To! (continued...)

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Wilson. Betsy and Jim put on these programs as part of the Edith Bolling Wilson Birthplace Museum in Wytheville, Virginia. In July, Jim King gave a presentation on moonshining in Southwestern Virginia. In August, Dr. Charlie Sydnor, a returning speaker from last year, introduced us to the Virginia Holocaust Museum in Richmond, Virginia where he once served as the Executive Director and still serves as their senior historian. The Virginia Holocaust Museum will be installing a temporary exhibition at Emory & Henry College early next year; a perfect chance for locals to get a taste of what you might see at the museum in Richmond. In September, Marion Chief of Police John Clair spoke on the history and development of the Marion Police Department. Our speaker for October will be Jo Ella Barber who will speak about The Battle of Kings Mountain. The event will take place on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 2pm at the museum in Marion.



Dr. Charlie Sydnor introduced us to the Virginia Holocaust Museum in Richmond.

There has been an update to our newspaper digitization project flash drives! The flash drives now have 480 unique local newspaper issues, from the 1860s through the 1960s, all digitized from our collection! We sell these flash drives as a fundraiser for the historical society. They are \$15 each and can be purchased in our gift shop or ordered through mail for \$20 to cover shipping. To order by mail, send payment and written request of item to: Smyth County Museum at P.O. Box 710, Marion, Virginia 24354. Those who have purchased a flash drive in the past can bring theirs by and exchange it for an updated one at no additional cost.

We now accept monetary donations online directly through Facebook! Donations are what keeps our organization alive; allowing us to keep the doors to our museum open and continue our mission. To donate through this method, visit [Facebook.com/SmythCountyMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/SmythCountyMuseum) and use the [Donate] button located on our page. All donations are tax deductible as we are a 501(c)(3) organization.

The Marion Downtown Christmas Market will take place on December 6<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup> this year. As tradition, we will be having our Christmas tree displays and decorating contest again this year and will be seeking local businesses, organizations and individuals to decorate. If you would like to decorate a tree let us know and we will get an entry packet to you.

## Getting to Know the Collection (Cold War Era Civil Defense Memorabilia)



The Cold War era of the 1950s and 1960s brought new meaning to the phrase “emergency preparedness” in the United States and around the world. The looming threat of atomic warfare fundamentally changed the way we planned for an attack at home; prompting extensive programs in emergency education and procedures to follow should an attack occur. Government funded education materials were distributed to the public and implemented in school curriculum, plans for the continuity of government were formed, emergency alert and broadcast systems were created to warn the public of impending attacks, and shelter locations were designated throughout the country should they be needed.

Fallout shelters, as they were termed, were to be located in the basements or the interior core of centrally accessible buildings and contained all the supplies needed to sustain their occupants. These supplies ranged from water and food rations, to medical supplies, and even tools and equipment for surveying radiological emissions.

During the past couple of years, we have assembled a small collection of civil defense memorabilia. The collection includes water storage drums, an original box of medical supplies, and a radiological monitoring system that were to be used to support fallout shelters. Emergency drinking water was to be stored in metal drums with plastic liners to be waterproof. The drums in our collection are labeled to hold 17.5 gallons of water. Once the drums were empty, they were to be used as a commode with the simple addition of some chemicals and a toilet seat. Medical kits were stocked with a variety of different supplies such as aspirin tablets, isopropyl alcohol, bandages, syringes, and water purification tablets. Depending on the number of persons a shelter was supposed to support, different kits stocked different quantities of supplies. Radiological monitoring systems were distributed across the country and were a part of a shelter’s supply set. Most of them consisted of low-range radiological survey meters, also known as geiger counters, used to monitor radiation.



## The Story of Tissa Henderson



This photograph depicts a group of flower girls standing over the grave of Tissa Henderson who was killed in an accident on Main Street in Marion in 1921.

The story of Tissa Henderson is chronicled by Mrs. Evelyn Thompson Lawrence, pictured third from the right in the photograph, in her "Directory of African-American Students and Teachers in all Smyth County Schools 1906-1965." On the morning of her first day of school, Tissa, accompanied by her older sister Valerie, began to walk to school. As they were turning onto Iron Street from Main, a coal truck delivering a load of coal to Fisher's Jewelry Store (now Cornett's Jewelers), struck and killed Tissa. Back then, there were no warning sounds on delivery trucks to alert passersby and by the time the driver and Tissa's sister had realized what was happening nothing could be done.

The lady standing behind the children is Mrs. Nellie Madison Russell who was Evelyn's aunt. The girls from left to right are: Laura Bell Stover, Margaret Baddgett, Erisa Gentry, Helen (Lovely) Baddgett, Lucile Haley, Nellie Mae Hayes, Mildred Cox, Evelyn (Tot) Thompson, Margaret Goble, and Susie Young.

This photograph was donated to the museum in September 2019 by Janet Breen of Marion.

### Item Donations June 2019 ---- September 2019

Photograph of the last Rich Valley High School staff (1986-1987) before merging with Saltville.	Toby Haynes, Broadford, Virginia
Collection of Rich Valley Fair Books (25 total) ranging from 1994-2018.	Raymond DeBord, Rich Valley, Virginia
Collection of items (books, documents, photographs, United State military memorabilia, etc...) from the estate of Major Bowen.	Homer K. "Major" Bowen Estate Marion, Virginia
Photograph, Holston Mills c. 1890-1910 Photograph, "Rocky Point" School House (possibly "Oak Point"). Photograph, Old School House (possibly "Rocky Point"). Photograph, Adwolfe School Group at Old School House. Photograph, "Uncle Rufe's House" near present day Riverside Road and Cherokee Lane. Photograph, "Tuesday April 18, 1911, King Philip (horse) age 2 years 3 months." Baby Scale with weights Merchant/General Use Scale (poor condition).	John Britton, Marion, Virginia
Military Memorabilia of Edward Parsons (photographs, documents, etc...).	Charlot P. Berry and Henrietta P. Dunford Wytheville, Virginia
Photograph, Girls standing over the grave of Tissa Henderson.	Janet Breen, Marion, Virginia
Framed Wythe County Land Grant on sheep's skin parchment of James Ligget, c. January 29 <sup>th</sup> , 1806.	David & Donna Blevins and Denver Osborne, Marion, Virginia

### Membership

## INTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP?

If you have a friend or family member who might be interested in becoming a member of the historical society, please encourage them to stop by and pick up a membership application or contact us for more information! Members wishing to do so can help **docent the museum**, assist in designing **window displays and inside exhibits**, assist in **organizing records**, or simply serve as a **greeter to welcome guests**. Membership annual dues remain at \$5 for students, \$20 for individuals, \$25 for family, and \$100 for business. Yearly membership renewals are due in March of each year and any membership dues paid after October of the previous year will carry over to the following year.



Smyth County  
Historical and Museum Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box 710  
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**VISIT OUR WEBSITE!**  
[smythcountymuseum.org](http://smythcountymuseum.org)