

# NEWSLETTER

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## *The Society Has A New Home!*

On April 11, 2017, the Historical Society purchased the long-awaited "home of our own". Located on the corner of Main Street and Russell Road, the building is in a prime location in downtown Abingdon and less than two blocks from the current Depot Square location. Previously occupied by a banking office and then vacant for three years, the building needs some repairs, updating, and general maintenance, so we won't be moving in until mid-summer. Additional photos will be posted frequently on our Facebook group page, so check in regularly. If you're in town and would like a tour of the new place, let us know.



Our thanks to everyone who has given moral and/or financial support to the Society in this venture. Now the hard part begins: securing continuing, sustainable financing. May is our membership drive month, so please renew your annual or consider a lifetime membership. This home belongs to all of us and now all of us have a mortgage to pay off!

Martha Keys, President

Charles Seaver, Sec/Treasurer

If you are interested in helping out the Society, there are many opportunities coming up. We will have a booth at **Plumb Alley Day** selling donated items, so clean out the cabinets and donate those gently used items to us. Or come and help staff the booth for an hour or so on May 27th, from 9-2.

The **Annual Meeting and Dinner** is on June 10th See page 2 for details.

The **Living History Tour of Sinking Spring Cemetery** is July 29th, from 5-7:30. This is a big project and we need volunteers for many different things: tour guides, spirits, ticket sales, greeters, script writers, advertising, etc.

The Society relies on **volunteer staff** to run the Library and assist customers from 10-4 Tuesday thru Saturday.

And if your time is not practical to give, please consider a **donation in materials or cash** to apply toward the renovation expenses of our new building. Call us at 276-623-8337 for details.

# 2017 Annual Meeting

## June 10



The theme of this year's Annual Meeting is **Virginia in World War I**, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the United States' entry into what has become a "forgotten war". Our speaker is Lynn Rainville, Ph.D., Director of the Tusculum Institute for Public History at Sweet Briar College, VA. Dr. Rainville is completing a project documenting WWI memorials and memorabilia in Virginia. She will be speaking about this project and her findings in SW Virginia.

Her work, and that of her colleagues, can be seen on the Web page [www.lynnrainville.org/ww1-memorials/index](http://www.lynnrainville.org/ww1-memorials/index), and yes, Abingdon's Tiffany glass window in the courthouse is shown there. Kanin Clark, portraying a WWI soldier buried in Sinking Spring Cemetery, is scheduled to be pictured in her book, *Virginians in the Great War*, due out next year.

### Meeting and Dinner Information:

- 6:00 pm, Saturday June 10, 2017, at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
- Buffet dinner catered by J.J.'s Restaurant and Sports Bar, wine available by the glass
- \$25 per person
- Dress is casual and period attire (1914-1918) is always welcome. Maybe a "doughboy" will show up?
- For tickets and information, please call the Society at 276-623-8337, or go to our web page at [hswcv.org](http://hswcv.org), where you may also purchase tickets.

During the business meeting, the following items will be presented to the membership for approval. This publication serves as notice of such proposed action.

- **Candidates for consideration for election as Officers and Directors for the terms shown:**

#### Officers for 2017-2019 terms:

President: Martha Keys

Vice President: Gene Sturgeon

Secretary/Treasurer: Charles Seaver

Corresponding Sec.: Karen McClanahan

#### Directors for 2017-2020 terms:

Charlie Barnette

Brett Compton

#### Directors to fulfill unexpired terms:

Sarah Sanders, Director Term expiring 2018

Ron Dickenson, Director Term expiring 2019

- **Proposed Amendments to the *Bylaws of the Historical Society of Washington County, VA*, dated May 6, 2008:**

#### **AMENDMENT 1**

**Section 3.3 ATTENDANCE:** If a Director or Officer fails to attend three consecutive meetings ~~per year~~ including participation in E-Mail meetings, that Director or Officer will be deemed to have resigned and his or her position shall be deemed to have become vacant for the remainder of his or her term or until the vacancy is filled pursuant to Section 3.5 of these bylaws. A majority of members of the board may waive this requirement in rare extenuating circumstances.

**Purpose: Removes the undefined time period 'year'; adds E-meetings; provides for an appeal**

#### **AMENDMENT 2**

**Section 4.3.1 PRESIDENT:** . . . The President shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors, appoint the chair ~~and the members of~~ all committees except the Nominating Committee . . . {re: Section 5.6 Nominating Committee}

**Purpose: Removes the appointment of Committee members as a responsibility of President; removes a conflict with Section 5.3 Committee Chairs**

#### **AMENDMENT 3**

**Section 5.5 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** Eliminate this section entirely, including these sub-sections referenced here: Sec 5.5.1 Composition of the Committee; Section 5.5.2 Powers and Functions; and Sec. 5.5.3 Reports to Board.

**Purpose of Amendment: Committee's primary purpose was to act on matters requiring immediate attention; E-mail communications and meetings have eliminated need for this committee**

#### **AMENDMENT 4**

**Section 5.7 FINANCIAL REVIEW ~~AUDIT~~ COMMITTEE:** The President shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors, designate, within 60 days after the end of the fiscal year ~~an~~ a Financial Review ~~Audit~~ Committee composed of not less than three (3) Society members who are not members of the Finance and Management Committee and which committee shall:

**Section 5.7.1** Perform the review ~~audit~~ or recommend an independent auditor. If an independent auditor is selected, with the approval of the Board of Directors, the Financial Review ~~Audit~~ Committee . . .

**Purpose of Amendment: Changes the designation from Audit to Financial Review, more accurately describing the level of examination performed**

## JOHN W. GARDNER POTTERY

J. W. Gardner, Sr. was born in Virginia on February 6, 1837. He first settled in Washington County about 1867, on a tract referred to as the Bowman lands bounded by properties owned by Ingles, Pippins, and Talberts, which included a strip across Raccoon Valley. Later he owned a section on the North Fork of the Holston River that contained the former Bowman Mill, later referred to as Gardner's Mill.

By 1870 he was working along the North Fork across the River Ridge from the community of Craig's Mill, which was located at the Jasper Creek - Smith Creek intersection. He brought his wares across the Ridge in wagons or on horseback using a trail known as "the Winding Stair", and he found a ready market in Craig's Mill. He also took his wares to nearby Mendota and to the distant towns of Abingdon and Bristol Virginia/Tennessee.

It is reported that he owned 4 kiln sites in the area along the North Fork and his son John, Jr. helped him operate his pottery business. J. W. Gardner, Jr. was born about 1864. He likely began helping his father when he was a teenager. It is not known for sure when the operation ended, but the lands were sold around 1910.

Gardner, Sr. died in March 1907 and is buried on the north side of the North Fork in a family cemetery not far from the Mendota Rd.

The crock (pictured r) owned by the Historical Society is approximately one gallon capacity and is stamped: *J.W. Gardner & Co/Craigs Mills, Va*, in an oval. Below that is the number 1 in a stippled circle.



## E. W. MORT - POTTER of ALUM WELLS

Edward William Mort was born in VA about 1853. In 1880 he is boarding with Dr. William Lancaster in the Kinderhook District of Washington County. He is possibly working in the Wooten Pottery shop learning the craft, or he may well have already learned it, or became attracted to making it a profession, since he was born in the pottery hotbed of Strasburg, VA. One source states he had his own shop by 1881.

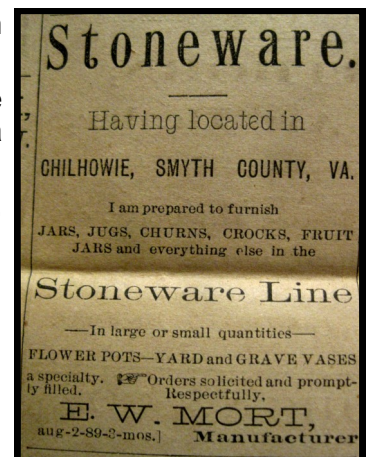
Alum Wells is located on Rt. 802 (Mendota Rd), midway between Holston and Mendota communities, and before reaching Zenobia and Wooten Gap, the area the Wooten's potted in. Assorted shards of Mort pottery were reported in the Gardner kiln wastes, so he may have also worked with Gardner. Like Gardner he would have transported his wares to Craig's Mill, Abingdon, Mendota, & Bristol.

In 1888 he was potting in Chilhowie in Smyth County, Va. per a newspaper ad noting he was selling "jars, jugs, churns, crocks, fruit jars, and everything else in the stoneware line. E. W Mort - Manufacturer."

In 1893 Mort became a minister of the Holston Conference at Emory Va. He died in 1923 and is buried in the Emory cemetery.

I have seen more of his pottery, mostly crocks and canning jars, than that of the other potters of Washington County. Mort marked the majority of his wares with a stamp - *E W Mort/Alum Wells, Va*. But unsigned pieces have been attributed to him.

Pictured is a 1/2 gallon jar, coated in a brown glaze, with the Mort stamp/imprint, and a copy of one of his Chilhowie, VA newspaper ads.



Sources for both:

*Potters on the Holston* by Skelly & Loy

*Legacy in Clay* by Wm King Regional Arts Center

*Great Road Style* by Betsy White

## *A Monumental Discovery*

In May of 2014, a town employee contacted Charlie Barnette and Carol Taylor about a monument that had been discovered by workers clearing a lot on Russell Road. Upon exploring the site, a monument for James L. Brown was found in sections that were scattered down the steep hillside. Several large bones were also found. Research indicated that this was the site of Brown's marble works. After it was determined that this was the burial site of James L. Brown, the town reset the monument and cleaned the hillside. As far as can be determined, Brown's is the only grave on the site.

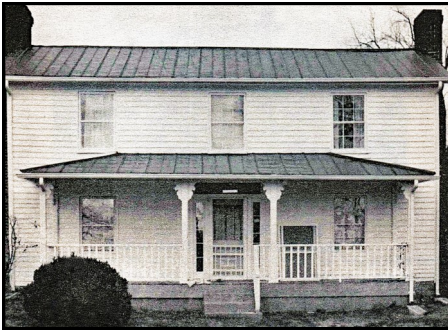


James Leftwich Brown was born May 1829 to Nimrod and Sarah Lucas Brown in Giles County, Virginia. He and Clementine Ellen Hale were married in 1854 in Giles County, and began their family there with the birth of daughter Sarah, their oldest child. Clementine would have eight more children, two of which did not survive into adulthood (see below).

James enlisted in the Confederate Army, Company H, 36<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry Regiment on 18 Apr 1862 in Giles County. The family remained in Giles during the war and two of the children were born in 1863 and 1866.

At some point after the 1870 Census the family moved to Mercer County, West Virginia, where the youngest child, Chapman Johnston, was born October 1877. The 1880 US Census shows James and Clementine living in Mercer County, along with all seven of their children including their married daughter, Sarah Woolwine. The family's time in WV did not last long, however.

By 1881 James, Clementine, and their children had arrived in Abingdon. In April 1881, Brown bought a house from G. M. Snodgrass located on the corner of Russell Road and Wiley Street. Snodgrass was part of a firm contracted to transport the U.S. mail and Brown contracted to deliver the mail in return for purchasing the house, which still stands today.



By 1888, Brown had established a marble works just up the street from his house and near Sinking Spring Cemetery. His business, Abingdon Marble Yard, dealt in American and Italian marble, monuments, and tombstones. Later, in addition to his marble works, he was providing steel fences for the residents of the town. In the 1900 Census he and sons Robert and Chapman listed themselves as "Marble Dealers". In the same Census another son living in Russell County was listed as a "Manufacturer Tombstones".

James L. Brown died in 1909. His sons Robert and Chapman continued to operate the marble works. Clementine died in 1917. In the 1920 Census, the two men, who never married, were still in the same house; Robert was "Proprietor" of a marble yard and Chapman was a "farmer". Robert died in 1922, at age 54.

Sarah A.	1855-1925
Rufus Snow	1857-1858
George Stafford	1860-1936
William P.	1863-1927
Nannie Ada	1866-1867
Robert Lee	1868-1922
Lula M.	1873-1928
James Estill	1874-1943
Chapman Johnston	1877-1952

Chapman continued to own and work in the marble yard, but in the 1940 Census he also indicated "income from another source". Chapman Johnston Brown died in Abingdon in 1952.

Now for the rest of the story: As each family member passed away, they were returned to Giles County, VA for burial, including, apparently, James L. Brown, who has a grave stone in Staffordsville Cemetery, Giles County, VA.

So, where is his final resting place after all?

If anyone has information on this family, please contact us.

### Sources:

*Places in Time, Volume 1* by Nanci King  
*Compendia, Annotations of Washington County, Virginia Cemeteries* by Thomas and Jane Fleenor Colley  
*Washington County Deed Book 36, 1881*  
*Washington County Deed Book 39, 1883-1884*  
*Chataigne's Virginia Gazetteer and Business Directory*  
*Abstracts from Local Newspapers* compiled by Nanci King  
 Ancestry.com  
 FindAGrave.com



## *Donations January 1 – April 30, 2017*

Photographs by G. W. Wertz	Julie Glass, Sun City, AZ
1948, 1950, 1968 <i>Columbian</i> , yearbooks from South Carolina	Penny Hudson, Bristol, TN
15 Volumes of <i>Journal of Southern History</i>	Ed Chitwood, Abingdon, VA
Photographic Services	Dean Barr, Barr Photographic, Abingdon, VA
Minnie Baugh Recipe File	Cindy Large, Abingdon, VA
<i>Just an Old Made Up Mess</i> by A. M. Wadkins	A. M. Wadkins, Huntington, MD
<i>Early Sharp Family History-Kathleen Ring Sharp</i>	Leon Ring, Mount Juliet, TN
<i>The American Ancestry of Julia Hutchinson</i>	M. David Sherrill, New York, NY
FBI files on the murder of Special Agent Hubert Tracey in 1942, articles written on the Memorial Dedication in 2017, photos, recording of SA Charlie Tignor, and other misc. items	Robert Craig, Abingdon, VA
<i>Genealogical &amp; Historical Notes on Culpepper County, Virginia</i>	Florence A. Powell, Meadowview, VA
Picture – Blacksmith Shop in Mendota, wedge of lye soap, unusual rock found at the head of South Holston Lake	Ronald L. Wimmer, Abingdon, VA
<i>Lines from Morning Glo</i> by Alice S. Littleton	Gene Denton, Emory, VA

## *Monetary Contributions January 1 – April 30, 2017*

In Loving Memory of Stephen Troy Combs & Florence Virginia Sweet Combs	Steve Bowling, Longmont, CO & Ann Kite Lee, Abingdon, VA
In Loving Memory of Yvonne Ellis	Mary Lominack, Abingdon, VA
Jean Dilworth	Waxhaw, NC
McCabe Lodge No. 56 I00F	Abingdon, VA
Arthur & Arlene F. Wills	Raleigh, NC
S. E. & Christopher P. Stevenson	Maurertown, VA
Michael Hayter	Emory, VA

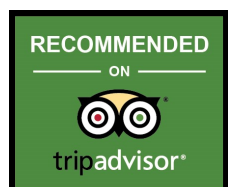
## *Membership*

Membership renewals for 2017 are now due. Dues remain at \$35 per person or family for an annual membership and \$350 for a lifetime membership. We also have three different levels of business memberships, student rates for any age, and a Library/Museum rate.

Dues and donations may be made on our Web page ([hswcv.org](http://hswcv.org)) with PayPal, credit cards, or by check mailed to the Society at PO Box 484, Abingdon, VA 24212.



PLEASE be sure we have your current address and email so you don't miss out on anything!





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