



Chronicle

Campbell County Historical Society
P.O. Box 595, Rustburg VA 24588

Locust Grove

By Robert M. Merryman

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Special points of interest:

The CCHS will meet on Sunday, July 24, at 2 pm in the basement of the Haberer Building. (Elevator is available) Judi Harvey of the Lynchburg Museum System will give a talk on "A Walk through Mourning." Judi will trace mourning customs but emphasizes the Victorian Period and will come dressed as a lady in mourning during that time period. If you have mourning items (including photos) that you would like to "show and tell," feel free to bring them.

The earliest recorded dates of people living at Locust Grove are found in an ancient cemetery about one half mile north of the main house. Prior to that time there is ample evidence of native inhabitants as seen by an unusual abundance of arrowheads and other implements. Numerous springs in the immediate vicinity must have made this an attractive location for Indians and was undoubtedly a significant factor in causing early settlers to select Locust Grove as their home.

In the fifties and sixties there were locust trees of gigantic proportions in the vicinity of the main house. Even today locust trees of several varieties spring up in fence rows and uncultivated fields.

The original home is believed to have been built prior to 1783.

Robert Alexander, a descendant of William Alexander of London Derry, was former Deputy Clerk to James Steptoe of Bedford and was made Clerk of Campbell County in 1782. His son John Alexander was the second clerk and lived at Locust Grove.

In April of 1783 the county seat was established at Rustburg closing a controversy which had been carried on by two factions in the selection of a site. One of the factors in favor of locating the county seat at Locust Grove was a "clerk's office" already in existence. No doubt the central location was a factor, additionally there already existed a small community which

would have prospered even more if the county seat was located here. But this was not to be and Locust Grove remained a quiet Piedmont Plantation.

Since a permanent court home was not built until 1848 the clerk's office at Locust Grove was used for court records. The clerk's office is a substantial brick building which originally was a one room structure. A careful examination shows that an additional room was later added which included an upper room.



The Old Clerk's Office at Locust Grove

Locust Grove Continued

The walls were plastered, and fine bookshelves on either side of the fireplace were often used for court records. This building remained intact until about 1960 when it fell into disrepair. A cobblestone walkway connected the main house with the clerk's office and is still in existence.

An interesting Civil War account reveals the involvement of Locust Grove in that conflict. John D. Alexander was the commander of the Campbell Rangers when General Longstreet was wounded at the Battle of the Wilderness. He was brought to Lynchburg by train to recover. When the Union Army of West Virginia under Major General Hunter was approaching Lynchburg, the citizens of Lynchburg decided to move the General to a safer location and removed him to the home of his friend Captain John D. Alexander at Locust Grove. While there he resided in the old clerk's office which by now was used as a dwelling.

The original residence at Locust Grove burned in 1930. There was an extensive account of the event in the Lynchburg newspaper. Mrs. R. J. Merryman described how people came from miles around to view the spectacle. She also described the beautiful wainscoting in the old home.

During the nineteenth century Locust Grove was a self-contained community as attested to by the number of structures, some of which still are in existence. No longer standing is the weaving house where cloth for the plantation was made. Although used for storage up until the 1960's, this building had a fire place and plastered walls.

Another structure was the old smoke house with detailed ventilation work and a shingle covered peaked roof. Nearby was an old ice house.

In front of this still exists a rough stone walk leading to the kitchen. The kitchen was an outbuilding located some distance from the main

house as was the practice in colonial days. Scattered all over the farm are old tobacco barns constructed of chestnut logs. Many of these have been converted to hay sheds and when the other structures had passed into oblivion the old chestnut logs still endured. Their presences attest to the extensive cultivations of tobacco in this area.

Around the main houses were many large stones with no apparent use, until one realizes they were obviously very useful when dismounting from carriages or horses. In the rear of the house are four boxwood trees about thirty feet tall reportedly used as a location for courting. Nearby are ruins of slave cabins.

Below the main house down a steep hill is located the spring house, which remains in a fair state of preservation. R. J. Merryman was concerned about the arduous walk for water and planted a row of walnut trees which still shade the trip to the spring house. The final preparation for any meal at Locust Grove was a trip to the spring for fresh water. The spring house is made of cut stone with iron bars in the lower windows. The purpose of the iron bars has eluded explanation.

Further up from the spring house past an old tobacco barn are the traces of the ice pond. This pond would have been fenced in carefully protected.

The first Merryman to own Locust Grove was Robert Merton Merryman who served as a private with I. Company, Campbell Rangers, 2nd Virginia Calvary, coincidentally the same unit commanded by Captain John D. Alexander. Robert Merton Merryman wanted a more modern home and around 1880 built Hickory Grove about a half mile to the east. Hickory Grove later became the Patrick Henry Girls Home. His son Robert Joshua purchased Locust Grove and raised his family here after his marriage to Josephine Hughes of Yellow Branch.

Locust Grove Continued

Term Dates:

Robert Alexander was county clerk from 1784-1819

John Alexander was county clerk from 1819-1838

John D. Alexander was county clerk from 1859-1865

William Kirk Alexander was circuit court clerk from 1868 – 1870 and W. K. Alexander was circuit court clerk from 1887.

Children of Robert Alexander

Ester married Micajah Moorman

Sallie married Nathaniel Manson

John married Sarah L. Cobb (1809)

Ann married Adam Clement

Elizabeth married Dr. John W. Payne

Susan D. married Dr. Robert W. Withers (1819)

Children of John Alexander

Sarah married Dr. Thomas H. Nelson

Charlotte married Dr. John F. Sale of Bedford

Eliza married James M. Cobbs of Lynchburg

Mary married Dr. William Davis

Octavia married Robert Camm then Edwin R. Page

Susan married J. Van Horst

Roberta married R. A. Hilton

John D. married Mary, daughter of Samuel Pannill of Green Hill

Cemetery at Locust Grove

Rustburg, Virginia

[Inscribed on main monument]

John Alexander

Born Jan. 25. 1782 at Rock Castle Campbell County Died Aug. 13, 1838 at Locust Grove "Sacred to the memory of John Alexander Esqr. Clerk of Campbell County Virginia."

Sarah Lewis wife of John Alexander Born Mar. 11, 1791

Died Jun. 3, 1859 at Locust Grove "Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Sally Alexander wife: of- John Alexander and daughter of Waddy Cobbs."

Robert Alexander Jr.

Born Nov. 10, 1821

Died Apr. 28, 1826

Charles Alexander

Born Sept. 10, 1826

Died Jul. 8, 1855

At the town of Jacksonville, Oregon territory.

Sarah Ann Nelson

Daughter of John and S. L. Alexander Born Apr.

13, 1812

Died Sept. 27, 1850

[Other markers]

Harry Page

Born Feb. 14, 1847

Died Feb. 12 1849

Doctor Robert F. Page

Mother

Mary Jane wife of .James C. J Peerman

Born 1833

Died 1883

Father

James C. Peerman

Born 1816

Died 1887

Ann Laurie daughter of James and Mary J.

Peerman

Born 1865

Died 1892

Mary Elizabeth daughter of

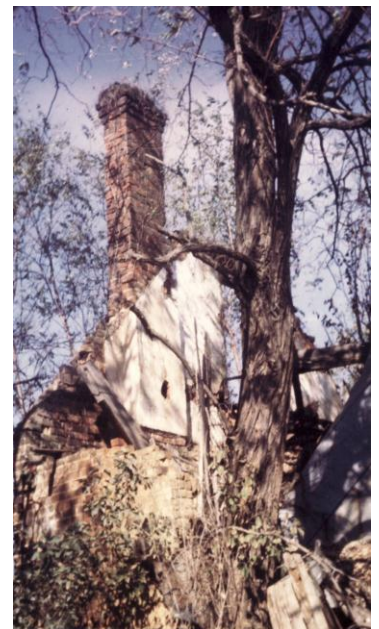
Patrick

Born 1831

Died 1855



Memorial by W. W. Davies to the Alexanders: John and wife Sarah Lewis, Robert Jr., Charles E., and Sarah Ann



The Old Clerk's Office at Locust Grove

Campbell County Historical Society Inquiry

I am looking for information concerning my Cobbs family who lived on the Cobbs Hall farm near Brookneal, Campbell Co, VA., in the late 1700's and early 1800's. Looking for someone who may have the Cobbs Bible records concerning births, deaths and marriages. Thomas and Mary ? Cobbs were my 4th Great Grandparents. According to the Campbell CO cemetery books, Thomas and Mary Cobbs are buried on this Cobbs Hall farm in the little cemetery there. Thomas Cobbs brother, Charles L. Cobbs and his wife, Sarah, are said to be buried at the Cobbs Hall farm also, along with several of their children. Charles Cobbs was a Baptist Minister and in 1795 he was the Sheriff of Campbell CO. Appreciate any help.

Helen Cobb Rehm
7020 SE Summit Dr.
St. Joseph, MO 64507
816-253-9733
Email: helenr@stjoewireless.net

Campbell County Prepares For War: May - August 1861

by Amelia A. Talley



Now that the Civil War Sesquicentennial is upon us, we may wonder what was happening in the lives of our ancestors in Campbell County during the spring and summer of 1861.

Where can we go to find out? What will we find out when we get there?

We will find many answers at the Circuit Court Clerk's Office in Rustburg. *Order Book 28* will reveal how the county prepared for war while *Death Register 1852-1865* will give us the beginning of a trail of tears as we read of county soldiers' deaths from disease and battle.



Records Room at Clerk's Office

The first Court session after the war began was held on May 13th when twenty Justices met to make an appropriation for the defense of the county, equipping companies, and providing for families of those called into service. [Order Book 28, p. 237]

The Court ordered that all members of volunteer companies over 45 years of age and appointed for home defense as a special police force were to serve without pay until others could be appointed in their place by the Court. [Order Book 28, p. 237]

The Court ordered that \$20,000 be appropriated for equipment (other than arms) of the volunteer companies of the county and for maintenance of the families of the members of these companies. To raise the funds, the Court pledged the faith of the county and authorized the presiding Justice to issue bonds of no less than \$500 each. The bonds were to read:

Know all men by these presents, That the County of Campbell is held & firmly bound unto Charles H. Lynch, Odin G. Clay, and Edward D. Christian, in the sum of Five hundred dollars, to be paid five years after the date hereof, with interest thereon from date, payable semi-annually, reserving to the County the privilege of paying the said principal sum, or any part thereof, at any time before the expiration of the said five years. In testimony whereof, the Presiding Justice of the County Court of said County has hereto set his hand, and caused the seal of the said County to be hereto affixed, on this day of 1861.

Countersigned.

Clerk.

Campbell County Prepares For War:

May – August 1861

The Court also ordered that Charles H. Lynch, Odin G. Clay, and Edward D. Christian be appointed to a committee to negotiate the loan, appropriate the proceeds for the equipment (other than arms) for the volunteer companies of the County, and distribute proceeds among the members of the companies and their families. They were to hire a clerk and pay him out of the fund. [*Order Book 28*, p. 237-238]

A month later on June 10th, two motions was raised to appropriate by loan \$5,000 for equipment for “Campbell Rangers” and for the purchase of horses to be used in the service and for the benefit of the government. The motion was refused. [*Order Book 28*, p. 241]

A claim for \$1,000.00 came to the Court to pay interest on bonds for equipping volunteers. [*Order Book 28*, p. 242]

Later that day S. D. Chambers made a motion to appropriate \$3,000 by loan for equipment for “Campbell Rangers” and for the purchase of horses, and this motion was also refused. [*Order Book 28*, p. 246]

A committee was appointed on August 12th to enroll the male free Negroes of the county between 18 and 50 years of age. [*Order Book 28*, p. 250]



Free Negro Register: 1802-1864 lists the name, age, height, complexion, marks, where and by whom emancipated, and genealogical information about 615 free people in the county.

Campbell County's earliest casualties in the war can be found in *Campbell County, Virginia, Death Records, 1853 -1865*.

- Wyth Turner was killed in battle in July 1861 in Pocahontas at age 30.
- William Pierce died on July 14, 1861, in Manassas Junction of measles at age 19.
- James W. Campbell died on July 28, 1861, in Campbell County of typhoid fever at age 22.
- Thomas D. Hamlet died in August 1861 in Pocahontas of measles at age 21.
- John E. Burruss died on August 11, 1861, in Campbell County of typhoid fever at age 28.
- John H. Organ died on August 13, 1861, in Lynchburg of typhoid fever at age 29.
- W. P. Urquhart died on August 26, 1861, in Pocahontas of measles at age 21.

This is the first in a series of articles about Campbell County during the Civil War years from records found in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

Endnotes:

- “Campbell Rangers” were commanded by John Dabney Alexander in the Battle of First Manassas. Alexander served for many years as Campbell County Court Clerk.
- A fieldstone marking the grave of John Henry Organ was found in March during a cleanup of Mount Calvary Baptist Church Cemetery by the Campbell Guards, Camp #2117 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Corrections From April's Issue

The five images on pages 2 and 3 of the April 2011 issue of the *Chronicle*, Volume 22, Issue 2, that accompany the article entitled "Mining Industry in Flat Creek" are the property of the Historical Society of Western Virginia, which holds exclusive rights to their reproduction. The Campbell County Historical Society regrets that prior authorization for its use of the images was not obtained, and that the name of the owner was given incorrectly.

1. All Campbell County Historical Society members who receive electronic copies or hard copies of the *Chronicle* are instructed to delete any scans or digital files which contain any of these five images, and to make sure that scans or digital images are not accessible or downloadable from the internet. Destroy any **prints or copies of any of these five images.**
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3. The Historical Society of Western Virginia looks forward to working with members of CCHS to gather additional information pertaining to these images, as well as with other topics, and has expressed the hope that increased awareness will be a mutual benefit. To obtain additional information regarding this organization and its museum, please visit www.linkmuseum.org

Revely B. Carwile, Jr. regrets the misunderstanding with the Historical Society of Western Virginia and with Sara Hollberg, as well as any inconvenience this misunderstanding has brought to members of CCHS.

Submitted by: Revely B. Carwile, Jr.

The Confederate Memorial Day Service



The Confederate Memorial Day Service was held on Saturday, May 28th at Kedron Baptist Church. Veterans of all wars from the community of Kedron Baptist Church were recognized. CCHS and Sons of Confederate Veterans members Kevin Parker, Reve Carwile, and Mike Keese participated in the service.

Campbell County Historical Society Calendar of Events

CAMPBELL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

http://www.myvirginiaheritage.com/cchs_home.htm



July 24 The CCHS will meet on Sunday, July 24, at 2 pm in the basement of the Haberer Building.
Aug. 6. Campbell County Heritage Festival
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
William Campbell Combined School, Naruna, Virginia
\$2.00 admission; children 12 and under free

If you have old photos of scenes, buildings, train depots, bridges, etc of the county and would be willing for the CCHS to scan them for possible use in our pictorial history, please bring them to the festival (we'll scan there and return the photos right then) or notify Mary Gough at mgough134@gmail.com or at 434 846-8975.

About Our Organization...

Preserve the Campbell County Courthouse as an historical museum for the enjoyment of the citizens and visitors to the area.

Collect and preserve manuscripts, artifacts and other materials pertaining to the history of Campbell County.

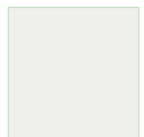
Identify historical structures, cemeteries and other sites in Campbell County with appropriate documentation and file with the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Provide quarterly educational programs to members and other interested parties.

Research and publish dominant and minority racial and cultural histories.

Stimulate the youth and adults of the County to appreciate and preserve their heritage.

Campbell County Historical Society, Inc.
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Recipient Name
Street Address
City, ST ZIP Code