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Special points of interest:

- The Campbell County Historical Society is very proud to announce the opening of the Historic Courthouse Museum.

- An effort to locate and list all cemeteries in the County is underway. We have located and catalogued 104 church cemeteries, 365 family cemeteries and the 5 public cemeteries to date.

The Campbell County Historical Society has been given hundreds of letters and documents from the papers of the late Judge Frank Nelson of Rustburg. (See article in this issue about Judge Nelson.) Judge Nelson was a typical lawyer of the time whose practice included collecting debts from individuals who had borrowed money on short term or collecting debts of businesses who were late in making payments for goods received from various companies that had shipped goods to the receiver. He participated in the county road building commission (known as “The Good Roads Committee”).

Letterheads from county and Lynchburg businesses that no longer exist provide a glimpse into the past and leads for further research. For example, did you know that Concord once had a hotel and a bottling company? Did you know that Maxwell cars were sold in Rustburg? The village of Gladys had J.T. Dove and Co., General Merchandise, Boots, and Shoes, as well as Seneca Tonic Springs. W.T. Whately, General Merchandise, Fertilizers, Flour, Meal, and Mill Feed operated in Kew, Virginia, with its shipping point in Naruna. Brookneal had Williams Drug Company. A 1909 invoice from County Garage (which also offered taxi service) shows that gasoline was 28 cents a gallon, while J.W. Rosser, General Merchandise, in Rustburg offered eggs at 29 cents a dozen that same year.

An especially poignant letter from a woman who had been “released” from the Poor House (Alms House) made a plea to Judge Nelson to help her, for she had been sent away without her “clothing or table ware.” That letter raises the question: during what span of years did the Poor House near Rustburg exist, and what agency administered it? Records show that C.E. Blankenship was Superintendent at some point. If anyone has photos, stories, or information on the Poor House, please contact Mary Gough at mgough134@gmail.com or at (434) 846-8975.

We are very grateful to John D. Nelson of Hanover County, grandson of Judge Nelson and son of Dr. William Nelson, for passing the papers on to the CCHS. He has spent countless hours reading and organizing the papers before sending them to us. John has shared much Rustburg information with me over the years from which we can all benefit. As John and his wife, Mabel, prepare for a simpler lifestyle in a Masonic Home, we want to thank him for his thoughtfulness to CCHS, and we thank Mabel for putting up with the “paper trail” he created while going through the papers.

Submitted by Mary Gough
Judge Francis (Frank) Nelson of Rustburg, Virginia

Francis (Frank) Nelson was born July 4, 1850, in Hanover County, Virginia, the third child of Philip Nelson and Jane Crease. At the age of fourteen in 1864, Francis attended Liberty Hall Academy located in Rockbridge County. That academy was the first classical school west of the Blue Ridge and was established by Dr. Robert W. Withers who was from that county. There is no record that Francis returned to “Mont Air,” but it is presumed that he returned for his father Philip’s funeral. Philip died near the end of the American Civil War. His funeral was conducted on December 19, 1863, at “Mont Air.”

Liberty Hill Academy later became Washington College where Francis was attending when Gen. Robert E. Lee became its president. After the general’s death, the college became Washington and Lee University.

Nelson began his pre-law career as an instructor at Episcopal High School in Alexandria. After three years as a teacher, he returned to the University of Virginia where he completed his study of law under that well-known past master John B. Minor. Judge Fitzhugh examined the qualifications of Francis, and in 1868 he was granted a license to practice law.

His first venture into the practice of law was at Little Rock, Arkansas in the law firm of Ashley-Watkins, which later became the Rose Law Firm (remember the Clintons?). Francis became entangled in a local state war known as the Brooks-Baxter Campaign where all local officials wore side arms. That was not to his liking, so he returned to Virginia.

How and why he established his law practice in the Lynchburg area is anyone’s guess. He found his way to Rustburg where he met and later married Ida Dandridge Withers who was the eldest child of Col. Robert Woodson Withers (CSA) who was for many years after the Civil War clerk of the court.

Quite active in the Democratic Party (the then conservative party), Nelson served for twelve years as a member of the Board of Supervisors (resigning to accept appointment as judge of the county court) and for two terms in the House of Delegates. He died May 22, 1922.

Fourth Annual Sons of the Confederate Veterans Wreath Laying Ceremony

On Saturday, May 29, 2010, the fourth annual Sons of the Confederate Veterans wreath laying ceremony were held at the Good Sheppard Episcopal Church cemetery in Evington at 10:00. Kevin Parker, Commander of the Campbell Guards #2117 SCV, presided at the ceremony and introduced our guest speaker, Ron Rumburg, who is the chaplain of the Appomattox Rangers SCV. His moving and inspiring speech challenged us to honor and respect our heritage and ancestors. Special music was provided by Barry Grishaw, who sang and played his guitar.

Poems and prayers were read by SCV and Order of the Confederate Rose members. Several patriotic wreaths were placed at the grave of a fallen Confederate soldier who is buried in the church cemetery. The story of the Taps song was given by Tom Blanks after which a gun salute was performed by Confederate dressed reenactors. Taps was played at the close of the ceremony. Refreshments were served by OCR members.

By Linda DeJarnette
Judge Francis (Frank) Nelson of Rustburg, Virginia

Judge and Mrs. Nelson had nine children:

1. Page Dandridge Nelson (1881-1960) m. first Mary Goggin; second, Mamie Goodloe; third, Clara Shaner.
2. Blanche Washington Nelson (1883-1958) m. Dr. Walter C. Rosser, widower
3. Frank Nelson, Jr. (1884-1964) m. first Margaret Dunforth; second, Esther B. Jolly
4. Carolyn Peyton Nelson (1886-?) m. first Marion L. Marshall; second, Frank McGinnis, widower
5. Evelyn Byrd Nelson (1888-1945) m. Hawthorn A. Goodloe
9. Ida Withers Nelson (1896-?) m. first, William G. Matthews; second, Charles T. Tyree, widower

In 1886 young Frank Nelson bought a house for $2, from Col. Robert W. Withers. Tradition holds that the house was once a tobacco factory and that Jeremiah Rust is buried on the grounds. (With the excavation for the new First National Bank which is on the grounds of the former site of the house, however, in all likelihood his remains would have been found.)

CCHS board member, Mary Walker Gough, grew up in this house, known as "The Nelson House," which holds fond memories for her.

We Say Good Bye to Board Member Charles Allen Tanner, III

We say good bye to Charles Allen Tanner III, 72, of Madison Heights, who died Friday, May 14, 2010. He was a son of the late Charles A. Tanner Jr. and Princess Cross Tanner.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Elizabeth Roark Tanner; three children, Charles Alexander Tanner, Claire Elizabeth Tanner and Jonathan Roark Tanner and wife, Kristina; four grandchildren, Allison Marie Tanner, Nathan Alexander Tanner, Parker James Tanner and Jillian Claire Banziger; a beloved aunt, Victoria Tanner Harris; and one brother, William Asher Tanner.

After graduation from E.C. Glass High School, Mr. Tanner attended North Carolina State University, graduating with a degree in pulp and paper technology. He was president of his freshman class, treasurer of his sophomore class and was a member of the Student Union Board of Directors for four years. He was employed in the paper industry for more than 20 years and then in federal government sales.

Throughout his life, he was active in his community in numerous charitable causes, and he was a true humanitarian. He was a member of the Campbell County Historical Society and was active in solar and wind energy. His interests included activities with his grandchildren, gardening, genealogy, travel and spending time at his mountain retreat in Nelson County.

The family received family and friends at a catered reception between the hours of noon and 2 p.m. Saturday, May 22, 2010, at Tharp Funeral Home, Lynchburg. A private family memorial service was held at a later date.

“No Virginia County has more to offer the historical student than Campbell, from its formation until the present time, in beauty of situation, staging of events and number of notable citizens.”

Campbell Chronicles and Family Sketches, by Ruth Early.
Campbell County Historical Society Calendar of Events

July 2010
- July 25 - Campbell County Historical Society Meeting Guest Speaker (Delores N. Hicks). Her presentation will be “A living History of an African American Family in the Village of New London, Virginia in the early 1940's to present.”
- July 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31- Old City Cemetery (Lynchburg, VA) Saturdays in the cemetery at 10:00 a.m.

August 2010
- August 07, 14, 21, & 28 - Old City Cemetery (Lynchburg, VA) Saturdays in the cemetery at 10:00 a.m.
- August 14 Saturday, August 14, from 9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. At Community Park, William Campbell High School, Naruna, VA Admission: $2.00 and Ages 12 and under admitted free

About Our Organization…

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.

Harper’s Mill, Vicinity of Hat Creek.