

# BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Newsletter

December, 2013

## DECEMBER QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DECEMBER 14, 2013

4PM – 6PM

BLAND COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OFFICE

**You are invited to join us on  
December 14<sup>th</sup> from 4 PM to  
6 PM for coffee and cookies  
at the BCHS Office just prior  
to the Bland Christmas  
Parade.**

The BCHS Board of Directors has decided to hold an Open House before the Christmas Parade in Bland on December 14, 2013.

The Open House will start at 4 PM. Members and Guests may join us during the hour before the Parade kicks off at 6PM.

We will have refreshments, displays, and items for sale in the Gift Shop. Members will be able to gather and discuss our accomplishments during 2013 and plans for the coming year. Minutes from the Fall Quarterly Meeting and a current treasurers' report will be available.

**Merry Christmas**

and

**Happy New Year**



from the Bland County Historical Society



### *President's Message*

Fall at BCHS has been very busy. In September we had a Yard Sale, followed by participation at the Festival of Leaves with a booth, and finally an exhibit at the Ceres Alumni Association Homecoming. All of these events brought us in contact with our many friends who live in Bland County and those who live elsewhere, but have an interest in our Bland County History.

We continue to get many interesting questions about the history of Bland County. David Hopewell asked for information about the historic Raleigh Grayson Turnpike. We were able to find information about the specifications for building the turnpike in one of Mary Kegley's books. There was also information in our 1961 History of Bland County and Richard Musson's book about U. S. Highway 21. Another person was interested in the exact spot of Kimberling Springs. While investigating this question, I came across the plat drawn by the surveyor, Joseph Peak, in 1866. It is in full color and quite detailed. We had a copy made for our archives.

Speaking of healing springs resorts, I decided to write a 3<sup>rd</sup> Historical Glimpse of Bland County on Sharon College. Sharon College was located in the other resort that once existed in Bland County, the Sharon Springs Resort. This investigation led to many interesting facts about Sharon Springs and other healing resorts in Virginia. Thanks to the late Marvin Neel, I was able to get a diagram and a great description of what the resort was like. We had old photos, college catalogues, commencement programs, and the class notes taken by Dr. J. J. Davidson in our archives. All of these materials provided the background for the booklet about Sharon College.

As we wrap up the year, we thank you for your support of the Bland County Historical Society. We hope you will participate by helping us organize our collection, by enjoying our programs at our quarterly meetings, by coming to the office to explore your Bland roots, and by looking at all the interesting photographs and books we have in the Bogle Library and/or on display.

*Ann Hardy Beardshall*

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### **HAPPENINGS at BCHS in 2013**

The long anticipated book, *Family Histories of Bland County VA*, was released in early 2013. It has proven to be very popular. We have sold over half of the copies that we had printed.

At the beginning of the year Brenda King and Harold Ramsey spearheaded the purchase, the assembly, and the placement of storage racks for our collection. They provide much needed space for organizing and storing our collections. Elmer Beardshall has developed a database that gives us information on the room, location, rack and shelf number for items in our collection.

This year we were told that we could clean out the "new jail", the annex built in 1954. It had not been in use since 2004. We cleaned it out over the summer and held a Yard Sale in September. In addition, we also sold some of our excess equipment and items donated by our members for the sale. We raised over \$2,000 for BCHS.

We are indebted to Stafford Graphics of Jonesborough, TN for providing a magnificent banner for use when we display our items at different venues. John Stafford and his son Jay were responsible for the design and production of the BCHS Banner pictured on the website and on Facebook and on display at BCHS.

Our 2014 Barn Calendar Contest has proven a huge success. We received over 50 barn photographs vying for a place in our calendar. During August, over 100 people came in to vote on the photos on display at the BCHS Office. The monthly winners can be seen in our 2014 calendar. We also put four pages of entries by season in the back of the calendar. There was such a wonderful selection of barn photographs we didn't want to leave anyone out. Homes of Bland County will be our theme for the 2015 BCHS Calendar.

We have sold our wares this year at the Festival of Leaves, Ceres Day, the Rocky Gap Flea Market, and the Ceres Alumni Association Homecoming.

Thanks to everyone who supported us with donations of artifacts, money, and most importantly, their time.

### **CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AT THE BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**2013 Christmas Ornament: Sharon College (1892) Ceres VA:** The 2013 Bland County Historical Society Christmas Ornament is a custom-made replica of Sharon College, near Ceres, Virginia. The hand-assembled ornament is finished in 24 karat gold plated brass and comes in a gift box. The ornament sells for \$20.00. Ornaments from previous years are also available: 2012, Historic Wolf Creek Bridge (1912) near Rocky Gap; 2011, Bland County Jail (1866); and, the favorite 2010 Bland County Courthouse (1878) replica. These ornaments sell for \$15.00 each or you may purchase all four ornaments for \$60.00.

**Third Historical Glimpse of Bland County, VA: Sharon College (1892 - 1901):** The third in a series of Historical Glimpses of Bland County has been prepared by Ann Hardy Beardshall. It traces the history of Sharon College, which operated for nearly a decade (1892-1901) in Effna, VA (near Ceres). This glimpse of Bland County History sells for \$15.00. We have a combo deal of \$30 for the 2013 Sharon College Ornament and the book about Sharon College.

**2014 Bland County Historical Society Barn Calendar: Barns of Bland County:** The 2014 Bland County Historical Society Calendar features Barns of Bland County. These winning photos are featured in our 2014 Calendar. The Calendar sells for \$10.00.

**Drawing of Main Street, Bland, VA (circa 1930-1940):** Randy Newberry has completed a pencil drawing of Main Street, Bland, Virginia from pictures he collected of the 1930s and 1940s with views of Main Street in Bland. Pictured are the Newberry Brothers General Store, the Bland Hotel, the Muncy Drug Store, and St. Matthews Lutheran Church. In the foreground is the old wrought iron fence that surrounded the Bland Courthouse. Prints of his drawing are available for \$12.00.

## FOUND TREASURES

During our recent cleaning of the jail cells, we came across a dusty green notebook with **MEALS SERVED** handwritten on the cover. Inside was the story of the food served at the Bland County Jail from October, 1981 to August, 1987. Robert Patrick was the sheriff during that time period but we can only guess who made these entries, no names are given. (**Note: if you cooked for the jail or know who did during this time, give us a call.**)

The early pages show only the number of meals served, usually 5 or 6 for each meal, but in July 1982 the menu was also shown and they ate well. For example on Aug 17, 1982, the menu was:

**Breakfast: Toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, cereal, orange juice, milk.**

**Lunch: Kraut and wieners, potatoes, drink.**

**Supper: Grilled cheese (sandwich), soup, potato salad, crackers and soda.**

So what about Christmas, I wondered. These meals were prepared most often by the wife of the jailer or sheriff and they had their own families to feed as well. The good news was there were fewer prisoners on most holidays. On December 25, 1982 only 2 prisoners were being fed. The menu reads:

**Breakfast: Sausage, egg, toast, potatoes, milk, orange juice.**

**Lunch: Chicken, slaw, cooked apples, rolls, Pepsi.**

**Supper: Ham sandwich, tomato, lettuce, cottage cheese, vegetable salad, honeydew, and Pepsi.**

It sounds like supper was leftovers, but mighty good ones. Two Pepsi's in one day – in Jail! Although this may not look like your typical Christmas dinner, the meals were substantial. That was true throughout the entries in the journal. Some other surprises in the book were the variety of food served which included omelets, squash patties, cabbage rolls, country ham, fish, and donuts and honeybuns for breakfast. Occasionally cakes and pies made the menu as well. Sometimes special menus were needed. In 1987 a prisoner was put on a bland diet for health reasons. That meant no grease, no sausage, barbeque or pie. He was to have poached eggs and rice as a substitute. The prisoner immediately requested a return to the regular diet!

The number of meals varied greatly by the months. In 1986 there were 645 meals served in July, but only 361 meals in October and a low of 151 prisoner meals in December. Crime down? Fewer court dates? Those questions are not answered here.

Reading through this record, it is easy to imagine the importance meals played in the lives of prisoners separated from home and family with little else to enjoy or look forward to than these home cooked meals. May all of you have a warm and wonderful Thanksgiving and Christmas.

*Sue Ellen Tate*

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS IN BLAND COUNTY

- Dec 5-6, 12-13, 19-20 BCHS Gift Shop open for Christmas Shopping
- Dec 14                      Open House before & after the Bland Parade, 4-6 PM at the Jail
- Dec 14                      Bland Christmas Parade 6 pm
- Dec 20                      LAST SHOPPING DAY AT BCHS OFFICE. Office will close for winter (January -March,2014). We will continue to answer questions via email [info@blandcountyhist.soc](mailto:info@blandcountyhist.soc) or phone 276-688-0088.
- Mar 2014                      March Quarterly Membership Meeting – date to be determined. Program to be held at the Mountain Home Center (John Dodson and his students), Rocky Gap.
- Apr 3 2014                      BCHS Office re-opens for 2014.

The Bland County Historical Society is located in the "old jail building". Volunteers are at the jail each Thursday and Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm for research and shopping, and on other days by appointment. PHONE: (276) 688-0088.

**Please note: The BCHS Office will be closed during the months of January – March, 2014. The Office will close on December 20, 2013 and re-open on Thursday, April 3, 2014. We will continue to answer questions submitted by email or by phone.**

#### **Purpose of the Bland County Historical Society**

The purpose of the Bland County Historical Society is to bring together those people interested in history, and especially the history of Bland County. Understanding the history of our community is basic to our democratic way of life, gives us a better understanding of our state and nation, and promotes a better appreciation of our American heritage. The Society's major function is to discover and collect any material which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the area. It provides for the preservation of such material and for its accessibility, as far as may be feasible, to all who wish to examine or study it. Through the Society's office, the Bogle Library and this website, assistance with historical and genealogical questions is offered.

Bland County Historical Society is a 501c 3 Non-Profit organization.



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