

BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mailing Address:
PO Box 416
Bland, VA 24315
Email: info@blandcountyhistsoc.org

Phone: 276-688-0088

Website: www.blandcountyhistsoc.org

Location: 19 Courthouse Square (next to Bland CH)



BLAND COUNTY JAIL
ESTABLISHED 1866

President's Message

Spring is near and it is time to wake up from our long winter nap and get ready for all our warmer weather has to offer. The BCHS office will be re-opening on April 7 at 9:00 AM. If you have not been by recently (or even if you have) we invite you to come and visit. And you may decide to volunteer and we would more than welcome you.

We have lots of things going on in the next two months. First, students from the University of Maryland volunteering at the Mission the last week-end of the month have requested to come by the office to learn more about our county. Second, the project with the OK Department of Corrections is completed. They have scanned all of the County HS Annuals. We will soon have these on our web site so you can view them whenever you wish. We are planning that you will also be able to purchase a digital copy of a year of interest through the gift shop. Third, the Fallen soldier project that has been ongoing since last year is almost complete. Ann Beardshall is currently finishing the biographies. This information will be sent to the War Memorial in Richmond for their records. We are planning to display our information during the Memorial Day week-end in May. We will keep the display up for most of the summer for you to review.

Our membership drive is about to start. If you do not get an application by mail, please stop by the office and join. This organization belongs to each person that has any relative past or present living here. We would welcome your involvement.

Have a wonderful 2017.

Molly P. Thompson

BCHS ANNOUNCEMENTS

April, 7, 2017. Re-opening of the Bland County Historical Society Office. The office will be open from 9-4 pm every Friday. Even though the office is not open every day, we will still answer genealogy and history questions about Bland County. Submit your questions: leave a message at 276-688-0088. We will also fill orders for our books and other items when we are closed. Just fill out the order form available online and mail to us. Form available: www.blandcountyhistsoc.org

June 10, 2017. Summer Quarterly Membership Meeting. Details to be announced.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

April 8, 2017 Family History Institute 8am to 4:45pm at the Wytheville Meeting Center. Sponsored by WCGHA. Ph. 276-228-2445 or www.wcgha.org

May 6, 2017 CERES DAY 8am to 2pm Former Ceres School Campus. Breakfast & Lunch served. Flea Market, Bake Sale, Crafts, Farm Equipment/Heritage Demos and Lots More. Sponsored by Ceres Alumni Association. Ph. 276-682-4231 or www.ceresva.org

'LONG-TIME VOLUNTEER, VIRGINIA GILLS HONORED AT THE WINTER 2016 MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF THE BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'



Volunteer: Virginia (Jenny) Gills (left to right) Molly Thompson present Jenny with Honorary Life Membership * Jenny helps with jail clean-up. * Jenny and Louise Aliff sort through Bland Messenger Collection * Barbara Kemp and Jenny review the obituary notebooks

Virginia "Jenny" Gills was rewarded with an honorary lifetime membership to the Bland County Historical Society at the Winter Quarterly Meeting in December. Jenny has been a faithful volunteer since the inception of BCHS in 1990. She was present at the ground-breaking of the Wolf Creek Indian Village where BCHS was previously located. Then, when we moved into our present office in the old Bland County jail, Jenny was one of the hard working volunteers who helped get the building in shape to house our collections. If you come to BCHS on a Friday afternoon, Jenny Gills is here to help you without fail.

There are too many projects to mention that Jenny has been willing to work on, but we will name a few. When we received the bundles of Bland Messengers, she helped us sort and catalog them. When it was time to clip, prepare our obituaries to place in notebooks, Jenny was there to help. In addition, she and Barbara Kemp have compiled notebooks with marriage records that we have acquired since the early marriage books were compiled. She has served in about every office we have and has always served on and regularly attended meetings of the Board of Directors. At the present time, she is Vice President for BCHS. Volunteers are at the heart of all we do and Jenny's perseverance is admired by all. Thank you Jenny Gills for being such a long and faithful volunteer in preserving the history of Bland County.

'Special Donation Received'

On January 13, 2017 BCHS received an email from Ken Jordan from Annapolis, MD stating that he had found among the donated books to the organization (Books for International Goodwill) for which he volunteers, the Town of Seddon (now Bland), Virginia, Minutes 1871-1894. Recognizing that these minutes might be valuable to the History of Bland County, he offered to send them to us. We quickly accepted his generous offer. The minutes are quite interesting because they report on a period for which there is not a lot of information. The 1890 U. S. Census burned in the 1920s so we don't have information about who was living in Seddon (later Bland) at the time. Our plans are to transcribe the minutes and make them available to our members and other researchers.

In the very first entry on July 10, 1877 we find out that Seddon (Bland) had a mayor. His name was W. L. Yost with George W. Bennett (Burnett), J. C. Painter, Hiram Hall and W. A. Thomas serving as commissioners. Aceles Fannon (owner of 1 of the 3 local hotels) presented an invoice to the town totaling \$6.00, for housing someone on behalf of Seddon. Other business conducted was the authorization to buy two books to keep the records of the Town. One of these record books is presumably now in our possession with records dating to 1894 thanks to Ken Jordan.

“CERES, BLAND, ROCKY GAP & BLAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOKS NOW AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING ONLINE”

Coordinator Joe Jacobs of OCI (Oklahoma Correctional Industries), a program that teaches inmates scanning skills, contacted us last year and offered to scan our yearbooks from our three high schools at no charge. They even paid the postage for mailing the yearbooks to and from the center in Oklahoma City. We were able to take the yearbooks from our collection or borrow ones that we did not have and mail them to the OCI project for scanning. We have received the CDs with the scans and have put the links to these yearbooks online for the enjoyment of all our members and others. We will also be offering to make a CD for any yearbook that you may want to have digitally. The cost will be \$15 for the CD and mailing. Please follow the link provided on the home page of the BCHS website to view the yearbooks. Our website address is www.blandcountyhistsoc.org

Our yearbooks that have been scanned include:

Ceres High School (1939-1942; 1946-1962)

Bland High School (1936,1946,1948; 1950-2014)

Rocky Gap High School (1953-2014)

Bland County High School (2015, 2016)

BOBBY LITTON SPEAKS AT MARCH QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON “THE BIG FOUR”

The March Quarterly Meeting was held at the Bland Library on March 11th with Bobby Litton as the guest speaker. A larger than usual crowd joined us to learn more about an event from Bland County history.

A roadside marker in front of Eagle Oak on U 52, as well as in the "History of Bland County" mentions the part that Captain Samuel Newberry played as one of the Big Four legislators who brought change to Virginia Government in the Reconstruction Era following the Civil War. Mr. Litton brought in a copy of the painting titled "The Big Four" which still hangs in the Capitol in Richmond. Despite the importance of the event, Mr. Litton said he was very surprised at how little detailed information could be found despite his widespread search which besides the usual historical search, included talking to family members and historical societies from the other Big Four. Mr. Litton did bring in a number of articles citing the events before the walk-out of The Big Four and the consequences of their action. His research was very interesting from several perspectives including the importance of maintaining historical records for the future.

Our next Membership Meeting is planned for the 2nd Saturday in June. Please join us if you can.

“HONORING BLAND COUNTY’S FALLEN HEROES”

Bland County’s Fallen Heroes include men who died during the conflict from World War I through the Gulf Wars while wearing the military uniform of the USA. We have collected the names from several lists: the Library of Virginia, *The History of Bland County*, and the National Archives. We plan to honor their memory in the following ways: an exhibit on Memorial Day, 2017, sending the information to the War Memorial in VA; and promoting the sale of bricks for these heroes at the Bland County Veterans Memorial in Rocky Gap.

We are still collecting pictures, stories and information about these men so we can display them appropriately so they will not be forgotten. Please examine the list below and let us know if you have any information and/or pictures about any of these men. If you wish to contribute pictures and/or buy a brick for any of these men, please call us or send a message by email.

World War I Casualties (N=14)

Name	Hometown	Details of Death
Early Scott Billings	Ceres	Died of Disease in San Antonio, TX
Stuart Nathaniel Brown	Little Creek	Died of Pneumonia at Camp Lee, VA
**Miller T. Burton	Bland	Killed in Action, France
Hugh Chaffin Collins	Longspur	Died of Disease during occupation in Luxembourg
*Charles Otto Fanning	Mechanicsburg	Killed in Action, Meuse-Argonne, France
Albert Randolph Hull	Rocky Gap	Died while a prisoner of war in Germany
Clownie W. Lilly	Hicksville	Killed in Action, Meuse-Argonne, France
Henry Trollinger McNutt	Ceres	Died of influenza at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Norfolk
Herbert Wayne Morris	NoBusiness	Killed in action Lorraine, France
*Addison Davis Pendleton	Mechanicsburg	Killed in Action, Meuse-Argonne France
Joseph Dudley Pulliam	Round Bottom	Killed in Action, Chateau Thierry, France
**Walker Poage Richardson	Bland	Died of Disease contracted at Camp Lee, died in Bland
William Albert Sublett	Mechanicsburg	Died of Wounds in France, Buried at Arlington
John Nye Tickle	Longspur	Died in Germany of disease, buried in Bland

World War II Casualties (N=29)

*Melvin Patrick Aliff	Rocky Gap	Killed in action, U. S. Marine Landing at Saipan
*William Wallace Bogle	Ceres	Killed in action, Normandy, France
*James Leslie Burke	Ceres	Killed in action, Normandy, France
*Robert Lee Carver	Rocky Gap	Died in the line of duty; Ii, Outlun Laani, Finland
**William Artie Burton	Kimberling	Died of noncombat wounds, Willinsein, Luxembourg
*James Edward Dillard	Mechanicsburg	Killed in action, Epinal, Lorraine, France
**Leroy Thomas Farmer	Bland	Killed in action; Frolis on Moselle River, France
Wilbur Gober	Bland	Died of Wounds in Holland
Everett St. Clair Hall	Bland	Died in NC Hospital shortly after war
**Andrew Gilbert Hancock	Bastian	Lost at sea; ship hit a mine near Brunei, Borneo
*Frank Forrest Kitts, Jr.	Ceres	Killed in action; Aachen, Germany
Willie C. Long	Bastian	Killed in action, Anzio Beach, Italy
*Edward Dunn Manning	Bastian	Killed in action, Normandy France
**Robert Thurman Miller	Kimberling	Died in a bombing run; Holland
*Jeff Troy Morehead	Nobusiness	Died in an aircraft training accident in Bakersfield, CA
Finley B. Morris	Round Bottom	Died of noncombat wounds, Camp Davis, NC
*Earl George Pauley	Bastian	Killed in action, Italy
*Arthur Roland Porterfield	Bland	Killed in action while carrying men to hospital, Liberia
*James Oren Ramsey	Hollybrook	Killed in action, Anzio Beach, Italy
*Robert M. Reed	Bastian	Died in a B-24 aircraft training accident near El Paso, TX
*Robert Oren Repass	Ceres	Killed in action during the Battle of the Budge, Luxembourg
*James (Sherman) T. Sadler	Bland	Died of wounds New Guinea
*William Howe Sadler	Bland	Killed in Action, Germany
**William Larry Stone	Mechanicsburg	Died of wounds and pneumonia in Germeter, Germany
**Zacharias Witten Strock, Jr.	Crandon	Drowned near Sicily, Italy
*Clifford Thomas	Mechanicsburg	Died of noncombat wounds
*James M. Walker	Mechanicsburg	Died during Airborne Paracute Mission, Utah Beach, France
*Clifford A. Willis	Rocky Gap	Killed in action, Italy
*Owen T. Wilson	Ceres	Killed in action, Funafuti Atol, Nauru, Gilbert Islands

Other Wars: Korea, Vietnam from Bland County (n=2)

Robert J. Wright (Korea)	Hollybrook	Died in Captivity; Captured near Kunu-ri, North Korea
*Council L. Royal (Vietnam)	Rocky Gap	Died in Plane Crash while serving in Vietnam

***Have Picture; **Have Picture and brick**