

BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2019 EDITION

President's Message

As I write this, I can see the leaves from my walnut tree floating to the ground. Fall will be here before we know it and summer will be but a memory in our past. I do hope that your summer was a memorable one.

As I have gotten older, I have accepted that none of us are immune to death. We have all lost loved ones throughout our lives. That is one of the things we all have in common. None of us are promised tomorrow. How will you live your today? Will you sit and boil over an argument or will put away your differences and offer your friendship and kind words? Do not pass up an opportunity to tell someone you care. Never tell yourself "I'll stop and check on my neighbor tomorrow", for tomorrow may never come. Never put off tomorrow what you can do today.

I hope each of you can make today memorable, not just for yourself but for someone else. Speak kindness as you pass in the grocery store, whether to a friend, foe or stranger. Make that phone call you have been putting off for weeks. Don't know what to say? All it takes is, "Hello. How have you been?"

The best time to share love and kindness is **ALWAYS** right now. No breath beyond the current is promised to any of us.

Eisle Havens - President

2019 Officers/Board of Directors

President	Eisle Havens
V. President	Molly Thompson
Secretary	Barbara Justice
Treasurer	Brenda Thompson

Other Board Members

Kathy Havens - Johnny Goins - Virginia Gills
Barbara Laban - Sue Ellen Tate

June Membership meeting 2019

We were delighted to welcome back Dr. Terry Mullins as our speaker. Many of you know him from his teaching time here in Bland County and as a local historian. Currently, he is a Professor of Education at Concord College, and is very active in the Tazewell Historical Society and community development as Vice Chair of Tazewell's Tourist Committee.

He has been involved in promoting a scenic highway called The Depot to Depot Scenic Highway, which would run from Tazewell's train depot (now a museum) to the Narrows depot in Giles County on US Route 61. The majority of that road would be through Bland County, with its main town crossing in Rocky Gap. Most members present had not heard of his proposal, which has been under discussion with county officials and VDOT. Dr. Mullins had numerous maps, both historical and current, to tell the historical story of the road, its development and changes over time. A scenic byway could provide a tourism boost, as these byways are popular and are promoted statewide. Currently there are ongoing meetings and hopes it will be approved.

The presentation provoked a great deal of discussion as well as questions and we thank Terry Mullins for bringing his knowledge, and sense of humor to our meeting.

Sue Ellen Tate

Located at 19 Courthouse Road,
Across from the Bland Court House.
The Bland County Historical Society is a
501 (c) 3 organization.

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“Old Jail Restoration Project”

The Bland County Historical Society would like to offer our sincere gratitude to everyone who has donated to the “Old Jail Restoration Fund.” With the generous help from our members and the community, we are pleased to announce that we have raised over \$7,500 of the \$9,000 goal to restore the bricks of the Old Jail! We have been working very closely with Mark Smith in completing a contract and making plans to begin restoration. Mark and his crew are hoping to start work around mid to late September!

We encourage everyone to visit the Old Jail building before and after completion of the time period brick and mortar restoration! We are extremely excited about this project in knowing that this endeavor will help save the Old Jail for future generations to learn about and enjoy the deep rooted History. We are still accepting donations that will help offset the costs of this sensitive project.



COMING EVENTS

September 6 & 7 – Bland County Horse Show

September 14 – September Membership Meeting

October 2 – Breakfast & Bake Sale

October 5 – Lord’s Acre Sale

October 12 & 13 – Festival of Leaves

The Bland County Historical Society remains open every Friday from April through December, 9am to 3pm. However, if you need something and cannot come in during those hours we will gladly attempt to meet you at another time. You may contact us at **276-688-0088** and leave a message or email us at info@blandcountyhistsoc.org.

Our efforts to continue to preserve the history of Bland County are solely funded by membership fees, donations and merchandise sales. If you have not sent in your membership renewal, wish to donate or wish to order merchandise, we encourage you to do so. Forms can be obtained on our website

<http://blandcountyhistsoc.org/>. You may also email us at info@blandcountyhistsoc.org for information, or stop by the office on any Friday during our office hours. Membership is \$15.00 yearly for individual, \$25.00 yearly for couples, \$5.00 yearly for students (public school age), \$50.00 yearly for organizations and \$150.00 each for a Lifetime membership.

Bland County Historical Society
PO Box 416

Bland, VA 24315

We also offer gift items such as afghans, ornaments, books, t-shirts, mugs and other items for sale.

“ Things
don’t have
to change
the world
to be
important.”

– Steve Jobs

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Front Porch Sittin'

Written by: Eisle Havens (president)

In this world of hustle, bustle, smartphones and internet TV, I can often be found sitting on my front porch enjoying the views before me and the sounds of nature that surround me. This is where my daughter and I often eat our evening meal and share thoughts and events of the day. Recently, my neighbors and I have found ourselves gathering on my front porch, or theirs. We share stories of life, growing up, love and give friendly advice or a shoulder when in need. These visits make me fondly remember "front porch sittin'" in my younger days, during a time when the world seemed to stand still, children could be heard and seen playing in the yard and life seemed so simple.

My current front porch is especially cozy and special to me. This was the home and front porch of my grandparents, Donald and Nina Wright. This is where I grew up! PawPaw would sit in his rocking chair, much like I do now, and gaze upon the local world below. This is where I, along with my brothers and cousins, were taught about life.

Oh! The tales PawPaw would tell! Some of truth and some seemed so farfetched that I often wondered if they belonged in a picture book. He recalled his younger days, shared stories of how turkeys came to these mountains, and taught us (grandkids) how to whittle and how to "behave". He taught us songs and rhymes (some of us later learned that we probably shouldn't repeat some songs he taught us). He told us tales of fishing and hunting, pausing briefly to roll a "Prince Albert" or to shoo a dog away. These are some of my most cherished childhood memories!

Back in the days of yesteryear, front porches were the center of the home. With no modern day air conditioners to cool a home, families would escape to the front porch to avoid the cook stove heated house. Front porches were a place for entertainment, a place so welcoming and inviting that friends, families and neighbors would gather by the dozens throughout the warm months of the year. This is where families gathered to mourn a loved one or to celebrate the union of love. In the early years of the Appalachians, many types of music were created on front porch stages. Toes tapped and rocking chairs squeaked to the beat of an old hymnal or folk song.

My heart grows extremely full as I remember the simple days of "front porch sittin'". Times like these seem so long ago that I often wonder if they were actually real or just a fictitious creation of vast imagination!

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We are looking for photos of your Class or Family Reunions in Bland County from 2019! You do not have to label each name on the picture. Just let us know the family name or Class year!

We also want to read about your favorite Christmas memory.

We want to do a special presentation in our December (Winter) Newsletter!

Email info@blandcountyhistsoc.org or mail to PO Box 416, Bland, VA 24315.

Deadline is November 20, 2019.

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Do you have a story, Historical information or any other article that you'd like to include in a future newsletter? Feel free to submit a copy via email info@blandcountyhistsoc.org or mail us a copy to PO Box 416, Bland, VA 24315.

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Festival of Leaves October 12 & 13 Bland Fairgrounds

The Historical Society will be set up again this year at the Festival of Leaves. We will be in the small (exhibit) building. Come by and visit us! We will have books and various merchandise available for sale.

(Fingers crossed, we will debut the NEW 2020 Calendar during the festival! Are you ready to Travel Thru Time in Bland County?)

NEW T-SHIRTS!

We now have Long Sleeved T-Shirts available for sale. We have Black, Pink and White to choose from. The Long Sleeved T-shirts are \$20 each. We also have 1 new Orange color of the Short Sleeved T-shirts. This gives us 6 colors of short sleeved T-shirts to choose from (Baby Blue, Burnt Orange, Orange, Red, Grey and Hunter green)! Short sleeved T-shirts are \$16 each. All colors in sizes Small – 2 X-Large.



The September (Fall) Membership Meeting will be held at the Mountain Home Center, located at Bland County High School in Rocky Gap. Kara Wikle is the current Local History teacher at the High School. She will give a brief presentation about the Bland County History Archives (a student based oral history project) and their latest, and future, projects. Please plan to join us on September 14 at 1:30pm!

The Breakfast and Bake Sale that we held in August at the Historical Office was a success, thanks to our supportive community! We hope to make this a once a month occasion with our next Breakfast & Bake Sale occurring on October 2, starting at 8am. We are also accepting preorders for whole desserts. Contact us for more information. All money raised will go towards the restoration of the Old Jail!