



# *The Highland Hourglass*

A Newsletter Published Quarterly by the Highland Historical Society

## Second Historic Preservation Award Presented



A second Historic Preservation Award has been presented to Karen Louise Doane and James Cyrus Houff for their preservation of the old Headwaters school building. Society Executive Director Cathleen Evans presented the award in September, accompanied by board members. As part of its ongoing effort to preserve the history of Highland County, the Society presents this award to individuals or groups who have put forth a conscious effort to safeguard historic landmarks for present and future generations. The purpose of this *Historic Preservation Award* is to recognize and encourage the preservation of significant Highland County buildings: houses, schools, churches, or any other structure of historic importance to the county.

When Karen and James purchased the property about ten years ago, the Headwaters school building had been used as a hunting camp for years, with a wall down the center dividing the interior into two rooms. Along with removing the wall, Karen and James repaired the entire structure from the foundation to the roof. Without the benefit of any photographs, they also restored the interior as closely as possible to its original state. The front platform and blackboard are now in place and the room is furnished with antique school desks, a teacher's desk, period books and toys, and reproduction children's clothing made by Karen.

The restored Headwaters School is open to the public during county events, such as the Maple Festival, and Karen and James welcome visitors to the school most any time by appointment.



*The interior of the restored Headwaters School.*



*Reproduction period children's clothing made by Karen.*



## Livestock Predators of Times Past

By James Blagg

Wildlife predators of livestock have been of interest since the earliest days of our county. When the area was first settled, wolves were a major concern, but were eventually eradicated locally. In 1985 my first cousin once removed, Mary Gertrude Blagg, told me how my great, great, great grandmother, Mariah "Mary" Hiner Blagg, dealt with some wolves. She relayed the following: "Mary lived on the Thorn in Pendleton County, VA. It was a cold night with a heavy snow falling. They had a mare with a young colt about a mile from the house and she heard wolves howling outside. She told the children to stay inside and she went out with a pine torch to get the mare and colt. There were two wolves trying to get near the colt. She took the mare and colt back to the barn using the torch to keep the wolves off the whole trip back. Whenever they'd get a little close she'd push the torch into their faces to back them off." As Mariah died in 1894 at the age of 89, there is no one to dispute the story, so I like to believe it happened much as I was told.

A survey of *Highland Recorders* over the past 120 years shows that eagles, bears, and domestic dogs were the sheep predators of most concern. There were bounties on wolves, eagles, and hawks at different times. Eagles and hawks preyed on newborn lambs as well as chickens -- and still do. Coyotes are relatively late comers, but it appears they are here



to stay. But the one sheep predator that has consistently been of concern to local shepherds is the black bear. That brings me to the following items, most of which were printed in the *Highland Recorder*.

**May 1896**, on Shaw's Ridge; Thomas M. Devericks' gunshot hit a sheep-killing black bear weighing 359 pounds. Eldridge Veach Ervine fired the final shot into the bear; they were part of a 38 man hunting party.

**February 1903**, Walker Mountain, Bath

County; Anderson "Andrew" H. Folks, age 63, fought an adult black bear with only an ax and the help of his coon dog; the 200 pound bear was killed.

**December 19, 1910**, Doe Hill; "The greatest excitement prevailed this afternoon in our unusually quiet village when it was made known that a bear had been seen about two miles west of Mr. Ambrose Price's place. Our local sportsmen started in hot pursuit, and in a short while it was seen on the hill west of town. Jno. O. Armstrong aimed the first shot, breaking one of its legs. It then turned and came directly toward town, and jumped into Mrs. Alfred Armstrong's garden. By this time the whole town, women and children joined the chase. It ran just below the school house, the pupils rushed pell mell after it, and the bear jumped into the garden at Mr. Wilson's late home, and from there made for the hill opposite the school house, where it received a fatal shot. It was brought to town and some snapshot views taken of the party and their trophy." (*Highland Recorder*, 23 Dec 1910)

**September 1912**, west of Blue Grass; Norval High lost numerous sheep to bears.

**May 1940**, Back Creek area; a bear killed a number of sheep for Edgar and Emmett Crummett; Mack Puffenbarger killed it.

**November 1940**, Middle Mountain; Lester Calhoun Mullenax killed a female bear, weighing over 300 pounds, that had been killing sheep.

**November 1945**, Alleghany Mountain; Kenny Waybright killed a black bear weighing about 400 pounds, very fat and tasting somewhat like mutton. (Wonder why?)

**1946**, two miles south of Monterey, at the foot of Jack Mountain: a black bear of about 150 pounds killed one of Bryon Ames Beverage's sheep. A posse formed the following morning and the bear was killed after a five mile pursuit.

**1956**, Valley Center: Paul Kerns Harold lost 9 lambs and 9 ewes to a 249 pound black bear. (Wonder how they knew the weight?)





## Volunteer Appreciation Dinner Held

Volunteers are the backbone of our Society, and are especially valuable in the maintenance and operation of the museum. The board hosted an appreciation dinner for all our volunteers on 23 October to thank them for their donated hours of service. Board member Clay Hamilton and his wife Patsy opened their home in Hightown for the event. Guests arrived amid snow flurries for a delicious dinner and good conversation. Society president Sarah Samples thanked all volunteers, including board members, for their time and service. Although extremely dedicated, our band of faithful volunteers is small and would welcome any and all who would like to join them.



Above: Volunteer Molly Payne and Board member Lorraine White listen as Society president Sarah Samples delivers the "official" appreciation remarks to the group (below, right).



left: Volunteer Roger Orndorf enjoys the after-dinner conversation among history buffs.



## The Obit Tidbit

*Featuring Interesting and Unusual  
Obituaries from Highland's Past*

### A Fatal Accident.

Last Saturday evening, about 6 o'clock the life of L. Ellsworth Wright came to a sad and sudden ending, in the following manner: Mr. Wright undertook to exhibit the gaits of a certain horse which he owned, by riding him back and forth in the public road near his house, on Jackson's river, this county, and while the horse was moving at high speed, from some cause he fell, throwing Mr. Wright off on his head, breaking his neck which caused instantaneous death.

Persons who were present looking on, ran as speedily as possible to the scene of the accident but upon arrival at the place where the form of the unfortunate man was lying, found that life was extinct, the head being much contused and lacerated in addition to his neck being broken. At the time this sad accident occurred Mrs. Wright, the wife of the deceased, was standing in the portico of their house and witnessed the running of the horse and saw the fatal fall, powerless as she was to avert impending danger which she foresaw and cautioned him against.

Mr. Wright came to this county a few years ago, from Harrison Co. W. Va., where his father, J. P. Wright and family now reside, and was united in marriage with Mrs. Annie E. Boner of this county. Mr. Wright was a vigorous and healthy man about 26 years of age and had been married about 2 years and 4 months.

The remains of the deceased were interred in the cemetery at Stony Run on Monday the 24th Inst.

Copied as published in:  
*The Highland Recorder, 20 July 1894*

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**Obit Tidbit Update:** The very first Obit Tidbit in the Fall 2012 newsletter was that of Mary A. Brown (known as Old Black Mama), who was born a slave in 1840 and served the McClung family as a free woman until her death in 1924(5?). Thanks go to Society member Frances McClung Buchanan for sharing this photo of Mary Brown.



## Treasurer's Corner

While the grants received over the past two years have substantially improved our museum, both our membership dues and our donation income have gradually declined. In 2011 our income from membership dues was \$4,140 and our donation income was \$17,443. In 2012 our income from dues was \$2,900 and from donations was \$16,886. As of the end of November of this year, our income from dues is \$1,305 and from donations is \$7,723. At this time it appears we will end 2013 with a net loss; I will provide final 2013 financial information in the next society newsletter. The society can periodically operate at a small net loss without effecting hours or services provided. This is largely possible due to the net income generated by reenactor events. However, as reenactor events only occur every few years, there is a real risk of soon depleting our small reserve, currently at just under \$7,000.

The finances of the society are public record. Upon request, we will furnish copies of our latest IRS Form 990. Alternatively, you can view our Form 990s on-line at the Economic Research Institute at this address:

<http://www.eri-nonprofit-salaries.com/index.cfm?FuseAction=NPO.Search>

Currently our 2002-2011 Form 990s are available at that site. The dollar amounts shown for dues and donations may differ somewhat from those given above due to the format requirements of the IRS; however, the raw data is the same. You may also view the 2002-2011 Form 990s for other county non-profits on that website, such as Highland Medical Center and Highland Center. If you have specific questions regarding society finances, feel free to e-mail the society at [highlandhist@mgwnet.com](mailto:highlandhist@mgwnet.com) and I will be happy to answer them.

James Blagg, Treasurer

## VDOT Enhancement Grant Update

Museum improvements made possible by the VDOT Enhancement Grant continue. New flooring for the back porch exhibit room was recently installed. Upgrades to the bathroom are underway and when finished will make it handicapped accessible. Exterior painting on the roof and building trim has been completed. The front steps have also been repaired under this grant. Application has been made to use the remaining funds in the grant to upgrade the garage, to making it suitable for the proper storage of large items.



*The back porch has been transformed into beautiful new exhibit space, thanks to the VDOT grant. New flooring was recently installed.*

## Please Help Us Fill This New Space!

A new year means new exhibits, especially now that the museum has a newly-renovated exhibit room, i.e. the former back porch. As ideas for exhibits are considered, please help us by submitting any photos you might have of the following:

1. **Highland Co. Schools:** interior or exterior shots, groups of students, teacher, printed programs, etc.
2. **Mills located in Highland Co.:** there were many, and we don't have a lot of photos. Any photos or information would be most helpful.
3. **People and Animals:** animals must have been highly prized to make it into rare & expensive photos, including pets, live-stock, wildlife, and hunting trophies.



## Thanks for Renewing!

Recently, cards were mailed to many of you, containing a reminder to renew your Society membership. The response was terrific! We thank you for your continued support of our programs in any capacity, be it through donations to our collection, financial support, volunteer hours, and/or positive conversations about the Society and museum. Thank you!!



## Check your Renewal Date!

Annual memberships run from January 1 to December 31 each year. If you receive a mailed copy of the *Highland Hourglass*, please renew by the date shown below your address.

If you receive an email copy, please renew by the first of each year. Life Members will find a 9999 in the year portion of the date under your address. No annual renewal is required.

**SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES!  
WE WILL GLADLY EMAIL NEWSLETTERS  
AND OTHER NOTICES TO YOUR INBOX.**

## Items Available by Mail

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- *The Battle of McDowell* DVD
- *Tol' Able David* DVD
- *Images of America: Highland County* by Chris Scott
- *Parallel Lines: Stories from the Battle of McDowell* CD
- Battle of McDowell Map Set
- 1926 Highland County Advertising Map
- Highland County History Coloring Book
- *Highland Is Their Home* Booklet
- Highland County's 150th Anniversary Program

Please email for prices and shipping rates.

## Highland Historical Society Membership

Membership rates:	<b>Annual:</b>	<b>One Time:</b>
	Individual ... \$15	Life ..... \$250
	Family ..... \$25	Patron ..... \$500
	Business ..... \$25	

*All members receive copies of "The Highland Hourglass," the society's newsletter by mail or email and a 10 % discount in The Highland County Museum Store. Business and life members receive a framed membership certificate to display. Patron members receive a life membership plus their names engraved on the "Friends of the Museum" plaque.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
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*Happy New Year!*

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Ludford Creef  
Will Crisp  
Roger Omdorff  
Molly Payne  
Linda Simmons*

### **Staff**

*Cathleen Evans, Executive Director*

### **Museum Hours:**

**Nov.1 to Feb. 28: By Appointment Only**

**March 1 to Oct. 31**

**Thursday, Friday & Saturday 11AM to 4PM**

**Sunday 1PM to 4PM**



*Preserving Highland County's Past  
for the  
Enrichment of Present and Future Generations*



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## Highland's First Families, Part III

The third installment of the popular First Families exhibit made its debut for the Maple Festival. Museum visitors from far and near continue to enjoy this visual presentation of the county's earliest settlers and their descendants. The exhibit requires hours of painstaking work to research, fabricate, and mount. Board member Jim Blagg and executive director Cathleen Evans worked together to prepare all the names, dates, and photos. Lorraine White and Wendy Henwood, also board members, helped with the project as well.

Showcasing settlers who arrived in Highland County between the years of 1778 and 1785, the exhibit includes — family trees. Names of people appearing at the top of each family line are descendants who still live in the county, over 200 years after their ancestor first arrived here. Visitors are enthusiastic about finding themselves or other family members among the thousand of names displayed. Some are surprised to discover

just how many other Highlanders they are related to.

Early settlers whose descendants appear on this year's family trees are Joseph Beathe (1778), William Blagg (1780), William Ryder (1780), John Wade (1780), John Beverage (1780), John Bird (1780), William Chestnut (1781), Thomas Douglas (1781), John Mullenax (1781), Richard Curry (1782), Henry Bussard (1785). The First Families exhibit will remain in place until October 31. Booklets containing family trees from the previous two First Family exhibits are also on display.



*Executive Director Cathleen Evans works on mounting*



*Maple Festival visitors peruse the First Families Exhibit in the two photos on the left. At right, volunteer docent Roger Orndorff show visitors around the permanent Highland County history exhibit and explains the filming of silent movie Tol'able David here in*

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Voices from Rich Mountain*

*By Paul Cunningham*

Paul Cunningham has assembled a noteworthy collection of period diaries, letters, and reports describing both civilian and military activities in Highland, Pocahontas, Randolph, Barbour, and Taylor counties during 1861. The authors include Rev. William T. Price, pastor of Williamsville and McDowell Presbyterian Churches from 1858 until 1867, Osborne Wilson, great-great grandson of early Highland pioneer William Wilson, and Highland native Charles Lewis Campbell. Other authors in the collection include William H. Taliaferro, John A. McNeel, and Dr. Henry M. Price. This collection provides a diverse view of events in western Virginia in 1861 from primary sources.

The collection begins with 31 year old Rev. William T. Price's diary spanning the period from May 21st until June 20th, with an afterward composed by Rev. Price forty years later. I found Rev. Price's style of writing informative, entertaining, and sometimes amusing. His detailed descriptions of events and various colorful individuals brought history to life. The book next provides an extract of 28 year old Osborne Wilson's diary from May 11th through August 15th. Wilson's diary gives a realistic view of his early days as a private in Captain Felix Hull's company. Wilson's experiences and views on the situation provide an interesting contrast to those of Rev. Price. Twenty year old Charles Lewis Campbell's diary begins on April 18th and ends on October 11th. There are several days when Campbell and Wilson were at the same location and it is interesting to see their different views of the events. Campbell mentions Rev. W. T. Price several times in his entries. I should note that some of the dates given for Wilson's diary entries in May are incorrect; however those in Campbell's are correct. There are a few small errors in the book, to include a duplicate illustration, but they do not noticeably detract from the work as a whole.

Also in the book is a long letter from William H. Taliaferro to his sister, a description of the retreat from Philippi by John A. McNeel, and an account of the Battle of Rich Mountain by Rev. Henry M. Price. While each of those is interesting, the diaries of Rev. William Price, Osborne Wilson, and Charles Campbell remain my favorite section of the book. It would be interesting to read the three dairies side-by-side in chronological order, and that is my intent when I next sit down with *Voices from Rich Mountain*.



*Book Review by Jim Blagg*

Paul Cunningham lives south of McDowell in Highland County. His company, Covenant Books, Ltd., offers reprints of original editions which have been digitally scanned and meticulously edited by Cunningham.

*Voices from Rich Mountain* is available in the Highland Historical Society museum gift shop.





## Collections Spotlight

Recent additions to the museum's collection include multiple copies of two booklets, *Highland Is Their Home* and the *Highland County 150th Anniversary Program and Historical Review*. Both booklets were donated by The Highland Center.

The introduction to *Highland Is Their Home* reads as follows:

*These accounts first appeared in the Highland and Bath Recorder in 1996-1997. They are a sampling of the lifestyles found in Highland County and represent the activities, attitudes, and feelings of all who call Highland County home. Irene Chapman, copyright 1998*

Included in the booklet are photographs and biographical sketches of eleven present and former Highland residents: Doreen Ralston, Jim Thompson, Sarah Samples, John Reynolds, Grace Griffin, Harry Ralston, Mary Sweitzer, George Marvin Botkin, Gaye Herold, Doug Gutshall, and Randy Richardson.

The program and historical review for the sesquicentennial celebration of the formation of Highland County contains a wealth of historical information. Besides being a record of the 1997 celebration, it also includes historical data like lists of county officers (sheriffs, clerks, treasurers, supervisors, etc.) and a reprint of Seybert Beverage's 1947 article on the formation of Highland County.



## Museum Cleaning Day Held

February 27th was cleaning day at the museum. Board members reported for work at 9:00 a.m. and tackled the dust and dirt from the recent renovations to the back porch. Sweeping, mopping, and dusting were on the agenda to get the museum in shape for its March 1 opening for the season. If you're handy with a broom or dust rag, consider volunteering sometime before the next newsletter arrives to help keep the museum spic and span for visitors.



Lorraine White, above, and Jim Blagg, below, sweep floors on Museum Cleaning Day.



Do you have a few extra hours a month? How about volunteering at the museum! If you're comfortable showing visitors around, then being a docent (or host) might be for you. Or, if you'd like to help keep things clean, there's always some dusting or sweeping to do. Would you rather be outdoors? During the summer months you can help with mowing the lawn. Currently, board members shoulder most of these tasks and could use your help. Thanks!



## Internet Resources for Genealogy

Resources for genealogy research abound on the Internet. One such tool is Geni.com, a subscription website for researching and recording your family's ancestors. Subscribers can also connect with others who are working on the same family line or similar projects. Sites such as Geni.com usually offer basic/beginning level tools for free, including access to at least some of what other users have entered into the database.

Annalise Connell, a new society member currently living in Hong Kong, has posted some useful information regarding some of Highland County's early settlers. She writes:

"Famous people make it into the history books, but average folks show up in land transactions, marriage records, and family stories. How might you fit in? Folks like you and me have put information they have found on a site called Geni.com (a cute way of spelling genealogy, I guess) so everyone can see it. Want to try your hand? Just type "geni highland county pioneers" into the Google search engine to see what I've put in so far on two early Highland County families, the Devericks and the Bodkins (or Botkins). I've focused on pioneers before the American Revolution. Each era had its own pioneers, and you may want to use Geni.com to create a project that shows when your ancestors first came to what is now Highland County."

## The Obit Tidbit

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Solomon Moats, who had been ill of fever for several weeks, died on Wednesday evening. He leaves a wife and three children in destitute circumstances. The wife is hard-working and will do, as she has in the past, all she can toward keeping herself and children, but it will be impossible for her to provide by her daily toil the things that will be necessary to make them comfortable during the winter. Here, then, an opportunity is offered to those of this community who have never known what it is to want for anything, not to mention actual necessities, to lend a helping hand to those of their fellow beings who have been less fortunate. Share your bounty with such and what remains will be the more enjoyed. On yesterday morning the remains of the deceased husband and parent were interred in the family burying-ground a short distance west of town, near where he had lived for a few months, he having moved here recently from a section in the northern part of the county, known as Sang mountain.

Taken from:

*The Highland Recorder, 5 November 1897*

## Highland History Highlights

Loftus Pullin was one of Highland's earliest settlers. Morton's 1911 history of the county notes his presence here as early as 1746. Morton also gives the following account (on page 69) of Pullin's wife, Ann Jane Usher:

*One Edward Usher eloped with the daughter of an English nobleman named Perry and came to America. Their four children were daughters, one dying in infancy. Usher died while they were yet small, and the widow went to England, hoping for a reconciliation with her father. He recognized her on the road as he drove by in his carriage, but being still angry he tossed her a shilling, telling her that was all she would have from him and that she must mind her brats herself. She returned to America, her children, if not also herself, finding their way to the Augusta colony, probably to For Dickenson. James Knox became the guardian of Ann Jan, and with a portion, at least, of her inheritance her purchased for her negro girl. Several years later she married Loftus Pullin. One sister married William Steuart, another Highland pioneer, the third (Martha?) marrying a son of Capt. Adam Dickenson. The stern parent finally relented and provided for his daughter by will. But the search he instituted failed to discover her, and no knowledge thereof coming to her descendants for many year, the matter went by default.*



### VDOT Grant Update

Renovations funded by a grant from VDOT are partially complete. The back porch has received storm windows, drywall, trim, paint, heat, and lighting. New flooring and insulated drapes will complete the space, making it suitable for museum exhibits.



### Check your Renewal Date!

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