

N E W S



THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

L E T T E R

Vol. 8 No. 1
Winter 2004

*Helping to Preserve the Past, to Enrich the Present,
for the Benefit and the Education of the Future*

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THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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2004 Board of Directors:

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**PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO
RENEW YOUR HIGHLAND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP!!!
WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!!**

ANNUAL MEETING JAN 9, 2004

The annual meeting of the Highland Historical Society will be held **Sunday, January 9, at 3:00 p.m.** in the Mountain View Room at the Highland County Public Library.

A delightful and special program will be presented on *What it Was Like in Years Past to be a Teacher in Highland County!*

Come and find out what your society has been doing this year!

All members of the society are invited to attend, and are eligible to vote for the 2005 Board of Directors. Refreshments will be served following the meeting.

(Snow date: Sun., Jan 23)

HIGHLAND COUNTY'S MUSEUM TO OPEN MAY 7!!

At last! After years of hard work, and hope, and planning, the Highland Museum and Heritage Center will open its doors on May 7, 2005!

This exciting event will be the centerpiece and showcase event of the 2005 McDowell Battlefield Heritage Days, and will be attracting folks from all over the country. There are people who are planning to come from as far away as Europe!

The entire first floor of the former "Mansion House" will be open to the public, and dignitaries and celebrations will be on hand.

Be sure to circle the date on YOUR calendar, and come join the celebration of this exciting milestone in the preservation of Highland County's history!



HIGHLAND COUNTY'S MUSEUM & HERITAGE CENTER

PROTEUS FOUNDATION AWARDS TWO GRANTS TO MUSEUM

In 2004, the society received two very welcome grants from *The Proteus Foundation*. One grant was for the completion of the renovation and restoration of the windows in the building, and the other was for the reconstruction of the original front porch.

The windows were completely redone; very exciting was the replacement of the glass in many of the windows with actual 1860's glass made possible by a generous and timely donation of the historic glass by Monterey residents, Lynda and Jim East.

Proteus offered the society a grant for the porch reconstruction - only if the society could meet the challenge to get matching donated funds. **Thanks to three generous local donors, the grant was matched and work is underway!**

The Proteus Foundation stressed that the society "serves a vital community role in linking the past with the present, and raises the awareness for the need to preserve the rich history of the area," and expressed the wish that the grants will serve as a stimulus for others to give to the society.

THE NEW HIGHLAND MUSEUM AND HERITAGE CENTER IS GROWING - BUT IS STILL VERY MUCH IN NEED OF MORE ITEMS FOR THE MUSEUM COLLECTION. If you would like to donate an item to the museum, contact Lorraine White at 468-3470 or Diane Klein at 396-6169.

6th ANNUAL HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY SENIOR SCHOLARSHIP AWARD PRESENTED TO ERIN RALSTON



The Highland Historical Society awarded its sixth annual scholarship to Highland High School graduating senior Erin Ralston, class of 2004.

The Highland Historical Society award to a graduating Highland High School senior is a yearly event. The society makes the award based on recommendations made by the History Department at the school.

Ms. Ralston was given a cash award and a certificate which reads "Award for Excellence for Outstanding Interest and Achievement in History by a graduating senior." We congratulate Ms. Ralston and wish her all success in the future.

SOCIETY SPONSORS FILM: THE BATTLE OF MCDOWELL

Be sure to come to see the new movie, *"THE BATTLE OF MCDOWELL"*. The film will have its first showing at the 2005 McDowell Battlefield Heritage Days event !!!

Funded by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the Shenandoah Battlefields Foundation, and the Highland Historical Society, the movie was filmed on location in McDowell, and tells the story of the Battle of McDowell, which is increasingly being recognized as one which changed the course of history.



Confederates bridge the Bullpasture



"Yanks" face the CSA fire MCDOWELL BATTLEFIELD HERITAGE DAYS 2005

The sixth McDowell Battlefield Heritage Days will be as held on the weekend of May 7-8, 2005.

The biennial event draws universal accolades from reenactors and visitors alike, and is now the largest "campaigner" (meaning: extremely authentic) event in the United States!

About 1,000 Reenactors will attend, and the event is being promoted as a very special Preservation Weekend, with all monies being raised to support the establishment of the Highland Museum and Heritage Center - with its central role as an Orientation and Information center for the Battle of McDowell.

Special exhibits in the new museum will highlight and explain the complex avocation of the reenactors.

In addition, the museum will feature the new and exciting film production "The Battle of McDowell." The film will show continuously in the McDowell Orientation Center room. (See film article in previous column)

ARCHAEOLOGY RETURNS TO HIGHLAND

By C. Mike Wilke

Highland County is unique since it has been relatively untouched by the building booms of the rest of the state. This fact has helped to preserve the multitude of historic and prehistoric sites in the county. But, these sites will not be safe for long. We see new construction being begun almost daily.

If you are aware of any sites whether from the historic or the prehistoric periods, do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the Highland Historical Society Board. I will investigate the site, record the site with the Virginia Department of Historical Resources if appropriate, and submit recommendations to the property owner. If an excavation of the site is undertaken with the approval of the property owner, all artifacts found at the site will be returned to the property owner after being recorded, photographed, and studied. The property owner has the option of loaning or donating material to the museum for display and/or study purposes.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Gerard Fowke recorded and excavated a multitude of Native American burial mounds throughout the Eastern and Midwestern states. During the early 1890's, he investigated three mounds in Highland County and subsequently published his findings in 1894. Since that time, archaeological investigations within Highland County were sporadic - but now..... archaeology has returned to the county!

NATIVE AMERICAN SITES In April, a survey of an (approximately) 3000 year old Native American site was initiated near McDowell. This site survey was cosponsored by the Highland Historical Society, the Archaeological Society of Virginia, and James Madison University and served as a workshop for JMU students, ASV Archaeological Technician students, and members of the HHS who had expressed an interest. The areas were

systematically surveyed by the group with the discovery of several Late Archaic projectile points, flaking debitage comprised of a variety of materials, numerous hammer stones, a plethora of fire cracked rock, and one earthenware pipe bowl probably thrown away during the 1800's by a farmer. On April 24, Twenty-three people including HHS members Mike Wilke, Jim and Lorraine White, Sara Bell, and Crysta Stanton met at the Davis Run I Site for follow-up investigations.

THE MANSION HOUSE Several Society members systematically excavated the location of the demolished brick front porch at the Mansion House in an effort to find the dimensions of the porch seen in early photographs and the possibility that there had been an earlier porch built in 1851 when the house was constructed. The results of this excavation verified that the porch pictured in an 1880's photo was in fact the original porch. A report of the archaeological work at the Mansion House was presented at a meeting of the Archaeological Society of Virginia Annual Meeting in October. The final report has been written, included in the files at the Department of Historical Resources in Richmond, will be submitted to the National Park Service for inclusion in the Mansion House Files, and will be available for purchase from the Highland Historical Society in the near future.



Wilke at museum porch excavation

As a result of the excavations performed at the Mansion House, application was made to the Department of Historical Resources for the assignment of an archaeological site number for the property and subsequently established as 44-HD-0068. The national numbering system includes the state (Virginia is number 44), the county (HD for Highland), and the assigned number of the site within the county (68).

A Preliminary Information Form was completed and submitted to the Department of Historical Resources in December to begin the process of nominating the Mansion House for placement on the Virginia Landmarks Register followed by the submission to the National Park Service to have the property placed on the National Registry of Historic Sites.

CLOVER CREEK CHAPEL In August, a Ground Penetrating Radar survey of the side yard of Clover Creek Chapel was conducted by James Madison University to prove or disprove the oral tradition that has continued to the present day that there are unmarked graves located on the south side of the church. This activity was cosponsored by the society, the ASV and JMU. Some funding has already been committed by donors to the \$1600.00 cost of the project but additional donations would, of course, be greatly appreciated!

There were no grave shafts found in the side yard. However, what appeared to be a footprint of a building that predated the chapel which was suggested in an aerial photograph was indicated. The final report has not yet been received.

WHAT'S NEXT The plans for the coming year include a return to the Davis Run I Site for follow-up work, revisiting and updating the 85 archaeological site reports on file with the Department of Historical Resources, evaluating several potential sites, investigating the location of the kitchen building at the Mansion House as well as the footprint of a building in the back yard as seen in an aerial photo, and beginning work on Fort George with archaeologists who specialize in frontier forts. It has been reported (and very preliminary investigations have supported) that the Fort George site has never been plowed. It is therefore very likely that this frontier fort, one of three reported in Highland County erected during the French and Indian War, will provide a wealth of information about the daily life at the then edge of the wilderness. It has been reported that this fort is unlike many of the period since it may have been a palisaded fort.

For more information: call society board member Mike Wilke at 499-2573 or email him at legypf@hcn.net

HIGHLAND APPRAISAL FAIR A BIG SUCCESS

The grounds of the Highland County Museum and Heritage Center bubbled with activity at the first Highland Appraisal Fair which was held on Saturday, October 9.

Taking place during the Hands and Harvest Festival, the fair came alive with tents, balloons, good food, bluegrass music and living history demonstrations which were ongoing there all throughout the afternoon.

Mountain Shades of Grass, featuring local musician Chris Simmons of Doe Hill, began performing at 2 p.m. and had toes tapping and hands clapping! The band features the Argenbright family of Augusta County including Dennis on guitar, William on mandolin and Denny on bass along with Simmons on banjo. The group's specialty is traditional bluegrass music.

Working historical demonstrations stations were set up on the museum grounds and the many 'stations' allowed children and adults the chance to try their hands at such things as rail-splitting, apple butter making, cornbread making and corn grinding. In addition, reenactors had set up a Civil War living history station. An archaeology display showed work which had been done at the Mansion House. (See article on page 3)

The main attraction, however, was the antique appraisals under the tents. Green Valley Auction's antiques experts Jeff Evans and Kent Botkin generously donated their time and expertise to benefit the museum, and reviewed items and gave oral appraisals throughout the afternoon. The Appraisal registration began at 11:30 a.m. and lines had formed well before Jeff and Kent began appraising at noon.

Some fascinating objects turned up, and many people walked away with

dazed delight after discovering the appraised value of some of their family treasures. Everything from piggy banks, to crocks, photos and books, old toys, dishes and lamps were among some items which drew a fascinated crowd of onlookers as the appraisals were made and discussed.

All proceeds from the event went to benefit the museum, and before the afternoon was over, suggestions were already being made that the society hold another appraisal fair next year.

FIRST OF A SERIES:

CARING FOR YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

PART 1

Keep photographic materials at proper environmental conditions. Relative humidity is the single most important factor in preserving most photographic materials. Relative humidity levels above 60% will accelerate deterioration. Low and fluctuating humidity may also damage them. Conditions of around 68 degrees F and 30-40% relative humidity are appropriate and easiest to maintain in enclosed areas, such as an interior closet or an air-conditioned room - - NOT in an attic or basement.

Temperature - NOT relative humidity - is the controlling factor in the stability of contemporary color photographs, however. Storage at low temperatures (40 degrees F or below) is recommended.

Exposure to visible and ultraviolet

(UV) light is potentially damaging to photographs. Light can cause embrittlement, yellowing and color fading in prints and hand-colored surfaces. Extended display of photographs is not recommended; however, if they must be displayed, use UV-filtering plastic or glass in framing. Exposure of color slides to the light in the projector should be kept to a minimum.. Use duplicate slides instead.

Atmospheric pollutants, particularly sulfur compounds, will cause black and white images to fade and discolor. Gas by-products given off by fresh paint fumes, plywood, deteriorated cardboard and many cleaning supplies may cause accelerated image deterioration. Storage in non-acidic containers is recommended.

HANDLING PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS:

If photographs are handled improperly, they can suffer disastrous damage, including tears, cracks, losses, abrasions, fingerprints and stains. Avoid touching fragile photographic materials; salts in human perspiration may damage surfaces. Wear clean cotton gloves if possible when handling negatives and prints.

PART 2 - STORAGE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS will appear in the next issue of the Highland Historical Society's newsletter

HAVE YOU NOTICED THE NEW HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY LOGO ON THE NEWSLETTER? IT ALSO APPEARS ON OUR MEMBERSHIP CARDS, AND ON BOTH LIFE MEMBERSHIP AND BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATES.

Ordering from
The Highland
Historical Society



Currently Available items:

(please indicate number)

____ **NEW! BLACK - BATTLE OF MCDOWELL SWEATSHIRTS-** featuring "Stonewall" Jackson

\$25.00 plus \$2.00 s/h (Please indicate sizes and number of shirts) _____ med _____ lg _____ x-lg

____ **BLACK - BATTLE OF MCDOWELL T-SHIRT-** featuring "Stonewall" Jackson

\$15.00 plus \$2.00 s/h (Please indicate T-Shirt sizes and number of shirts) _____ sm _____ med _____ lg _____ x-lg

____ 1847 Campbell Map of Highland County - \$15.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling

____ Mapsets of the Battle of McDowell - \$8.00 plus \$1.00 s/h

____ Book: *Golldays in America* - \$15.00 plus \$3.00 s/h

____ Book: *Coler/Colaw Family in America* - \$15.00 plus \$3.00 s/h

____ **"RECONNAISSANCE AT MCDOWELL"**

CIVIL WAR PRINT -- by Bradley Schmehl - LIMITED EDITION: Numbered, signed by
artist - \$225. Plus shipping (billed separately)

AND

YES! I WANT TO HELP MAKE THE DREAM OF THE HIGHLAND MUSEUM A REALITY!

Here is my tax-deductible donation of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 * \$500** \$1,000*** \$2,500***

\$5,000**** \$10,000 other

* For a gift of \$250.+, you will receive a Mapset of The Battle of McDowell.

**For a gift of \$500.+, your name will be inscribed on the special Donors plaque in the Museum, and you will receive a print of the first map done of Highland County: The 1847 Campbell Map.

***For a gift of \$1,000.+, your name will be inscribed on the special Donors plaque in the Museum, and you will receive a copy of Richard Armstrong's book: *The Battle of McDowell*

****For a gift of \$5,000.+, your name will be inscribed on the special Donors plaque in the Museum, and you will receive a print of Bradley Schmehl's painting: "Reconnaissance at McDowell"

AND

I am enclosing membership dues: INDIVIDUAL _____ \$5.00
FAMILY _____ \$15.00
BUSINESS _____ \$25.00
LIFE MEMBER _____ \$150.00

Send to:

THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

BOX 63

MCDOWELL, VA 24458

Enclosed is my check for _____ (total)

(Please print clearly)

name _____

address _____

city _____ state _____ zip _____



THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

attn: Treasurer

Post Office Box 63 - McDowell, Virginia 24458

MEMBERSHIP

PLEASE CHECK:

- Annual Individual..... \$5.00
 Family Membership..... \$15.00
 Annual Business or Organization..... \$25.00
 Life Membership..... \$150.00
 Patron - any amount over..... \$250.00

2005 RENEWAL NEW

My gift for THE EXCITING NEW HIGHLAND MUSEUM..... _____

name _____

address _____

city _____ state _____ zip _____ - _____

All dues and contributions are tax-deductible



THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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