



# THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

L E T T E R

Vol. 1 No. 1  
Fall 1997

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

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## Explaining your Label

**PLEASE CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL CAREFULLY.**

All Charter Members will find [-CH] following their name on the label.

Life Members will find [-CH - LIFE] after their names on the labels.

If you have not paid your dues for 1997, you will notice a **RED MARK** beside your name. To keep your membership current, and to receive future mailings - and to have a vote at the annual meeting, your dues need to be paid no later than **November 23, 1997**. Please help keep **YOUR Historical Society active** by continuing your support. We - and the future - will appreciate it!!!

If you find any errors in your mailing label - if your name is misspelled - or your address is incorrect, please bear with us - and send any corrections to:

The Highland Historical Society Newsletter  
 Box 63  
 McDowell Va 24458.

## HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting Of the Highland Historical Society will be held on Sunday, November 23 at 3:00 o'clock in the Mountain View Room at the Highland Public Library in Monterey. All members are invited to attend, and are eligible to vote for the 1997-98 Board of Directors. Refreshments will be served following the meeting.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Highland Historical Society was originally formed in the 1980's, for the purpose of creating and publishing a revised history  
*Con't on page 2*

### THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Post Office Box 63  
 McDowell, Virginia 24458

#### 1996-97 Board of Directors:

- Diane Klein, Chairman*
- Sarah Samples, Secretary*
- Hazel Corbett, Treasurer*
- Nicholas Beverage*
- Dwayne Harkleroad*
- Elizabeth Hefner*
- Donovan Hower*
- Lester LaPrade*
- Gail Lowry*
- Sue Robinson*
- Lorraine White*
- Norma Varner*



**ABOUT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Con't**

of the county. The results can be seen in the very successful "The New History of Highland County," which is still available for sale from The Recorder, and from the Society's table at the Maple Festival.

The Society was re-activated in 1995 and has since been involved in many projects - including the McDowell Battlefield Days in May, in plans to survey and catalog historic sites and structures in the county, in the microfilming of all of the county newspapers dating back into the 1800's, in collecting genealogical records and local histories, of putting up signs identifying the smaller towns in the county, supporting and working with other organizations to provide trails, markers and parking at the site of the McDowell Battlefield, and in financing the restoration of rare old county documents.

The Society's goals are inherent in its motto:

*"Helping to Preserve the Past,  
to Enrich the Present,*



*for the Benefit  
and the Education  
of the Future."*

**MAY 8, 1862**

**O**n May 8, 135 years ago about 9,000 Rebel soldiers and an almost equal number of Yankees converged on Robert Sitlington's farm and the little village of McDowell.

1862 had opened with Union and Confederate forces jockeying for position throughout the western part of Virginia, and West Virginia. The Shenandoah Valley, known as "Breadbasket of the Confederacy," held provisions for the southern army, and also had Staunton, a major supply center and transportation network where two major roads and a railroad crossed.

Months earlier, Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson had stated: "If this Valley is lost, Virginia is lost." It was in McDowell, on the slopes of Sitlington's Hill, that Federal troops (under Milroy and Schenck) moving toward Staunton were successfully repelled by the Confederates (under "Allegheny" Johnson, reinforced by the brigades of Taliaferro and Campbell [under Jackson]). In a little more than four hours, 180 men lay dead, and many of the more than 600 wounded were being tended in makeshift hospitals quickly established in the Presbyterian church and in local homes. Federal troops retired beyond McDowell, and Jackson's army took up the pursuit the next day (leaving behind a detachment of cavalry and the VMI Cadet Battalion to guard Federal prisoners - mostly wounded), chasing the Federals through Monterey, and up the South Branch valley to West Virginia.

This battle was the first Confederate victory in Jackson's

brilliant Valley Campaign. It forced Milroy and Schenck out of the Valley, preventing them and the rest of Fremont's command from uniting with Banks' force, thus relieving the pressure on Richmond; it kept "the Breadbasket" for the South, and it left Jackson free to operate against his enemies separately - a key to his phenomenal success in the Shenandoah Valley in the months to come. On May 9, he announced the outcome with a one-sentence message to General Cooper in Richmond: "God blessed our arms with victory at McDowell yesterday."

McDowell remains the last undeveloped, unspoiled battlefield area from the Valley Campaign, allowing a unique chance to understand and experience what took place there on May 8, 1862. The Presbyterian Church stands today as it did then, and still bears the scars of a cannonball hit and the names and dates which were carved into the bricks on the front of the church by the soldiers.

**McDowell Battlefield Days - 1997**

The second McDowell Battlefield Days, sponsored by the Highland Historical Society and the Highland Chamber of Commerce was held on the weekend of May 10-11, 1997, and despite bitterly cold weather (which some felt to be a perhaps overly-accurate representation of the weather experienced at the battle in 1862), both the public and reenactors all expressed great satisfaction with the event.

Reenactors from the entire East  
*con't page 3*



## McDowell Battlefield Days *con't*

Coast arrived on Friday night, May 9 and "occupied" McDowell, setting up camps and picket lines. The Union soldiers held firm command of the village until the morning of the 10th, when the Confederate troops began skirmishes which led up to the Reenactment of the Battle of McDowell. Routing the Union troops, under the eyes of well-over 300 spectators, the Rebels held many of the Federals captive at the McDowell Presbyterian Church, where "medical treatment" of the wounded occurred, as it did in 1862. On Sunday, after some skirmishes pushing the Union troops westward, period worship services at the church were held for the enactors and the public.

Thanks to generous cooperation from local residents of McDowell, all who attended felt that they had experienced a truly unique weekend which gave them a truer understanding of the events at McDowell in May, 1862.



## SOCIETY TAPING RECOLLECTIONS OF HIGHLAND RESIDENTS

The Society is sponsoring the audio taping of some of Highland's older residents. Copies of the tapes will be placed in the Highland County Library, and eventually will find a home in a future Highland museum. McDowell resident Betsy Little is currently doing the interviews for us, and has gotten some delightful memories on tape.

## HIGHLAND'S FIRST MAP RESTORED BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### PRINTS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Thanks to the Society's Life Member Clay Hamilton's initial concept and dedicated help in getting it accomplished, the Highland Historical Society restored the 1847 Campbell Map of the county.

Found hanging in the courthouse, it was taken to a professional restorer in Washington, D.C. who repaired, bleached and backed the fragile map, which contains the names and locations of residents and places in the county - all written in the meticulous handwriting of the county's first surveyor and map-maker, Thomas Campbell.

The original map will hang, in a new archival mat and frame, in the courthouse. A limited edition of extremely handsome, full-sized prints of the map are now available for purchase from the Historical Society. A printed list of the names found on the map, a brief biography of Campbell, and a handsome border have been added - to enhance the print.

The maps will sell for \$15.00 - plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling, and may be purchased by sending in the coupon below.

Send to:  
THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOC.  
BOX 63  
MCDOWELL, VA 24458

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the print of  
the 1847 Campbell Map of Highland County.

I enclose my check for \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print clearly)  
name \_\_\_\_\_  
address \_\_\_\_\_  
city \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_



## "where do my dues go?"

Just some examples of Highland Historical Society activities in 1997:

- ◆ A \$1,000. grant given by the Society which will help finance the completion of the Virginia Civil War Trails link in Monterey.
- ◆ The erection of "Welcome to McDowell" signs on Rt. 250.
- ◆ Restoration of the 1847 map of the county. (See previous article)
- ◆ Working with Bath and Allegheny counties toward funding the preparation of a Manuscript Guide of the Allegheny Highlands.
- ◆ Participation in the Highland Sesquicentennial - purchase of a large street banner, and the Society's float in the parade.
- ◆ A \$1,000 grant to the Highland Public Library to help purchase and maintain the new microfilm reader.

## hhs Life Members

Lucinda Angle  
Louise S. Barry  
Mary Ann Corbett  
Clay Hamilton  
Rosalee Malcolm Siron  
Rudolph Siron

## hhs Business Members

Bath County Historical Society - 1996, 1997  
Bear Mountain Outdoor School - 1996  
Valley Home Farm-George & Peggy Bird - 1996, 1997  
Field Books - 1996-1997  
Gallery of Mountain Secrets - 1996  
H & H Cash Store - 1996  
Highland County Chamber of Commerce - 1996, 1997  
Highland Medical Center - 1996  
Highland Public Library - 1996, 1997  
The Highland Inn - 1996, 1997  
High's Restaurant - 1996  
Donovan Hower - 1996, 1997  
John Lohr, Esq.- 1996  
The Recorder Publishing Co.- 1996, 1997  
*We thank these fine businesses for their support, and urge that you show your support for them as well. If your business has not yet supported the Society, won't you consider doing so?*

THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



attn: Hazel Corbett, Treasurer  
HCR 4 - Box 135 - Mustoe, Virginia 24465

MEMBERSHIP

- \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Individual.....\$5.00
- \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Business or Organization.....\$25.00
- RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_ NEW \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Life Membership..... \$150.00
- \_\_\_\_\_ Patron (any amount over ..... \$250.00

Gift to the Endowment Fund for future Highland Museum..... \_\_\_\_\_

*name* \_\_\_\_\_

*address* \_\_\_\_\_

*city* \_\_\_\_\_ *state* \_\_\_\_\_ *zip* \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

All dues and contributions are tax-deductible

THE HIGHLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
POST OFFICE BOX 63  
MCDOWELL, VIRGINIA 24458