

# BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Quarterly Newsletter

June, 2013

### SUMMER MEMBERSHIP MEETING BLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

JUNE 8, 2013, 1:30 PM

CO-SPONSORED BY BLAND COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND  
FRIENDS OF THE BLAND LIBRARY

**Guest Speaker**  
**Margaret Linford, President**  
**SMYTH COUNTY GENEALOGICAL  
SOCIETY**

We are pleased to have as our speaker at our summer membership meeting, Margaret Linford, President of the Smyth County Genealogical Society. Margaret is a native of Marion. She received an academic scholarship to Brigham Young University in Provo, UT where she received education and training as a professional genealogist. She has over 10,000 hours of research experience, having contributed to the family histories of several notable Americans, including Michelle Obama. She is also a regional consultant for Family Search, one of the online genealogy search sites.

Several years ago, Margaret returned to her hometown of Marion with her husband Blair, a geologist for the State of VA, and their two children, Amelia (age 9) and Lauren (age 5). Immediately, upon her return she became actively involved in organizing the Smyth County Genealogical Society. The SCGS is housed at Smyth County Library. In a short time, they have developed amazing resources for genealogists in the area.

She will be speaking to us about some basic research tips, highlighting examples of her finds in Smyth County. She will also tell us how people in our area can access the numerous records stored at the Granite Mountain Records Vault in Salt Lake City via the Smyth Bland Library in Marion.



### *President's Message*

We have had a very busy quarter answering quite a few genealogy questions. Some of the families who have submitted inquiries are: Charletons, Corners, Garretts, Hares, Frenches, and Dunns.

One very interesting question had to do with **Jacob Shaffer rifles** which were made in Wythe County circa 1820-1850. The question received was about a rifle signed with gold which was owned by Bland County resident Bal Hayton from Ceres, who sold it to Bill Rudder from Tazewell County, and from there the trail disappeared. However, Bland resident Howard Walker had seen the rifle and was able to describe it to the inquiring party. If any of you have seen or know anyone who has one of these rifles, please contact the office at 276-688-0088. Myth has it that Mr. Shaffer outfitted the Wythe County militia with his rifles during the Civil War.

I continue to work on the history of the **Wesendonck and Nidermaier** families who resided near Hollybrook. I have received inquiries from Berlin, Germany; Galveston, TX; Charlotte, NC, and Bristol about these two families. I welcome any information you may have about them.

I am also working with my friend, Judy Matthews, to gather documentation about **The Birth of Bland County**. We have located the original act to form Bland, dated March 30, 1861 in the vault at the Library of Virginia. We will be obtaining a copy to post at the Historical Society Office. It is handwritten and covers two large pages. Many of you have seen the transcribed version, but not the original. Bland County possessed an original copy, but it burned in the Courthouse fire in 1888.

There is much work to be done at the Historical Society. We welcome any volunteers. We particularly need volunteers to staff the gift shop on Thursdays and Fridays. We also have much work to do on processing our collection. Please come help.

*Ann Hardy Beardshall*

# BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Newsletter

June, 2013

## HAPPENINGS at BCHS

The Bland County Historical Society had a booth at the **Family History Institute** in Wytheville on March 23rd. Our booth received a lot of attention and we sold many books. The program was very interesting and we were able to enjoy it as well.

Our 2014 Calendar with a theme of **Bland County Barns** has been featured in the Bland Messenger. We have started receiving submissions. July 15th is the deadline for entries. Please send your submission by email using [info@blandcountyhistsoc.org](mailto:info@blandcountyhistsoc.org)

We participated in **Ceres Day** on May 8<sup>th</sup> and sold many of our books to the attendees.

We had the Jail open for the **Festival of Trails** on May 11th. Buzz Richardson graciously agreed to sit on the porch and tell some stories about the jail and some of its history (plus anything else he wanted to tell). We also started a permanent exhibit at the Jail featuring the Sheriffs of Bland County as well as many pictures of the Jail at different times during its long history of 147 years (1866 – 2013). We opened the front group of six cells in the annex built in 1953 for viewing during the Festival.

Harold Ramsey, committee chairman of the Jail Renovation, has set up the shelves in the upstairs storage room to house our donated items and our large collection of **Bland Messengers**.

As some of you may know, we lost two of our board members this quarter. Brenda King, who helped establish and run our office and gift shop and contributed numerous hours of volunteer time over the last few years resigned in April from the Board of Directors and her volunteer role. She has made enormous contributions to the Bland County Historical Society and we thank her wholeheartedly. Rita Palmer, who also resigned, was with us only a short time but contributed a spark of enthusiasm and many ideas in her time with us. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

We now have Bland County items for sale at the Regional Visitor Center on Tazewell Ave. in Wytheville. Check out their Gift Shop.

## MARCH 2013

### QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our Book Party, featuring the "Family Histories of Bland County Virginia", was made festive by the lovely spring table and refreshments provided by Barbara Laban, our Hospitality Chairperson, with the help of some of our members. We had an interesting discussion of a few of the stories and facts that members had discovered and enjoyed in the new book. There is certainly a variety of stories and family histories. Although there was not a big turnout from our membership for the book party, we have been very pleased with the wide interest and sales of the book itself.

### BLAND COUNTY HALL OF FAME

We have a new section on our website entitled the Bland County Hall of Fame. Our first features were of Mackey Bane, sister of Bob Bane and her art exhibit in Raleigh, NC, spanning over 65 years of her art work; and a feature on the late Nancy Tate Muncy, the first woman in the Henrico County Police Force.

Our most recent addition features, Dr Barbie Buckner who was awarded the Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship by DOE, NASA and NSF. Dr. Buckner is a graduate of Rocky Gap High School. If you would like to nominate to our Bland County Hall of Fame, please send the information to:

[info@blandcountyhistsoc.org](mailto:info@blandcountyhistsoc.org)

**For items for the Newsletter and/or the website,**

**Contact the Bland County Historical Society**

**Mailing Address:**

**Bland County Historical Society**

**PO Box 416**

**Bland, VA 24315**

**Phone: 276-688-0088**

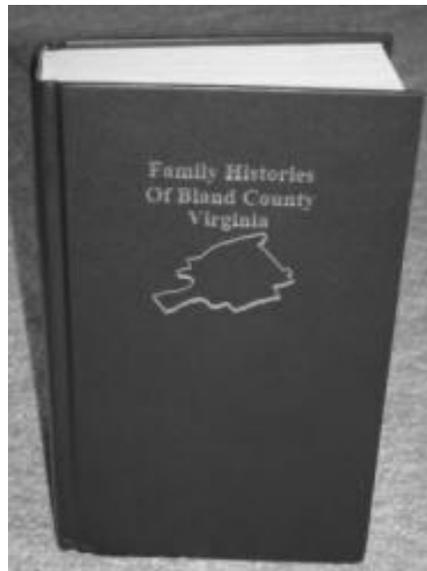
**Sue Ellen Tate, Newsletter Editor**

If you have suggestions for **future programs** at the membership meetings, let us know by contacting the office at 276-688-0088.

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS IN BLAND COUNTY

June 8	<b>BCHS Summer Quarterly Membership Meeting 1:30pm in Bland Library</b>
June 8	Rock-N-4 A Cure Concert , 6pm Bland Fairgrounds
June 15	Rocky Gap Ruritan Flea Mkt & Hotdog Sale all day Rocky Gap UMC, <b>BCHS will have a booth selling Gift Shop Items</b>
June 15	Downtown Bland Street Dance, 4pm
June 15-22	Chautauqua Wytheville
June 21-22	Bland County Relay for Life
July 13	Ceres Car Show
July 20	Bland County Former Residents Reunion, Bastian Union Church Picnic Shelter
August 17	Downtown Bland Street Dance
Sept 6-7	Bland Horse Show
Sept 13-14	Bland County Fair
Sept 21	<b>BCHS Annual Picnic, Noon at the BCHS building</b>
Sept 28	Downtown Bland Street Dance
Oct 5	Lord's Acre Sale
Oct 12-13	Festival of Leaves
Nov 9	Rocky Gap Christmas Parade
Dec14	<b>BCHS Membership Meeting, 1:30pm in Bland Library</b>
Dec 14	Bland Christmas Parade 5pm

## BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY GIFT SHOP



### **FEATURED ITEM – *Family Histories of Bland County, Virginia***

We are pleased to announce the arrival of the Bland County Historical Society's long anticipated new book, FAMILY HISTORIES OF BLAND COUNTY VIRGINIA. The 632-page, hard-bound book contains 124 Bland County family histories that were submitted by the public and includes many photographs and a **complete index containing over 8500 names. This book sells for \$35.00 each at the BCHS office. Shipping is \$6.00 each.**

The Bland County Historical Society is located in the "old jail building". Volunteers are at the jail each Thursday and Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm for research and shopping, and on other days by appointment. ph (276) 688-0088

#### **Purpose of the Bland County Historical Society**

The purpose of the Bland County Historical Society is to bring together those people interested in history, and especially the history of Bland County. Understanding the history of our community is basic to our democratic way of life, gives us a better understanding of our state and nation, and promotes a better appreciation of our American heritage. The Society's major function is to discover and collect any material which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the area. It provides for the preservation of such material and for its accessibility, as far as may be feasible, to all who wish to examine or study it. Through the Society's office, the Bogle Library and this website, assistance with historical and genealogical questions is offered.

Bland County Historical Society is a 501c 3 Non-Profit organization.



**Mailing Address:**  
**Bland County Historical Society**  
**PO Box 416**  
**Bland, VA 24315**

Send e-mail to:  
**[info@BlandCountyHistSoc.org](mailto:info@BlandCountyHistSoc.org)**

**Phone: 276-688-0088**