

Bland County Historical Society

Message from the President

On August 3rd, 2024, the Sluss Family organized a family gathering to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the Sluss Family Massacre. This reunion was a somber yet poignant gathering, as descendants from far and wide came together to honor the memory of their ancestors. The reunion was held at the Gym in Ceres (Bland County, Virginia), about a mile from Sharon Church where a Memorial Marker stands as a silent witness to the passage of time and the resilience of the family.

Despite the tragic history, the atmosphere was one of unity and remembrance. Stories of bravery, survival, and the strength of the Sluss lineage were shared, bringing tears to many eyes and a sense of pride to every heart. The younger generation listened intently, learning about the past that shaped their present. The day was filled with activities designed to celebrate both the lives lost and the enduring spirit of the Sluss family. A communal meal brought everyone together, reinforcing the bonds of kinship.

After the meal, and much needed time together, many of the family traveled to Sharon Church and Cemetery, the supposed location of the Sluss family burial. The family then traveled to the massacre site, many of which had never set foot on the soil where their ancestors were slain. The somber moment was brightened as a beautiful rainbow positioned itself just above the location where their ancestors' home once stood. It was almost as if the slain Sluss family members placed the rainbow to welcome these descendants home. With eyes full of tears and hearts overflowing with love, everyone was rooted directly to this spot, together, where their family members drew their last breath some 250 years ago.

The reunion was not just a remembrance of a dark chapter in history, but a testament to the enduring strength and unity of a family that had risen above adversity.

Eisle Havens
President

2025 & 2026 Plans

Get your old Bland County Fair pictures and archives ready - We are going to the County Fair! 2026 will mark the 100th Anniversary of the Bland County Fair. To help celebrate this momentous occasion, the Bland County Historical Society will be teaming up with the Bland County Fair Association to bring an archives display for our gift shop. This display will be present in 2025 and 2026. The Calendar theme for 2026 will be "100 Years of The Bland County Fair"! Our calendar photo contest will run from August 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025. Email your calendar photo entries to info@blandcountyhistsoc.org

Bland County Fair & Horse Show



Bland County Historical Society
The Bland County Historical Society needs Presenters for our Quarterly Membership meetings in March, June and September.
Do you, or someone you know, have an interesting topic to present? Is there something specific you want to learn about?
Contact us at 276-613-4626 or info@blandcountyhistsoc.org

Located at 19 Courthouse Street (across from the Bland Court House)
PO Box 416
Bland, Virginia 24315
The Bland County Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization.



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In memory of Our Friend,
Barbara Laban

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Past/Current/Future Projects
Membership Information
Addie Nolley

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Calendar of Events

2024 OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT - EISLE HAVENS
VICE PRESIDENTS -
MOLLY THOMPSON
& SUE ELLEN TATE
SECRETARY - RACHEL HAVENS
TREASURER - KATHY SUE HAVENS

BOARD MEMBERS:

KALI ARCHER, VIRGINIA GILLS,
RICHARD TODD INGRAM, NORMA
NEWBERRY, PANDORA SAUNDER-
SIMPSON, BRENDA THOMPSON,
LORRAINE WADDLE, SKYLER
WHEELER

WEBSTORE

Have you visited our website? We have over 20 items listed from our gift shop! From books to afghans, ornaments to hats, we have a nice selection to shop, from the comforts of your home. We will be adding more items as time allows. More items coming soon.

<https://bcchistoricalociety.bigcartel.com/products>

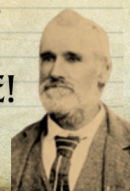
Bland County Historical Society

Quarterly Membership Meeting
September 14, 2024 at 1:30pm
Mechanicsburg Christian Church
10744 E Blue Grass Trail
Bland, VA

Life, Times and Family Tree of
Timothy Elijah Mitchell
(Presented by Joe Carr & Family)
This Family Tree includes Strook,
Mustard, Wohlford, Burton,
among others.

**EVERYONE
WELCOME!**

Light refreshments
will be served





***REMEMBERING OUR
FRIEND:
BARBARA LABAN***



BARBARA SUE LABAN, 81, of Bastian, VA, passed away peacefully on Sunday, May 5, 2024, at Bland County Nursing & Rehab. She was born June 3, 1942, in Columbus, OH, the daughter of the late Edward & Esther Hall.

Barbara attended Bastian Union Church and Bastian Church of God. Her personal walk with the Lord taught her to fear not and be not dismayed because she knew the Lord was with her always. She enjoyed cross stitch and needlepoint, was a Master Gardener (2003) and loved cats.

Barbara achieved a Bachelor of Science degree and Master's of Science degree (1966) from University of Oregon. She went on to be a high school educator for many years. She taught at St. Joseph Catholic School ('72-'74), Bollingbrook Private School ('75-'83) and at Prince George County High School ('83-'96), all which were located in the Petersburg, VA area. She was a past president in the Petersburg, VA, local Learning Disabilities Chapter.

She completed the full process (2003) to become a Black's Fort Chapter member of the Virginia Daughters of the American Revolution in Abingdon, VA.

She and her beloved husband enjoyed many activities together but were especially proud of their participation in the Triangle Search and Rescue, Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Emergency Management Search and Rescue member (2003), the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary – Charleston, WV region in which she held many titles for 10 years and the National Cave Rescue (1994). Once they relocated to Bastian, VA, Barbara enjoyed volunteer work. She was a volunteer for the Bland Historical Society, the Wolf Creek Indian Village, in Hospice for over 10 years and enjoyed working in many capacities during Bastian Union Church activities.

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents, Edward Sterling & Esther Barbara Shircliffe Hall, her husband of 51 years, Dr. Cornelis Laban and her brother, Robert Sterling Hall.

Left to cherish her memory are her two sons & daughter-in-law, Chris & Jessica Laban and Doug Laban; her daughter & son-in-law, Petra Laban & Robert Seubert; her beloved grandchildren, Robbie and Katarina; her siblings, Steven, Gary, Michael, Pamela, Deborah, Cynthia, Russell and Patricia; a special friend and caregiver, Angie Hodge; and her special cat companions, "Mittens" and "Midnight." Funeral services were held Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 1:00 P.M. at A. Vest & Sons Funeral Home Chapel, White Gate, with Pastor Cliff Bowman officiating. Burial followed in the Suiter Cemetery. The family received friends at the funeral home from 12:00 P.M. until service time, 1:00 P.M.

The Laban family was in the care of A. Vest & Sons Funeral Home, White Gate, avestandsons.com, (540) 921-2985.

Barbara will always hold a significant place in the hearts of all at the Bland County Historical Society. She was renowned for her exceptional organizational skills in every project she undertook. She meticulously maintained the flower gardens, ensuring they radiated a pristine and inviting charm for all visitors. Even following her passing, Barbara retained her esteemed position as an Honorary Lifetime Board of Director. Her presence will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

~Bland County Historical Society Board of Directors~

MEMBERSHIP

The Bland County Historical Society is funded solely by membership dues, donations, and gift shop sales. Please consider joining/renewing today.

Yearly Membership Dues

Individual: \$15

Couple: \$25

Students under 19: \$5

Organizations: \$50

Lifetime: \$150

Membership forms are located on our website blandcountyhistsoc.org. For assistance, email us directly at info@blandcountyhistsoc.org or leave a message at 276-688-0088.



INVOLVEMENT

Do you have an article or story you wish to submit to be published in our quarterly newsletter? Is there something you wish us to research? Do you want to volunteer your time to help preserve the History of Bland County? Does your student need volunteer hours for school? We are always accepting new ideas and suggestions!

The Bland County Historical Society is OPEN every Friday from April through December; 9am to 3pm. However, if you need assistance and cannot visit during regular business hours we will gladly attempt to meet you by appointment. You may contact us at 276-688-0088, please leave a message or email us at info@blandcountyhistsoc.org.

Addie Nolley: A Beacon of Youthful Ambition

This summer, we welcomed Addie Nolley, a diligent young volunteer, into our midst. Addie, daughter of Steve and Debbie Nolley, graduated from Bland County High School in 2020. She was the recipient of our 2020 scholarship and has recently achieved her Bachelor's Degree at Liberty University. Addie's academic journey continues as she plans to embark on her Master's Degree in History at Liberty University this Fall.

During her tenure with us, Addie undertook the pivotal task of organizing the archives of the Bland County Historical Society. Her primary focus was on curating an exhibition that would honor the memory of William Howe Sadler, a distinguished war hero from Bland County, showcasing his Purple Heart and other military memorabilia.

PVT William Howe Sadler made the ultimate sacrifice in Germany on December 2, 1944. His only son, Larry, recently entrusted the Historical Society with his father's war medals and cherished memorabilia for safekeeping.

Addie's exceptional efforts resulted in a poignant display within our Military Hall, preserving and honoring these invaluable historical artifacts. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Addie for her invaluable contributions and wish her abundant success in her pursuit of a History Education.



BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"Honoring Those Who Have Paved the Way"

On March 16, 2024, the Bland County Historical Society convened its Annual Spring Membership Meeting. During this event, distinguished recognition was given to individuals aged 90 years or older. Among those in attendance were Nel Bohara and Billy Pauley, while Helen Kidd, unable to be present, had her family submit a written account which was shared during the gathering. The narratives shared provided fascinating insights into their respective life experiences and historical perspectives.

"Turnpikes of Bland County, Virginia"

On Saturday, June 8, 2024, during our Summer Membership Meeting, Robert Hetherington engaged with us to delve into his publication, "Turnpikes of Bland County, Virginia." His presentation proved engaging and enlightening. Noteworthy is Mr. Hetherington's status as a seasoned local author, with a repertoire encompassing works such as "History of Mechanicsburg, Bland County, VA," "Life Along Walkers Creek," "African-American Heritage of Bland County, Virginia," "Journal of Dr. John Howe Hoge 1877-1896," among others.

2024 BLAND COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

In 2016, the Bland County Historical Society established the "Nancy Clark Tate and Zareda Shufflebarger Earnest Memorial Scholarship" in honor of two esteemed members of the society. In May, Eisle Havens, the President of the Bland County Historical Society, attended the 2024 Bland County High School Senior Awards Night to award Ashlyn Danielle Clemons with a \$500 scholarship. Ms. Clemons demonstrated outstanding academic performance in high school-level History classes and aspires to pursue further education with a specialization in History. We extend our best wishes to Ms. Clemons for a successful and fulfilling academic journey ahead.



Bland County Historical Society
PO Box 416
Bland, VA 24315
276-688-0088
info@blandcountyhistsoc.org
www.blandcountyhistsoc.org

Calendar of Community Events 2024

MARCH 16:
QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING
SUBJECT: "HONORING THOSE WHO HAVE PAVED
THE WAY"
LUTHERAN-PRESBYTERIAN FELLOWSHIP HALL
1:30PM

APRIL 5 THROUGH DECEMBER 20:
BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OPEN
FRIDAYS - 9AM-3PM

MAY 4:
CERES DAY
BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOOTH
CERES SCHOOL/GYM
8AM - 3PM

MAY 11 THROUGH OCTOBER 26:
BLAND COUNTY FARMER'S MARKET OPEN
SATURDAYS - 9AM-12PM

JUNE 8: QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING
SUBJECT: "TURNPIKES OF BLAND COUNTY"
BY ROBERT HETHERINGTON
LUTHERAN-PRESBYTERIAN FELLOWSHIP HALL
1:30PM

AUGUST 29, 30, 31:
98TH ANNUAL BLAND COUNTY FAIR

SEPTEMBER 14:
QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING
SUBJECT: TIMOTHY ELIJAH MITCHELL
MECHANICSBURG CHRISTIAN CHURCH
1:30PM

OCTOBER 12 & 13:
BLAND COUNTY FESTIVAL OF LEAVES
BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOOTH
BLAND COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
9AM-4PM

DECEMBER 7:
BLAND TOWN CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION
OPEN HOUSE
BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
11AM-2PM

DECEMBER 14:
WINTER MEMBERSHIP MEETING
BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1:30PM

DECEMBER 20:
SEASONAL CLOSING
BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
9AM-3PM



BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 416
BLAND, VA 24315

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE: _____ MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: _____ NEW MEMBER: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY STATE ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

(Please include your email address if you wish to receive your
newsletters electronically.)

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

CATEGORY	CHECK ONE	AMOUNT
INDIVIDUAL		\$15.00 YEARLY
COUPLES		\$25.00 YEARLY
STUDENTS (UNDER 19)		\$5.00 YEARLY
ORGANIZATION		\$50.00 YEARLY
LIFETIME		\$150.00 (EACH)

I AM ALSO ENCLOSING \$ _____ DONATION

AND/OR \$ _____ IN MEMORY OF _____

PLEASE MAIL YOUR CHECK TO:
BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 416
BLAND, VA 24315

THANK YOU!

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

Bland County, Virginia

Hidden in this puzzle are words related to Bland County. Can you find them all?

G	B	D	G	E	V	G	R	O	S	E	C	L	O	S	E	U	L
J	M	E	F	P	H	X	R	T	P	J	C	E	R	E	S	S	A
S	C	F	A	B	L	T	S	E	R	O	F	I	C	K	W	M	A
H	N	S	X	R	W	E	R	V	Y	J	R	O	C	K	Y	J	V
A	N	A	I	T	S	A	B	H	F	O	S	B	P	J	A	I	L
Y	E	Y	C	R	E	E	K	S	S	E	N	R	E	D	L	I	W
S	E	L	G	A	E	O	Z	K	O	O	R	B	Y	L	L	O	H
Q	J	H	W	M	E	C	H	A	N	I	C	S	B	U	R	G	C
T	G	I	N	T	E	R	S	T	A	T	E	K	Q	H	Y	X	T
G	N	K	I	K	E	N	O	D	N	A	R	C	I	B	N	R	D
G	I	I	M	G	I	G	T	E	K	R	A	M	V	W	O	D	R
X	T	N	D	G	O	N	X	A	K	R	S	N	Q	N	S	N	A
S	N	G	A	G	R	I	C	U	L	T	U	R	E	Y	I	A	H
L	U	C	K	Z	P	H	I	W	S	T	E	K	C	O	R	L	C
V	H	Z	H	G	C	S	I	L	D	J	A	A	S	P	P	B	I
A	G	W	R	F	Q	I	E	S	U	O	H	T	R	U	O	C	R
C	U	G	D	K	R	F	Y	Q	T	N	G	N	I	M	R	A	F
T	T	U	N	N	E	L	S	X	N	I	H	R	G	S	B	C	Z

CREEKS

INTERSTATE

TUNNELS

MARKET

COURTHOUSE

JAIL

AGRICULTURE

FOREST

FISHING

HUNTING

HIKING

RICHARD

MECHANICSBURG

CERES

HOLLYBROOK

BASTIAN

GROSECLOSE

FARMING

BLAND

CRANDON

WILDERNESS

EFFNA

ROCKY

PRISON

BEARS

EAGLES

ROCKETS