



HFI Newsletter 2013

Wysong Blacksmith Shop

Dottie Kessler Archives & Historic Document Collection

HFI has a very active Archives Committee who are investigating digital methods of cataloging, indexing, and incorporating scanned images into a virtual collection. Committee members visited the Historical Society of Western Virginia and viewed PastPerfect, a comprehensive software package which is the standard for the management of museum collections and is used by over 7500 organizations throughout the world. A powerful computer, a high grade extra-large flatbed scanner, and storage media would be equipment needs. Also mentioned were a digital camera and a camera stand.

The committee will be investigating other ways of cataloging, indexing, and incorporating scanned images into a virtual collection, but Past Perfect accomplishes these and many other tasks with ease. Because it is the standard in the museum world it also offers the potential for linkage with other users, making it a doubly desirable solution. If any HFI member or friend would like to volunteer for this committee, please contact committee chair, Gretchen Greiner, or leave a message at 473-3077.



Fincastle

HFI 2013 SAVE THE Dates:

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

OCT. 2013

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SOCIAL

DEC. 7, 2013

HOLIDAY HOME TOUR & MARKETPLACE

DEC. 14, 2013

HFI Annual Membership Social will be hosted by Karen and Tony Triplett at their home, Hawkshead Farm, which has been on the home tour twice in the past. If you missed it, you missed a real treat! The Triplets have generously offered to host the HFI Membership Holiday Open House on December 7, 2013 from 6-9 pm, so you have another chance to see this remarkable estate. Refreshments and beverages will be provided by the HFI Board of Directors. Invitations will be sent to members in late November.

**Holiday
Home Tour
with
Marketplace**

THE ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

This photograph below is of the young ladies of Fincastle, circa 1906. The group has been identified as possibly being the “Do As You Please” Club. Still needed is positive identification of the sixth and seventh ladies from the left as well as the child. If you know who they are we would welcome your help! The ladies are (from left to right): Gainor Ross, Mary Ruiz (Mrs. Walsh), Ida Derbridge (Mrs. Hayth), Mary Bell Simmons, Mary Hopkins Godwin, Mamie Mehaffy (?), Lizzie Mehaffy or Minnie Ross (Peck) and a child. One of the many fascinating documents in the Dorothy Simmons Kessler Collection is an item attributed to the Botetourt County Brank Library Book Fair of June 26, 1971 titled “Did You Know????” Here are some excerpts:

1. “Did You Know” that there was once a tannery just below the reservoir at the Big Spring? There was also a tannery at the far western end of Back Street and on the western side of Catawba Street which was owned by a Mr. Carper and Mr. Vanmeter. This was in 1822.

#8. “Did You Know” that the cross bar from the gallows and some logs from the old jail (which was used before the one now housing the library) were used in the barn on “Bolton’s Hill”?

#17. “Did You Know” that Mr. John Bosserman found the mineral spring just outside Fincastle on Rt. 606 in the early 1800s? He saw a seep of water with iron rust color and dug into it. It was known as the Bosserman Mineral Spring and was on the John Bosserman property. This was the spring that brought so many Southern visitors to Fincastle.

#18. “Did You Know” that there was a Fincastle newspaper in 1781 and the name of it was the “Fincastle Patriot”? Look for more nuggets of Fincastle history in the next newsletter!



The
Archives

Committee continues its work cataloging and scanning the impressive amount of information in Dottie Kessler's collection. Many of the items we have completed date back to the early days of Fincastle history. We will soon be tackling the scrapbooks Dottie painstakingly prepared for each year since the 1970s. The committee meets twice a month on Thursday mornings, and would welcome new volunteers for sorting, reading, and recording the contents of each item. Some of the documents are not of a quality suitable for scanning, so we also need volunteers to type transcriptions so that they, too, will be accessible. Call 992-3647 for more information. Committee Members include: Gretchen Greiner, Chair; Lyn Burton, Shirley Sydnor, Pat Simmons, Ruth Schwendeman, Nancy Adamson, Lynne Bolton, Peggy Crosson, Karen Shriver, Missy Sigurdson and Pam Thacker.

Scanner Donations in memory of Dottie Kessler:

Friends and members of the Dorothy Simmons Kessler family made dedicated donations to the HFI Archives Committee for the purchase of a professional grade document scanner. We thank the following: Jean C. Sandock, Mr. & Mrs. Hix C. Bondurant, Sarah Kohler, Maryelyn Shelby, Brenda R. Simmons, Kieffer & Jacqueline Gaddis, Heinrich & Elizabeth Huber, William M. Yowell, and Patricia Simmons.



HFI Recognizes Lifetime Members

Historic Fincastle, Inc.(HFI) would like to recognize all our lifetime members and express our appreciation for their contributions to HFI.

Anita & James Firebaugh, Carole & Chuck Gieger, Sandy Stokes, Pam Wiegandt, Priscilla Richardson, and Sarah Pardee Early

Carole and Chuck Geiger moved from Williamsburg, VA, to Fincastle in 1997 – the first time in their lives that they CHOSE the place they wished to live instead of the Marine Corps directing where they would live! Chuck, a retired Marine Corps aviator, and Carole, an educator, own C Geiger Consulting, LLC, specializing in leadership, organizational, and professional development. They ‘found’ Fincastle while on vacation, fell in love with The Olde Manse, Fincastle, its people, and the area, and they put down roots they did not know they could grow. The Olde Manse, formerly the Presbyterian Church’s parsonage-cum-small farm, sits on the site of an 1800 building. The original four rooms of the present farmhouse date from about 1840. The property includes a schoolhouse/office built in 1860 for the ministers’ church and teaching responsibilities. The Geigers live a deep commitment to preserve and maintain the historic properties and to conserve the woodlands that surround them.

Anita and James Firebaugh. Anita Firebaugh is a former HFI president who falls in love with Fincastle all over again on each visit to town. Anita loves history and has written numerous historical articles for The Fincastle Herald and other publications. She also maintains a website, botetourthistory.com, that offers historical tidbits about the county. So far, Anita has traced her Botetourt roots back to the late 1700s and she is the seventh generation of her family to live in the county. She lives with her husband, James Firebaugh, on his farm outside of Fincastle. James also is a seventh generation Botetourt Countian, and members of his family have worked the land they live on since 1859.

Pam Wiegandt. Ralph and I and our then toddler sons, Eric & Steve moved to Troutville in 1971. Within a year or two, Ralph was sharing Dub Minter's two room law office on Roanoke Street. Dub was a beloved friend until his death and he introduced us to many Fincastle folk, all of whom seemed to have a gift for hilarious storytelling. My love for Fincastle has less to do with "by the book" history and everything to do with these friends and their stories. Ralph & I built our house in Fincastle and moved in the first week in February 1993 in time for the epic ice storm a week later. The main feature of the house is the view of Fincastle and the distant Alleghenies. Ralph used to rise every morning, go out on the deck & exclaim, "We live in paradise!" Indeed. Many of our early Fincastle friends have died, as has Ralph; their houses in town & headstones in Godwin remind me of their stories. I love being part of Fincastle's present story and the clarity that comes from the privilege of living many years in this place.

Priscilla Richardson My original interest in Fincastle came from my family tree. An ancestor served in Mosby's Raiders. Looking around Fincastle I could sense how he could have walked the streets -- or ridden a horse on them -- and imagine his contribution to the CSA cause. Then as I learned more about Historic Fincastle and I came to see how you all are saving something very important for the future of this whole region. Every school child can come on a day trip to see how folks used to live, cook, earn a living and have fun. They get some hands-on history right here, where their own ancestors may have lived, not some far away historic spot. Also, rather than let the tourist dollars go to other places, we here have something unique -- a history location that modern people live in, yet one that's worth taking the time to visit. Because of all these things and more, I support HFI and its important work in preserving our heritage.

2012 HFI Memberships

Individual Memberships	Family Memberships	Friend Memberships
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Michelle Alexander Crook	Pete & Nancy Adamson	Robert & Sue Bagnoli
Peggy Keith Barnett	Terry & Kathy S. Austin	Evelyn Myers Besley
Susan Bentley	Dr. & Mrs. Max Bertholf	Lynne Bolton
Mary Black	Frank & Eleanor Branin	Hix & Lillion Bondurant
Faye Caldwell	John & Patricia Brown	David & Alison Bondurant
H. Joe Camper	Kerry & Marsha Campbell	Mitch & Bobbie Lou Bowman
Brenda F. Chapman	Arlene & Bob Cheeseman	Carol & Alan Brenner
Angela P. Coon	Donna & Ed Clements	Joseph Buhrman
Peggy Crosson	Scott & Susan Critzer	Sarah & Bruce Bulmer
Gene Crotty	W.E. & Jo Dunbar	Kip & Lyn Burton Burton
Rose Ellen Gravett	Jim & Marcia Helms	Janet Coon
Glenna Hinson	Sidney & Tommy Hunter	Peggy C. Davis
Patricia A. Honts	Garland & Jane Jones	Sally Eads
Joseph Johnson	Brian & Marni Jones	Charles & Judy Echols
Barbara & Pat Kagey	Gary & Dreama Kattenbraker	Dudley & Martha Emick
Julia & Michael Klapproth	George & Louise Kegley	Mike & Cathy Goad
Kenneth & Deborah Lane	Mahlon & Gret Kidd	John & Genevieve Goss
Dorothy Langford	Richard & Becky Koffman	Lee & Gretchen Greiner
Harriet Little	Ed & Ruth Korth	Steve & Ann-Marie Hamblin
Geneva Mateer	Brett & Mary LaGue	Betty B. Hawes
Edgar C. Mayse	James W. & Wilma Lambert	Martha C. Henry
Lee B. McBride	Kim & David LaPrade	Robert H. Hoffman
Frank Taylor Miller	Betty & Mack Luber/Bullard	Melodye Hollingsworth
Emily Moore	Ron & Valerie Lucas	Roger & Anne Howard Holnback
Robert Murray	Gail McMillan	Robert & Helen Holt
Gretchen Noterman	Lee & Luther Minnix	Carol & Dev Jarratt
Nancy M. Pauley	Joella & Stewart Morris	James M. Johnston
Mrs. Billy W. Proffitt	Mack & Marcia Neighbors	Rodney & Mary Catherine Layman
Virginia Reynolds	Allen & Patricia Nelms	David & Trish Morris
Karen Shriver	Betty Newman	Helen & Kerry Morris
Virginia Dodd Smith	Natalie & Harry Norris	Martha Murray

Patron Membership	Lifetime Memberships	Friend Memberships Cont.
Hemco Gage & Plasma-Tec	Sarah P. Early	William D. Watson
James E. Hickenbotham	Anita & James Firebaugh	Kirk & Bettina Wehner
Karen & Henry Hicks	Carole & Chuck Gieger	Donald & Ulla Wetherington
Charlotte & Dan Jones	Priscilla Richardson-Hopper	C. Locke Wysong
L&M Properties, LLC	Sandy Stokes	Mary E. Wysong
Barry & Dorothy Maxfield	Pam Wiegandt	Peg & Jerry Wysong
Lacey & Carmela Putney		
Charles J. Wehrmeister		

Corporate Sponsors		
Bank of Fincastle	Bank of Botetourt	Town of Fincastle

Sampling of Vistors to Fincastle



Rabbi Peter Schweitzer and Oren (Photo by Gretchen Greiner)

Elementary school classes continue to tour the town with HFI volunteer guides in cooperation with Botetourt Historical Society. Virginia Standards of Learning concepts are emphasized by tour guides.

Lucy Wysong and husband toured with guides, Pat Simmons and Melodye Hollingsworth.

Rabbi Peter Schweitzer and his son, Oren, 11, of New York City visited Fincastle recently to trace their family roots here. Their roots trace back to a German family, the Guggenheimers, who settled in Fincastle in the mid 1800's according to court records and other historic documents. The Guggenheimers were merchants here and owned land and slaves. Peter and Oren were met at the courthouse by HFI volunteers, Marni Jones and Sally Eads. Sally assisted them in searching court documents such as land transfers and census records. The New Yorkers were then taken on a tour of Fincastle, which culminated at historic Santillane, where they spent the night. Owner and HFI volunteer, Lissy Merenda, also offered them a tour of the home and quick history lesson of Lewis and Clark's ties to the area. Peter and Oren left Fincastle to tour other areas of Virginia.

HFI Town of Fincastle Tour Guide

The HFI Board is producing a new printed tour guide for visitor use. Guide design will be done by Ben Moser, a native of Fincastle. The guide will have an expanded list of structures, new street map, and more photos. QR codes will be included for use by visitors with smart devices to access the tour information electronically. The guide will include Peck Cottage, circa 1784, one of the very early small log homes clustered around the town spring. The home is a simple log structure of rough cut logs that are exposed in the original front room and loft. An original casement window can be seen in the attic. A small dugout for food storage still remains. The original dimension of the one-room house was 16 X 20 feet. Additions include a sun room, bedroom, kitchen, and study.



HFI Supports the Proposed Lewis & Clark Eastern Legacy Trail

On Saturday, November 3, 2012, at 3:00 pm, Botetourt County became a national Meriwether Lewis & William Clark community. This historical distinction is rooted in the many, varied connections the two Expedition-famed explorers had to Botetourt County both before and after their westward venture. Their history and connections to Botetourt County will be signified forever by the placement of an NOAA Lewis & Clark disk on the front lawn of the Botetourt Courthouse. The disc is the second one to be installed in the Commonwealth, the first being at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. It is a shared gift, funded 50 % by the national organization, The Lewis & Clark Trust, Inc., and remaining balance equally paid by Botetourt County, Town of Fincastle, Botetourt Historical Society and Historic Fincastle, Inc.

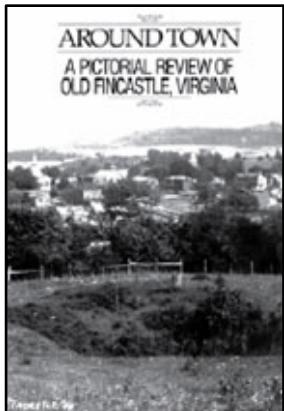
Activities that eventually led to honoring Botetourt County's distinguished connection to Lewis & Clark began 44 years ago. In 1968, U.S. Congress enacted The National Trails System Act that provided for the development of scenic, historic, and recreational trails. The Act states its purpose is to "...provide for ever-increasing outdoor recreation needs of an expanding population...to promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation.." This act was amended ten years later with the passage of the 1978 National Parks & Recreation Act that "officially" established the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail. Since then, thousands upon thousands of people world-wide have visited The Expedition Trail, visiting communities along a path that begins in Woods River, Illinois and ends at Cape Disappointment, Oregon.



In 1996, author Stephen Ambrose wrote "Undaunted Courage," a compelling factual account of the lives and mission of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. A large part of the story focuses on Lewis' upbringing in Virginia, and the book, itself, is thought to have spurred a growing interest in the "whole story." Little by little, from 1996 to 2006, momentum increased for learning more about the two men and their lives before and after the Expedition. In fact, part of the preparations for the 2003 – 2006 Expedition Bicentennial Commemoration involved identifying and documenting possible Lewis & Clark sites of interest located east of the Mississippi River. In 2007, only a year after the Bicentennial celebration, an Eastern Legacy Trail National Historic Landmarks "theme study" was conducted. The movement to continue and complete a coast-to-coast Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail had officially begun! Eastern sites were listed and recommendations regarding the sites were made. Eighteen of these were in Virginia, and three of these are in Botetourt County – Greenfield Plantation, Santillane, and the Fincastle Historic District. A recommendation for the town stated, "... the connection of William Clark to the town and celebration held there in 1807 should be documented; and 2) a historical marker placed in the vicinity of the courthouse would be appropriate."

With expertise provided by Botetourt County, two county employees - David Lalush and AJ Kyle - have installed the NOAA Lewis & Clark disk. Under the leadership of Pete Peters, Director, Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, and Botetourt Lewis & Clark Project volunteers, Kip Burton and George Sydnor, much time was given to installation details to ensure the disk was placed exactly as required by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration.

The ceremony was held on the front lawn of the Botetourt courthouse with guests; Peyton C. (Bud) Clark, 3rd great grandson of General William Clark, Jim Mallory, Vice-Chair Lewis & Clark Trust, Inc. and Scott Lokken, regional representative of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. VMI Cadet Color Guard and Pipe and Drum contingent participated, as well as local Boy and Girl Scout Troops, and various volunteer community members. Peggy Crosson of Preservation Virginia was recognized for work on this project. Master of Ceremony was the Honorable Judge Malfourd (Bo) Trumbo. Following the dedication, the disk was unveiled and the Botetourt Historical Society hosted a reception for the public at the Botetourt Museum.



Around Town: A Pictorial Review of Old Fincastle, VA

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Thank you!