



# HISTORIC FINCASTLE, INC

April 2012



Phot

o (R-L) Jessica, Steve, Josie, and Beth Wiegandt, Pam Wiegandt, Harriet and Ian Little, Tracy Bishop, Carol Brenner, Marni Jones, and Rob Hagan.

## ***RALPH WIEDANDT MAKES BEQUEST TO HFI***

Ralph Wiegandt thought of HFI during his estate planning and made a generous financial bequest to HFI from his estate. This bequest will allow the Archives Committee to fast forward their plans to purchase software and scanning equipment for archiving historical documents. The Board of Directors is very thankful for this thoughtful contribution to our organization and assisting us in meeting our goals for 2012 and beyond.

## **IN THIS ISSUE:**

2011 Membership Listing

Proclamations to long time members

Focus on Archives

Historic Fincastle and QR Codes

## **HFI Honors Ralph Wiegandt and Harold Little with Proclamations of Service**

Members of Historic Fincastle, Inc.(HFI) presented Proclamation of Service honors to the families of the late Harold Little and Ralph Wiegandt at the organization's annual membership open house. The open house, held at Academy Hill in Fincastle, was attended by more than 100 members. HFI volunteers, Peggy Davis and Rob Hagan, coordinated the presentation of these proclamations.

Ralph Wiegandt was recognized for his many culinary contributions to the group and his dedication to securing water and sewer service to the town. Ralph also served in an advisory capacity for many HFI activities and was a staunch supporter of preservation of the town and its history.

Harold Little served the organization through artistic contributions. He was a member of the first planning committee for the Fincastle Festival Art Show. He created the current HFI logo which depicting six town steeples, including the Botetourt County Courthouse and five churches. Harold also contributed prints of his oil painting, Cronise Fields, for an HFI poster fundraiser.

Both men were remembered for their dedication to their families and wives, Pam Wiegandt and Harriett Little. HFI members joyfully cheered these two gentlemen as respected members of our town and community and we will greatly miss them both.

## Historic Fincastle getting QR Codes for town visitors

Historic Fincastle, Inc. (HFI) and a group of Virginia Tech (VT) students are working on a joint project making new technology available to town visitors through an Urban Planning Seminar course. Quick Response (QR) Codes will be developed by the students along with an expanded web site to give visitors immediate access to a tour map with suggested routes. Also, historical information about Fincastle and the historic buildings in town will be accessible.

The student group of four is composed of; Alex Kosnett from Dunn Loring, VA a double major in Environmental Policy & Planning and Biochemistry; Chris Piott from Lynchburg, VA majoring in Environmental Policy & Planning; Eric Park from Richmond, VA majoring in Public & Urban Affairs; and Greg LeMieux from Clinton, IN majoring in Public & Urban Affairs and Geography. These students are supervised by Dr. Diane Zahm in this seminar course. Student groups have the freedom to design a capstone project during their final year at VT. Their choices are based on their interests and identified needs in urban planning. The students design the project, develop benchmark deadlines, and assign tasks and duties among the group.

Plans for the project include a Google map of the Town of Fincastle with markers for areas of interest.

Visitors to town could access the information via the internet or by use of smart phone technology by scanning a QR Code. The codes will be strategically located in town for convenience to visitors. An

audio component is also being explored for buildings built prior to 1800. HFI officers, Carol Brenner and Marni Jones, have met with the students and are very excited about their energy and technology knowledge.



VT Students: Eric Park, Alex Kosnett, Chris Piott and Greg LeMieux with Marni Jones at HFI office



## 2012 Members & Friends Membership Thank you

Dear Friends and Members who have joined HFI for 2012: Your contribution will help HFI to carry out its mission to support the preservation of the historic, physical, cultural and natural resources of Fincastle and its surroundings. The 2012 membership list will be in our next newsletter.

## Elizabeth and Israel Christian Scholarship Program:

The Elizabeth and Israel Christian Scholarship is offered annually by Historic Fincastle, Inc. as a way to commemorate the history of Fincastle and encourage and support high school students who are planning to pursue post-secondary education. The 2011 winners are Mallory White from Lord Botetourt, who is attending Virginia Tech, and Shannon Kessler from James River, who is attending Radford University. Both students received \$500 toward college expenses. This scholarship program has been awarding scholarships since 1999, with a total of \$12,000.00 to local students.

## James Matten Early Cabin Wish List:

We are making enhancements to the displays in the Early Cabin and need the following items to complete this project:

- candle mold
- butter churn
- crocks that would have been used for food storage
- hand-dipped candles to display
- kerosene lamps

If you have any of the above items and would be willing to donate them to the Early Cabin displays, please call 540-473-3077 and leave us a message about your item. Thank you!

## 2012 HFI Board of Directors

*Carol S. Brenner & Marni Jones, Co-Presidents*

*Lissy Merenda, Secretary*

*Missy Sirgurdson, Treasurer*

**Board Members:** *Lynne Bolton, Alan Brenner, Lyn Burton, Sally Eads, Gretchen Greiner, Melodye Hollingsworth, Marcia Neighbors, and Karen Shirver*

### 2012 SAVE THE DATES:

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING	OCT., 2012
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SOCIAL	DEC. 1, 2012
HOLIDAY HOME TOUR & MARKETPLACE	DEC. 8, 2012



## **Fincastle and Shenandoah Valley Supports Heritage Tourism Santillane Hosts Reception for Legacy Partners and National Park Service**

*(L-R: Congressman Robert Goodlatte and Lissy Merenda)*

*When Dan and I bought Santillane seven years ago, we really didn't quite grasp its historical significance. Our careers have always been around education, volunteerism and community engagement. Santillane has given us the perfect platform to intertwine the three. Now, we know we have an even more special role. That role is to maintain the integrity of a national treasure and safeguarding its heritage as part of the Legacy Trail and the entire Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Four members of the National Park Service visited Fincastle on March 3 to validate inclusion of Santillane on the Legacy Trail (i.e.) events prior and after the National Expedition known as The Corp of Discovery. Documents in the Fincastle Court House, various maps delineating the route taken by Clark and Lewis as they headed north thru Augusta and Rockbridge Counties, the site of Greenfield Plantation, the toll house on what is now Springwood Road and Santillane, the home of Clark's wife to be, Julia.*

*It seemed only fitting that the reception for our special guests and Legacy Partners, the Town of Fincastle, Historic Fincastle Inc., Botetourt Historical Society and Preservation Virginia be held at Santillane. The goal was not only to offer southern hospitality but to do so in a fashion that would mimic the manner of entertaining in the early 1800's. As 75 guests arrived, they were offered Mint Juleps while live music from an autoharp flowed though the downstairs. The array of southern fare served was reminiscent of that which Julia Hancock and her mother and father might have served to guests. It included sweet potato biscuits with country ham, smoked salmon, cheeses, fruits, pork tenderloin, crab spread and sweets. The house was a flicker with candlelight and the wood stove and downstairs fireplaces were roaring. Our organization partners greeted guests at the door, took coats and provided valet service. All we were missing were the carriages to arrive with the Jefferson, Preston, Breckinridge guests, and of course, Julia Hancock and William Clark. Dan Merenda mentioned, "What was significant was the attendance of four members of the Board of Supervisors, the Town Mayor, Town Manager and Congressman Goodlatte and his wife, Mary Ellen. This is a genuine show of support and collaboration."*

*A letter received recently from James Mallory, vice chairman of the Lewis and Clark Trust, Inc. had this to say about the visit.*

*"I truly hope there is a way to eventually build an Educational & Tourist Center to direct the traveling public to Fincastle. Fincastle should be a "destination" not a drive by on the interstate. One should tell the story of Julia and William Clark's wedding using those grand documents in the court house and the other would be the story of Nicholas Biddle coming to Santillane to start editing the exploration journals. Both are Fincastle ONLY pieces of the Lewis and Clark Story. Lewis' name comes first in the title of the exploration but Fincastle is pure William Clark and Julia Hancock."*

*Submitted: Lissy Merenda of Santillane*



## 2011 HFI Memberships

### **PATRONS:**

Dr. Henry Bowen  
 Charles & Judy Echols  
 Dudley & Martha Emick  
 James E. Hickenbotham  
 Karen & Henry Hicks  
 John & Julia Patterson  
 Samuel Wysong

### **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS:**

Michelle Alexander  
 N.M. (Corky) Bolton  
 Robert Bowman  
 Faye Caldwell  
 H. Joe Camper  
 Melville Carico  
 Dale & Gloria Carter  
 Brenda F. Chapman  
 Angela P. Coon  
 Peggy Crosson  
 Gene Crotty  
 Virginia Fodge  
 Rose Ellen Gravett  
 Deborah Hedrick  
 Glenna Hinson  
 Patricia A. Honts  
 Joseph Johnson  
 Dorothy Langford  
 Monty Leitch  
 Kaye Reynolds Lowe  
 Weldon L. & Susan Martin  
 Geneva Mateer  
 Frank Taylor Miller  
 Martha Murray  
 Betty Newman  
 Nancy M. Pauley  
 Mrs. Billy W. Proffitt  
 Virginia Reynolds  
 James Rickman  
 Beverly Stafford  
 Katherine Watts  
 Margaret R. Webb  
 Poo Wyche

### **FAMILY MEMBERS:**

Evelyn Myers Besley  
 Frank & Patricia Bramlett  
 John & Patricia Brown  
 Neal & Heather Brush  
 Bill & Rhonda Campbell  
 Arlene & Bob Cheeseman  
 Ed & Jeanie Claunch  
 Vernon & Jane Daniel  
 Mike & Cathy Goad  
 Katie, Maggie, Anne, Eva Grumbine  
 Lee & Magae Hartzell  
 Jim & Marcia Helms  
 Sidney & Tommy Hunter  
 Garland & Jane Jones  
 Barbara & Pat Kagey  
 Gary & Dreama Kattenbraker  
 Patty & Richard King  
 Richard & Becky Koffman  
 Ed & Ruth Korth  
 Jim & Wilma Lambert  
 Kim & David LaPrave  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph D. Logan  
 Betty Luber & Mack Bullard  
 Pete & Bette Mahony  
 Dan & Lissy Merenda  
 Lee & Luther Minnix  
 David & Trish Morris  
 Joella & Stewart Morris  
 Mack & Marcia Neighbors  
 Stan & Carolyn Nelson  
 Beth & Steve Pappas  
 Don & Judi Race  
 Jack & Betty Spigle  
 George & Shirley Sydnor  
 Josh & Lori Taube  
 Richard & Paige Ware  
 Bill & Pat Watson  
 Kirk & Bettina Wehner  
 Mrs. E.C. Westerman  
 Pete & Freda Wood

### **FRIEND MEMBERSHIPS:**

Samuel & Judy Aman  
 Robert & Sue Bagnoli  
 Dan & Karen Beasley  
 Dr. & Mrs. Max Bertholf  
 Bob & Sue Birmingham  
 Lynne Bolton  
 David & Alison Bondurant  
 Hix & Lillion Bondurant  
 Mitch & Bobbie Lou Bowman  
 Carol & Alan Brenner  
 Kip & Lyn Burton  
 Scott & Susan Critzer  
 Lynn & Raul Cuervo  
 Peggy C. Davis  
 Stan & Connie Diez  
 Sally Eads  
 Lois N. Farmer  
 John & Genevieve Goss  
 Lee & Gretchen Greiner  
 Steve & Ann-Marie Hamblin  
 Betty B. Hawes  
 Robert H. Hoffman  
 Melodye Hollingsworth  
 Robert & Helen Holt  
 Brian & Marni Jones  
 Charlotte & Dan Jones  
 Julia & Michael Klapproth  
 Allen & Ann Layman  
 Barry & Dorothy Maxfield  
 Emily Moore  
 Helen M Morris  
 Edith Mayhew Moses  
 Robert & Martha Murray  
 Allen & Patricia Nelms  
 Patsy & Steven Powell  
 Erik & Ruth A. Schwendeman  
 Karen Shriver  
 Pat Simmons  
 Kathleen & Michael Sloan  
 Dr. & Mrs. W. Graham Stephens  
 Eleanor Neville McDowell Thompson  
 John & Linda Thornton

**Continued....**

<b>LIFETIME MEMBERS</b>	<b>CORPORATE SPONSORS</b>	<b>FRIENDS CONTINUED</b>
<p>Sarah Early</p> <p>Anita &amp; James Firebaugh</p> <p>Carole &amp; Chuck Gieger</p> <p>Sandy Stokes</p>	<p>Bank of Fincastle Bank of Botetourt</p> <p>&amp;</p> <p>Botetourt County Board of Supervisors</p>	<p>Paul &amp; Terry Tucker Scott &amp; Barbara VanCleaf Patty &amp; Rick Vari Bob &amp; Reddie Waid Donald &amp; Ulla Wetherington Pam Wiegandt H. Douglas &amp; Trish Wilhelm Bob &amp; Ruth Anne Wysong C. Locke Wysong Chris, Conner &amp; Heather Wysong Peg &amp; Jerry Wysong Mary E. Wysong</p>



## Focus Project for 2012: The Archive Committee

(Photo L-R: Shirley Sydnor, Ruth Schwendeman, Lyn Burton, Pat Simmons)  
The Archives Committee is progressing nicely with indexing the items of the Dottie Kessler collection, and we are finding it fascinating work! Each time we meet we always find interesting nuggets of Fincastle history. For instance, recently we opened a large manila envelope and found that it contained a stack of typed half sheets of lot searches conducted by Charles Burton, a noted Botetourt historian and genealogist. Each sheet contains the full history of a given lot in one

place, which would save the researcher from having to trace back through multiple deed books at the Court House to find this information. There are indications that Charles Burton intended to put this information in book form, but so far our search has not turned up a reference to a book. Each item in the collection is handled with care.

Here are the procedures the committee members follow each time we meet:

- Information on an item is recorded on a catalog form, with particular attention paid to a description and to potential key words that someone might use to locate the information.
- An accession number is assigned to each item and is written on the back of that item and on the catalog form for the item.
- At the present time information from the catalog form is transferred to an Excel spreadsheet. The future disposition and current location of each item is identified on the catalog form and the item is placed into the appropriately labeled box (for example, digitize and return to originator, digitize and preserve). This makes it possible to quickly locate each item that has been cataloged using its accession number and box location. We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of PastPerfect, the museum cataloging software which has been ordered.

All of this work is taking place in the HFI office, where a computer donated by the Bank of Fincastle is in place on a new work table. Several Archives Committee members will be participating in online training to be held in early May on cataloging using PastPerfect. Training for additional members will be held in the near future. If you are intrigued by glimpses of the past please consider joining the dedicated group working on this treasure trove of Fincastle history left to HFI by Dottie Kessler. We are also seeking volunteers with computer skills and a love of organizing to aid in the cataloging and scanning process. We would welcome your help! Call Gretchen Greiner at 992-3647 for more information. **Committee Members include: Gretchen Greiner, Chair; Shirley Sydnor, Pat Simmons, Ruth Schwendeman, Nancy Adamson, Lynne Bolton, Peggy Crosson, Karen Shriver, Missy Sigurdson and Pam Thacker**





## Focus on Historical Homes in and around Historic Fincastle

### RUSTIC LODGE - CIRCA 1802

Rustic Lodge dates to around 1802 and the homestead originally contained 920 acres. According to an article which appeared in the Fincastle Herald on September 5, 1895, the home was a plain, unpretentious abode presided over by Mrs. Martha Diggs Burwell. Today there are approximately 14 acres remaining with the house. The lawn is landscaped with flower and herb gardens using, as much as possible, plants of the 1800's. The home is an excellent example of an early, one and one-half story dog-trot log home with an 'L' off the back which is of post and beam construction. The log portion is approximately 48 feet long and 20 feet wide. *'A Girl's Life in Virginia Before the War'* says that Rustic Lodge was surrounded by a forest of grand old oaks. Today only one of the large oaks remains. From all indications both the log structure and the post and beam 'L' portion have always been covered by clapboard. Rustic Lodge has been remodeled and or restored into a comfortable home for the modern day family. During the process, great care was taken to preserve the basic structure, reproduce details, such as chair rail and baseboard, uncover and repair the original heart pine floors and preserve the four remaining original windows. In several areas of the house logs and beams were exposed to reveal the rustic beauty of the structure. As in Mrs. Burwell's era, Rustic Lodge once again is a plain, unpretentious abode, yet has all the modern conveniences of today.

### RESTORATION OF RUSTIC LODGE

Sometime in the distant past people had torn out the original windows on the front of the house and replaced them with Victorian four pane windows. The front porch was also made to look Victorian with ornate railing. Oak flooring was installed to cover the heart pine floors. A bathroom had been installed upstairs with linoleum flooring. Rough plaster over sheet rock had been used on the walls and ceilings throughout the house. In the upstairs bedrooms OSB board was screwed into the heart pine so carpet could be installed.

My goal was to preserve the original structure, create a more energy efficient home, have modern conveniences, and make it comfortable both for myself and guests. In doing this I did not want to build any room additions on the structure.

Beams and logs exposed in the Kitchen/Keeping Room area of the house were never meant to be exposed; however, I wanted the look and feel these two features would give to the house. I had the logs in the foyer exposed first to show the beauty of the oak logs and secondly, to show the way a 'dog-trot' home was constructed. The wood boards in the foyer ceiling and wall in the upstairs hall are new; however, the exposed nails



you see were taken from the original laths found over the logs in the foyer. When the sheet rock was taken off the walls in the two upstairs bedrooms we found that these two rooms originally had chair rails so chair rails were duplicated based on the original remaining in the upstairs hall. A closet was added in the guest room using an original door taken from the downstairs portion of the house. The only pine logs in the house, were exposed in the bedrooms. These logs tie the two log cabins together. The vanity in the upstairs bathroom is made from an old wooden door and door facing that came from an early 1800's Botetourt home. The two pine wall cabinets in the bathroom were made from old heart pine and the nails came from the original lathing. All flooring in the log portion is the original heart pine. Also, all window frames, doors and most of the chair rail and baseboard are original. In the side foyer (next to the kitchen) the ceiling is original as are the wooden walls. This area was at one time a side porch and one original porch post remains in the corner beside the table. Four original windows

remain; two, in the living room and two in the upstairs guest room. All wide board walls (room over kitchen, closet in keeping room and walls in side foyer area) are original. If you look closely you can see the hand plane marks. All fireplace mantels are original with the exception of the one in the family room. The family room mantel was constructed to cover a very unsightly brick mantel built in the 1950's. The wood used in this mantel came from the same house as the material used in the upstairs bathroom. When the fireplaces in the bedrooms were uncovered we found they had been filled in with handmade bricks and used with a wood stove. The fireplace in the living room had been partially torn out and never repaired. I chose, for energy efficiency, to keep the upstairs fireplaces closed and added the small stoves you see today. In the living room I had an electric insert installed. All of these features can be changed at a later date if someone chooses to do so. Flooring in the kitchen, keeping room, side foyer and room over the kitchen is re-milled antique heart pine. The doors in this area are made of re-milled antique heart pine as well. The hinges were made by a blacksmith in North Carolina. The front porch was enlarged to help with water problems because the house is built below the crest of the hill. Great care was taken to make it 'fit' the home. I am an outdoors person and wanted a place to spend time outside and entertain guests so I also had a deck added at the rear of the house. All gardens and landscaping that you see today have been added. Rustic Lodge is once again a very comfortable, quiet home.

## BURWELL FAMILY OF RUSTIC LODGE

Mrs. Martha Digges Burwell moved to Botetourt County from the home in King William County she had shared with her husband, Major Nathaniel Burwell, prior to his death. Coming with her were her children, Nathaniel, Thomas, Martha, Lucy, Mary and Frances along with approximately 50 slaves. Martha, born in 1756, was the daughter of the Honorable Dudley Digges, Counselor of the Colonial Government, member of the House of Burgesses and a resident of Yorktown, Va. She was referred to as one of the legendary 'Belles of Williamsburg', prior to the Revolution. She and her family were very close to Secretary Thomas Nelson and his family. In fact, one article states she was more like a daughter to Secretary Nelson before the war. Her husband, Nathaniel Burwell, was born in 1750 and died in 1801. Major Burwell was in command of artillery and rose to his rank of Major just before the close of the war. He served with distinction and honor and was commended by General Washington for his efforts. He married Miss Martha Digges on March 11, 1780.

According to Letitia Burwell in 'A Girl's Life in Virginia before the War', the family was removed to Botetourt County because they were impoverished by high living, entertaining company and a heavy British debt. It is reported that Mrs. Burwell was intimate with the family of Lord Dunsmore, the last Royal Governor of Virginia. Upon arrival in Botetourt Mrs. Burwell's company was sought and engaged by such honorable people as General Breckinridge, who is reported to have been a frequent guest at Rustic Lodge. Mrs. Burwell lived to be ninety-two years old and at the time of her death, it is reported, that she was still an excellent reader. Nathaniel, her son, married Lucy Carter of Shirley plantation on the James River and went on to eventually own a lot of what is now Salem, Virginia. He was active in early government of Roanoke County and was named to the first Board of Trustees of Roanoke College. Thomas, another son, remained and farmed the land of Rustic Lodge until he and his brother sold the property in 1858, ten years after the death of their mother. Frances, a daughter, married Lewis Harvey of Roanoke County in 1807. They lived at 'Speedwell' in the Starkey area of Roanoke County. In reading Martha Digges Burwell's will she also had a daughter named Martha who never married and lived in Rustic Lodge with her brother Thomas and his family. There were also other children mentioned in Mrs. Burwell's will; Lewis, a son in Richmond, along with two other daughters, Mary Dawson and Lucy Bowyer. Letitia Burwell, in her book, mentions a grand carriage pulled by four horses belonging to the Burwell's. I have found that this carriage was purchased by Nathaniel Burwell in 1781 and delivered by boat to their home in King William County. This must have been grand because daughter, Martha, mentions it in her will and gives it to her niece.

Much has been written about this family, especially Mrs. Burwell. She is buried right outside the front door of the Fincastle Presbyterian Church. Part of the inscription on her tomb reads,

"A gentlewoman, kind, cheerful and affectionate to all around her she was beloved at home and admired abroad.

A Christian whose long life was spent in the practice of feminine virtues, her example as inspiration and her memory never to be forgotten."

### How did I get to Rustic Lodge?

I spent many days during the summer in my youth with close friends at a cabin on what is now Stephens Road and always admired this old home sitting on the hill. My husband and I both loved old homes and we always admired this home on our travels in Botetourt. When we were being transferred back from Atlanta, we found that it was for sale and purchased it along with the field beside it. It is the style home that I love and fits my furniture perfectly. I had a vision immediately about what it could look like if someone 'fixed it up' and today that vision has been carried out. I don't know how to describe it other than it just 'fits me' and is so comfortable. Since the day we moved in I have always felt 'at home' here and just love spending time both in the house and yard.

Submitted: Karen Shriver

### ***Focus on HFI Volunteer:***

Many HFI volunteers and members complete tasks regularly as volunteers of the organization. HFI would like to recognize Gretchen Greiner for her countless hours as chair of the HFI Archives Committee. Gretchen says her love of history began with a course in American Political History in college. "It was the most difficult course I have ever taken and the most rewarding as well. The professor insisted that for every historical event studied we research two differing points of view, then articulate our own opinion on the subject. He taught us so much more than history...he taught us how to think!" Later she pursued library science and then instructional technology, so working on the Kessler collection combines many of her interests. After retiring from teaching in the Frederick County Public Schools in Md. and two years working on their farm, Gretchen and her husband, Lee, moved to Botetourt County. They previously lived in Harpers Ferry, W. Va. Also in her spare time, she enjoys visits with her grandchildren, gardening, exercising and reading. We thank Gretchen for her enthusiasm, leadership, and willingness to be a HFI volunteer.

