

# NEWSLETTER



Vol. 45 No.1 - Spring 2023  
Walter Jenny, Editor

## *A Great Start For 2023!*

There's a lot going on with your Historical Society!

The library opened in February, and attendance is already strong. Despite COVID concerns, visits were higher in eight of the last ten months of 2022 compared to 2021, and visits this March are up at least 25% over March of 2022.

Our membership is also up. We have more dues-paid members now than at *any time* since at least 2013, with progressive growth the last three years. Increasing the number of dues-paid members increases the Society's revenue without raising dues, so it's a good for our members too. While we're still shy of our annual goals, we are making progress.

As you'll see in this newsletter, we have a busy schedule ahead of us this year. We hope you'll have an opportunity to take advantage of some of our events this year. As always, there are volunteer opportunities - a library volunteer, fulfilling research requests, a "Living Spirit" or guide at Sinking Spring Cemetery in July, an indexer (training provided), updating our African American database on Ancestry.com, or simply helping restock our rack cards at local hotels and visitors centers.

One of the most exciting upcoming projects is the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Over the next three years, the Virginia 250 program will help highlight events leading up to our break from Great Britain, and of course Southwest Virginia played an often overlooked but significant role in that process. Martha Keys will take the lead in organizing our local committee which will coordinate events in Washington County with the VA250 Commission in Williamsburg and surrounding counties, and the Society will be involved as those events unfold. Feel free to contact Martha if you'd like to be involved. You'll see more about VA250 in coming newsletters. Stay tuned!



## ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR JUNE 24

**The Society's 2023 Annual Meeting will convene on Saturday, June 24, 2023 at the Higher Ed Center in Abingdon.**



Members will socialize between 6 and 6:30 pm before we handle business. After a brief financial report and the president's report, the Society will elect our officers for the next two years, as well as two of our six directors who will hold three-year terms.

Karen McClanahan, our corresponding secretary, is stepping down from the Board after several years of dedicated and invaluable service. As a result, that seat will be vacant and needs to be filled.

The Nominating Committee has recommended that the following individuals be elected:

President: Walter Jenny (incumbent)

Vice President: Mark Hagy (incumbent)

Secretary/Treasurer: Charles Seaver (incumbent)

Corresponding Secretary: Patricia Musick Hatfield

Board seats: Charlie Barnette and Brett Compton (incumbents)

Dinner will be served at 7:00, followed by music by Jack Hinshelwood.

**Tickets for the dinner are \$35 per person and can be purchased at the Historical Society office or through our website store.** You can also attend without buying dinner, or via Zoom; a registration link will be sent out with our "For Members Only" email. If you have not been receiving that email, by the way, please contact our office so we can make sure we have your correct email address.

By the way, if you're receiving this newsletter, your dues are current for this meeting. We are switching to an anniversary dues renewal system, so your membership will be good for twelve months after the last month you've paid your dues. You will receive renewal notices before the end of your current year.

We hope you'll join us for this year's annual meeting. It will be good seeing and visiting with everyone in person again. Thank you for supporting your Historical Society!



## Third “Reclaiming Our History” Conference Set For June 17

Our third virtual conference on Washington County’s rich African American history will take place this year on June 17.

“Reclaiming Our History” will again examine challenges that face African American genealogical researchers, and will expand on what we’ve done in Washington County to break through the 1870 brick wall. We will discuss the African American section of Abingdon’s Sinking Spring cemetery and ideas to research and preserve it.



Our keynote speaker this year will be Renate Yarborough Sanders. A member of several genealogical societies and a blogger, she has taught and consulted on genealogical research across the country, including Mount Vernon, the College of William and

Mary and the Midwest African American Genealogy Institute. This retired educator specializes in teaching beginning to intermediate research methodology and sharing specific ways to research ancestors of color – both before and after Emancipation. We’re excited to have her join us this year.

The Society’s “WashCoVA African American Family Tree” has increased by over 200 individuals and over 300 new records since last year’s conference, thanks to the efforts of volunteers like Sue Lessenberry of South Carolina and Carol Hawthorne-Taylor of Bristol. The tree features local cohabitation records and voting rolls from the 1860s which help identify ancestors of families broken apart by slavery and their descendants.

The conference, of course, is not just for African American researchers. It’s a great way for anyone to learn more about the history of our county and how to improve their own researching skills. The registration fee is \$5. Videos and information from the 2021 conference can be viewed at <https://hswcv.org/reclaimingourhistory.php> on our website.



## Did You Know...

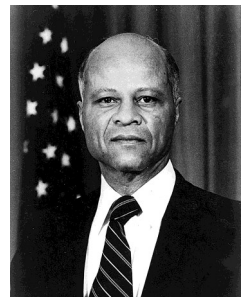
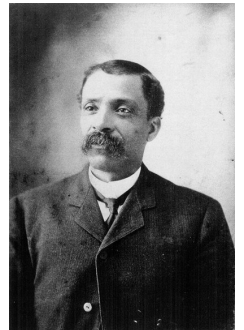
Dr. Bascom Slemple Waugh (1908-1992) of Glade Spring was a flight surgeon for the Tuskegee Airmen?

That Frank Trigg Jr. (1851-1933) was a college president in three states? His grandson, Dr. Harold Trigg Jr., developed the methadone treatment program at Beth Israel Hospital in New York, one of the largest in the world.

That John F. Reinhardt (1920-2016), born in Glade Spring, was a United States Ambassador and director of the U.S. Information Agency?

That Frankie Newton (1906-1954) from Blacksburg in Washington County was considered one of the greatest New York jazz trumpet players of his era?

That Thaddeus Harris (1828-1871) and his family owned and operated Abingdon’s Tavern on Main Street for over 100 years, and was a founder and principal of the Kings Mountain school in Abingdon?



## Did You Get Your Bulletin?

The Society’s *Bulletin* has been mailed to all of our dues-paid members. It’s 96 pages full of information about Washington County history and people. If you have not received this year’s edition, please contact our office. It’s a benefit of your membership that we’ve been doing since 1936, at no additional cost to you.

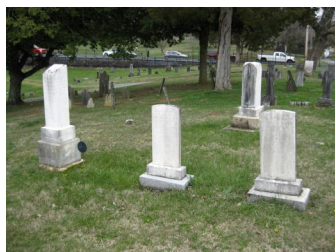


# Virginia Highlands Festival A Busy Time For The Society

The first weekend of the Virginia Highlands Festival has become a busy week for the Historical Society, as thousands of visitors visit Abingdon during the town's biggest tourism event.

Since Robert Porterfield began the summer festival in 1949, the ten-day event highlights the arts, history, and culture of Southwest Virginia. It's an excellent way for the Society to share the county's rich history with the public.

Our resident cemetery expert Charlie Barnette will conduct a workshop in Sinking Spring cemetery on the safest way to clean cemetery headstones without causing damage. The workshop will be free of charge, and D2 kits will be available for purchase.



Before and after pictures of headstones Charlie cleaned in last July's workshop, and how they look in March 2023. Great work, Charlie!

Saturday evening will be the popular "Living History" guided tour. Society volunteers will tell the stories of some of the fascinating individuals buried at Sinking Spring who helped build Abingdon, beginning with Henry Creswell's burial in 1776. The cost is \$5 cash per person, payable at the gate.



Our fourth Conversation with Jefferson will take place on Sunday and Monday evenings, featuring Monticello's Thomas Jefferson (Bill Barker). This year he's teaming up with President John Adams (Steve Holloway of Williamsburg) at the ballroom of the Martha Washington Inn & Spa.

## Quick Schedule...

Saturday, July 22:

Cemetery headstone cleaning workshop, Sinking Spring Cemetery, with Charlie Barnett. Free.

10th annual Living History tour, Sinking Spring Cemetery. \$5

Sunday, July 23: Conversation with Jefferson and Adams, Martha Washington Inn ballroom, 7 pm. \$25.

Monday, July 24: Conversation with Jefferson and Adams, Martha Washington Inn ballroom, 7 pm. Cash bar opens at 6. \$25.

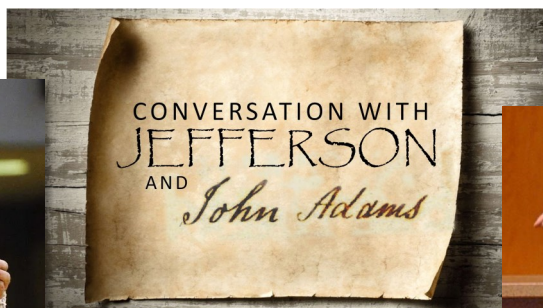
Imagine these two Founders paying a visit to America's western frontier, sharing their visions for the new country and conversing with the citizenry. Jefferson and Adams worked closely together until the political vitriol of the 1800 elections separated them; they didn't speak to each other until they had retired from politics and, in 1812, resumed their friendship. Their correspondence until their deaths on July 4, 1826 provide unique insights into their relationship and the early history of our nation.

The programs begin at 7 pm, and sponsorships are available. Tickets are \$25, and one child 12 or under can attend at no charge when they are with a paid adult. Tickets can be purchased in advance on EventBrite (small handling charge), through the Historical Society office, or at the door until sold out.



# VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS FESTIVAL

Our volunteers and staff put in many hours of planning and research into these programs. We appreciate your support of these programs, and hope you'll be able to attend them this July.



# The Fincastle Resolves

*In 1775 the Lead Mines in present-day Wythe County were the county seat of Fincastle County, and as such was chosen as the site for the meeting of the regional Committee of Safety that had been called for by the First Continental Congress. Fifteen prominent men, many from present-day Washington County, were chosen, and they drafted the "Fincastle Resolves" or resolutions. The county seat would shortly thereafter move to Christiansburg, as Fincastle was divided into Montgomery, Washington and Kentucky counties of Virginia.*

*The Fincastle resolution was dated January 20, 1775, three months before the battle of Lexington, five months before the battle of Bunker's Hill, and nearly a year and five months before the Declaration of Independence. Other counties in Virginia had passed similar resolutions in 1774 and forwarded them to delegates attending the Continental Congress, but the Fincastle Resolutions were the first adopted statement by the colonists which promised resistance to the death to the British crown to preserve political liberties. They were sent to George Washington, then a member of the convention in Philadelphia and an acquaintance of Col. William Preston.*

"In obedience to the resolves of the Continental Congress, a meeting of the Freeholders of Fincastle county, in Virginia, was held on the 20th day of January, 1775, who, after approving of the association framed by that august body in behalf of all the Colonies, and subscribing thereto, proceeded to the election of a committee to see the same carried punctually into execution, when the following gentlemen were nominated: The Rev. Charles Cummings, Colonel William Preston, Colonel William Christian, Captain Stephen Trigg, Major Arthur Campbell, Major William Inglis, Captain Walter Crockett, Captain John Montgomery, Captain James McGavock, Captain William Campbell, Captain Thomas Madison, Captain Daniel Smith, Captain William Russell, Captain Evan Shelby, and Lieutenant William Edmondson. After the election the committee made choice of Colonel William Christian for their chairman, and appointed Mr. David Campbell to the clerk.

The following address was then unanimously agreed to by the people of the county, and is as follows:

"To the Honourable Peyton Randolph, Esq.: Richard Henry Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton, Esquires, the Delegates from this colony who attended the Continental Congress held at Philadelphia. Gentlemen, Had it not been for our remote situation, and the Indian war which we were lately engaged in, to chastise those cruel and savage people for the many murders and depredations they have committed amongst us (now happily terminated, under the auspices of our present

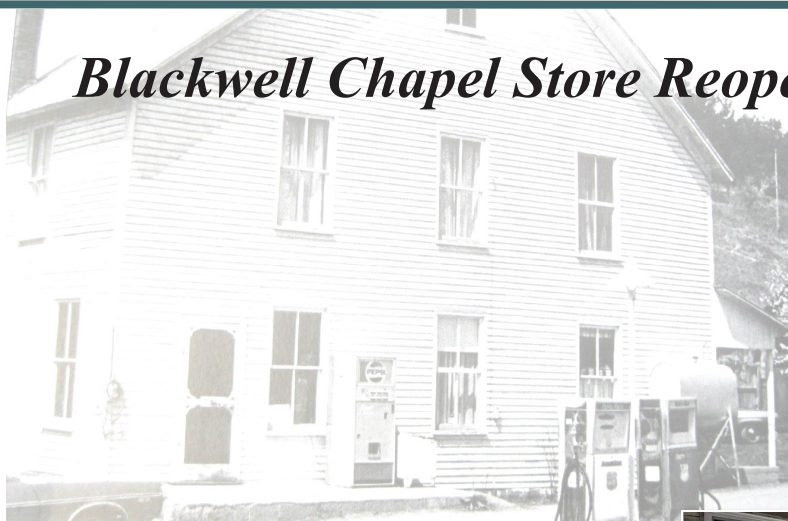
worthy Governour, his Excellency the Right Honourable the Earl of Dunmore) we should before this time have made known to you our thankfulness for the very important services you have rendered to this country, in conjunction with the worthy Delegates from the other provinces. Your noble efforts for reconciling the Mother Country and the Colonies, on rational and constitutional principles, and your pacifick, steady, and uniform conduct in that arduous work, entitle you to the esteem of all British America, and will immortalize you in the annals of your country. We heartily concur in your resolutions, and shall, in every instance, strictly and invariably adhere thereto. We assure you, Gentlemen, and all our countrymen, that we are a people whose hearts overflow with love and duty to our lawful sovereign George III. whose illustrious house, for several successive reigns, have been the guardians of civil and religious rights and liberties of his subjects, as settled at the glorious Revolution; that we are willing to risk our lives in the service of his Majesty, for the support of the Protestant religion, and the rights and liberties of his subjects, as they have been established by compact, law, and ancient charters. We are heartily grieved at the differences which now subsist between the parent state and the colonies, and most ardently wish to see harmony restored, on an equitable basis, and by the most lenient measures that can be devised by the heart of men. Many of us, and our forefathers, left our native land, considering it as a kingdom subjected to inordinate power, and greatly abridged of its liberties. We crossed the Atlantick, and explored this then uncultivated



wilderness, bordering on many nations of savages, and surrounded by mountains almost inaccessible to any but those very savages, who have incessantly been committing barbarities and depredations on us since our first seating the country. These fatigues and dangers we patiently encountered, supported by the pleasing hope of enjoying those rights and liberties which have been granted to Virginians and were denied us in our native country, and of transmitting them inviolate to our posterity. But even to these remote regions the land of unlimited and unconstitutional power hath pursued us, to strip us of that liberty and property with which God, nature, and the rights of humanity, have vested us. We are ready and willing to contribute all in our power for the support of his Majesty's government, if applied to constitutionally, and when the grants are made by our own representatives; but cannot think of submitting our liberty or property to the power of a venal British parliament, or to the will of a corrupt ministry. We by no means desire to shake off our duty or allegiance to our lawful sovereign, but on the contrary shall ever glory in being the loyal subjects of a Protestant prince, descended from such illustrious progenitors, so long as we can enjoy the free exercise of our religion, as Protestants, and our liberties and properties, as British subjects. But if no pacifick measures shall be proposed or adopted by Great Britain, and our enemies will attempt to dragoon us out of those inestimable privileges which we are entitled to as subjects, and to reduce us to a state of slavery, we declare, that we are deliberately and resolutely determined never to surrender them to any power upon earth, but at the expense of our lives. These are our real, though unpolished sentiments, of liberty and loyalty, and in them we are resolved to live and die. We are, Gentlemen, with the utmost esteem and regard, your most obedient servant."



# Blackwell Chapel Store Reopens



*The screen door creaks open and shut again like a screen door should* as customers enter the Blackwell Chapel store on Rich Valley Road. Mike Hoback immediately welcomes them, by name if an old friend - but newcomers are also quickly made to feel at home here.

Mike, his wife Judy and his brother Steve have reopened the country store after months of do-it-yourself labor and renovations to serve the needs of the community for another generation.

Old country stores, along with schools and churches, once were the hub of rural life in Washington County and elsewhere. Most have closed, and many have disappeared from the landscape, so rural residents have had to drive miles into town for basic supplies.

This store was built in 1908 by Mike and Steve's great-uncle and great-aunt, G.W. and Senah (Blackwell) Herndon, and they operated it until 1945. After a couple of changes of management, the brothers' uncle and aunt, William and Virgie Crabtree, were the sole proprietors from 1950 until it closed in 1988.

After their retirements, Mike, Judy and Steve had the opportunity to acquire the property in 2021. They refinished over 2,200 square feet of the original wood first floor and added new electrical wiring, a septic system, a heating and cooling system, and new restrooms, windows, roof and parking lot. Rocking chairs invite good conversation around a wood fired stove. They plan to remodel the second floor for an Airb&b or something similar.

Rich Valley Road (Route 700) originally ran along the north side of the building, and the imposing storefront with large windows naturally faced the road. In the 1950s the highway was rerouted to the south side, so the Crabtrees flipped the entrance to the south end as well. The gas pumps along Rich Valley Road are gone, and a new handicap-accessible porch with rocking chairs welcomes visitors. The new owners plan to fix up the north end to make it functional once again, with easier access to the store's new off-road parking area.



The freshly painted shelves carry locally made products as well as essentials like soft drinks, cornmeal, flour and paper towels. The 1930s-era meat box has a new compressor, and the ancient ice cream cooler will carry cold treats during hot summer months, just like in the old days.

The original "cash register" was a desk in which credit accounts were kept for the store's customers. It's still on display in the store.

They also features a new deli run by Judy Hoback with ham and roast beef sandwiches, hamburgers and hotdogs. A lunch special is offered Tuesday through Friday from 11 to 5, and mouthwatering breakfasts are served on Saturdays from 8:30 to 10:30. The store is closed on Sundays and Mondays.



So if you happen to be in the neighborhood - and even if you're not - make sure you visit the Blackwell Chapel. It's a labor of love. If you've never been in an old country store, you'll enjoy it. They'll make you feel right at home.



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## Monetary Donations

November 2022 through February 2023

Anonymous - *Southfield MI*  
Pauline and David Deck - *Charlottesville, VA*  
Rachel Fowlkes - *Abingdon, VA*  
Dr. Diana Hulse - *Abingdon, VA*  
Walter and Rose Ann Jenny - *Abingdon, VA*  
Estate of Mary Fay Kelley - *Los Angeles, CA*  
Susan Lowry - *Abingdon, VA*  
Janna McConnell - *Miami, FL*  
Steven Mulvaney - *Tannersville, VA*  
Dr. John and Nancy (Sullivan) Ray - *Knoxville, TN*  
David Snodgrass - *Greenwood Village, CO*

### MEMORIALS

#### Jane Oakes

Jean and William Mitchell Trust - *Charlottesville, VA*

#### James Herbert "Jimmy" Repass

Charles and Sandra Spears - *Johnson City, TN*

Wayne and Sue Brickey - *Blountville, TN*

Renee and Paul Gaskins - *Bristol, TN*

John P. McConnell Family Foundation - *Raleigh, NC*

Donald and Sue Ann Lockmiller - *Johnson City, TN*

Bob and Jill Caramenico - *Mooreville, NC*

James and Kathy Gainor - *Collegeville, PA*

Sara Fritz - *Damascus, VA*

#### Randy Smith

Ben and Merry Jennings - *Abingdon, VA*

## Donations of Items

Anonymous	Bristol, VA	<i>History of Company A, 37th Battalion, Virginia Cavalry, C.S.A.</i> by Capt. George T. Williams
Anonymous	Abingdon, VA	<i>A History of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, 1887-1972</i> <i>The Free Zion Church on its 50th Anniversary, 1972-2022</i>
Anonymous	Abingdon, VA	2 photos of downtown Meadowview, Sue's Party House Maiden family info (Grace, Daniel and Carter)
Anonymous	Abingdon, VA	Two Green Springs Presbyterian Church Directories, 1978 Meadowview United Meth. Church Directories, 1998 Meadowview United Methodist Church history
J. Dave Dameron	Gray, TN	<i>King's Mountain - The Defeat of the Loyalists</i> by Dave Dameron <i>A Guide of the Battles of the American Revolution</i> by Dave Dameron and Theodore Savas
Dr. Jerry and Helen French	Abingdon, VA	Collection of history books and Civil War history books
Pat Hatfield (from the Susan Cox Collection)	Abingdon, VA	<i>Floyd County Virginia - A History of its People and Places</i> Reference history book of Wyoming Co. WVA.
Anne Maio	Abingdon, VA	Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club newsletters - 1999 through 2021
Betty Ringley	Waleska, GA	Book - <i>Celebrating The Bradleys</i>
Margaret Trigg Roper	Silver Springs, MD	Civil War portrait of William King Trigg and biography
Kathy Shearer	Emory, VA	Collection of historical documents, books and journals
Kari Kemper Tudor	Damascus, VA	Book - <i>American Settlements and Migrations</i>
Joan Worley	Abingdon, VA	4 Yearbooks - Virginia High School 1973 and 1975), Virginia Junior High 1971 and 1972
Joy O'Dell Yates	Cleveland, TN	100 year old chalkboard / Craig Mill information School papers, hat, ribbons and badges

*Thanks to all our donors and members for your support!*



## Trigg Portrait Donated



The Historical Society received this family treasure earlier this year from Margaret Trigg Roper of Silver Spring MD.

William King Trigg was born in Abingdon on February 26, 1841 and died on July 21, 1862 in Richmond. He was the eldest son of Dr. Daniel Trigg and his wife Anna Munford (Tompkins) Trigg of Abingdon.

Trigg received a fatal wound on June 30, 1862 during the Civil War while charging across open ground at the Battle of Frayser's Farm. An ambulance corps rushed him to the house of their cousin, Ellen Conway, who lived in Richmond. When Trigg's younger brother Daniel received the news, he also went to Richmond; their widowed mother and their older sister, Nannie Byrd (Trigg) Greenway, arrived soon from Abingdon.

William told his family about his part in the battle and gave his Le Mat revolver to Trigg before dying there on July 21, 1862. Trigg's mother and sister took William's body to Lynchburg, where they buried the twenty-one year old in the Presbyterian Cemetery in the plot of his grandfather, Alexander Tompkins, who was buried next to him in 1864.



His headstone reads:

*"Brave as the bravest he marched away,  
Triumphant waved our flag one day,  
He fell in the front before it."*

We appreciate the donation of this valuable family heirloom by the Trigg family.



One of our dedicated volunteers, Diane Hulse, has been sorting and organizing a collection of prescriptions and other records from the drug store Charles Gibson operated in Abingdon during the late 1800s.





The Historical Society  
of Washington County, Virginia, Inc.  
P.O. Box 484  
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Tues. - Fri. 10 am - 4 pm  
Sat. 11 am - 4 pm



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