



Living History Tour Shines

The Historical Society's Living History tour at the historic Sinking Spring Cemetery, held this year on July 23, continues to highlight Abingdon's Virginia Highlands Festival.

Although shortened by an approaching thunderstorm, the annual event about the lives of men and women buried on the original site of Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church remained popular this year.

Here are the stories of this year's Spirits:

Rev. James McChain (1814-1869, portrayed by Will Clark) served as the pastor of Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church from 1843 until his death in 1869. He and his wife Jane Gibson, the granddaughter of Rev. Charles Cummings, and their children James Gibson McChain and Amelia Charlotte McChain, are all buried at Sinking Spring.

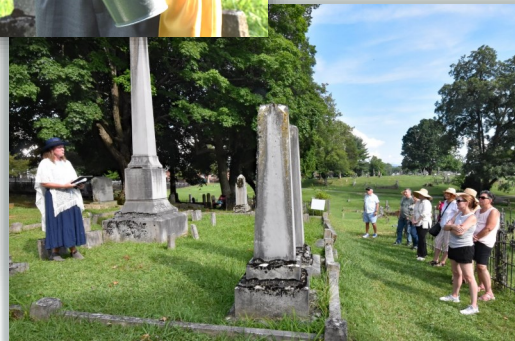
Merchant **William King** (1769-1808, Michael Henningsen) parlayed an inheritance from his grandmother into a salt mining and distribution empire that made him Abingdon's wealthiest citizen before his death at age 39. With no descendants, he bequeathed \$10,000 to establish the William King Academy. His 1803 brick home on Court Street in Abingdon still stands.

Connally Trigg Litchfield (1829-1909, Kelly Moore) led Company D of the 1st Virginia Cavalry (Washington Mounted Rifles) and was wounded four times in battle during the Civil War. In 1864 a pistol ball struck Capt. Litchfield in the right eye and remained lodged there until it fell out in July 1897, 32 miserable years later. He was a son of George V. and Rachel (Trigg) Litchfield of Abingdon.

Ella Helena Anna Kleiber Findlay (1880-1904, Lacey Dillard) was born in Berlin and married Abingdon's Alexander Findlay while he was studying violin there. A child prodigy on the piano, she performed around the country and taught music with her husband before she died at the age of 24. Their son Charles Kleiber Findlay was a gifted cellist.

John Goodson Kreger (1827-1893, Mike Hagy) was the Clerk of Court in Washington County for many years. During his tenure,

Continued on Page 4



Grasselli Awarded Society's Highest Honor

The Historical Society's Davis-McConnell Distinguished Service Award was presented in June to Eleanor Grasselli in recognition of her "extraordinary service extending over a period of many years" to the Society.

Eleanor has served as President and member of the Board of Directors, editor of the *Bulletin*, and as a library volunteer and researcher. Her leadership and commitment have inspired all of our volunteers. She has made a positive and significant difference in the Society.

Thank you, Eleanor!



Walter Jenny, Pat Carty, Martha Keys, Nancy Leasure and Charles Seaver presented Eleanor with a plaque from the Society honoring her years of service

Annual Meeting

The general membership of the Society held the 2022 Annual Meeting at the Higher Ed Center in Abingdon on June 25.

Vice President Mark Hagy presided over the meeting in the absence of President Walter Jenny, who attended via Zoom after a covid diagnosis earlier in the week. Mark presented Walter's Annual Report, and Secretary/Treasurer Charles Seaver gave a financial overview of the organization.

Board members Cathy Hagy and John Neal were elected unanimously to continue serving on the Board. Under our bylaws, the six directors serve staggered three-year terms, and the officers serve two year terms.

In 2021 the Society fixed business membership dues at \$50. Now businesses can become members for ten years with the payment of \$450, a 10% discount over paying annually.

After a catered dinner, John Legard gave a presentation in recognition of the 250th anniversary of the founding of Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church. The call to Rev. Charles Cummings to serve the spiritual needs of Presbyterians on the American frontier gave stability to white settlement in Southwest Virginia. John was followed by Michael Henningsen who interpreted Cummings for the audience.

Many thanks to Mark, Charles, John, Michael, and the entire team who put together the annual meeting. It was good to be back together under one roof again, face to face. We hope you'll all be able to attend next summer's meeting.

Joy Eller Helton, 84, passed away on Monday, August 8, 2022, in Johnston Memorial Hospital.

Joy was born in Tazewell County, raised in Glade Spring, and lived in the Abingdon area for most of her life. She graduated from East Tennessee State University with a degree in Social Work. Joy worked with children in the Tennessee Department of Human Services, from where she retired. Afterwards, she worked at the Holston United Methodist Home for Children. Joy was a member of Pleasant View United Methodist Church and was an active member of the Daughters of the American Revolution.



She was preceded in death by her parents, Howard L. and Gladys Hinkle Eller; sons Lee Andrew and Donald Scott Helton; nephew Jeffrey Todd McThenia; and lifelong friend Helen Richardson. She is survived by her husband of 64 years, Donald Eugene Helton; sister Gayle McThenia and husband Clayton; brother Tom Eller; nieces, nephews and cousins. Burial was at Glenwood Cemetery in Bristol, TN.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested to the Holston United Methodist Home for Children, P.O. Box 188, Greeneville, TN 37744 (423-638-4171).

From Charles Seaver: "Joy was a faithful volunteer going back years at the Court House and from 2001 to about 2010 at the Station. Her husband, Don, also volunteered during the same period. Don was a member of the Board, and served as Acting Treasurer when Gerry Henninger was seriously ill during 2005-2006."

We extend our condolences to her family.

Jefferson, Hamilton Visit Abingdon

The gilded ballroom of the Martha Washington Inn in Abingdon was the setting on July 25 for the third "Conversation with Jefferson" program sponsored by the Historical Society.

Thomas Jefferson, portrayed by Monticello's Bill Barker, returned with Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, who was interpreted by Ian Rose of Philadelphia. This was Ian's first appearance in Abingdon.

The two gentlemen conversed with the 217 citizens in attendance as if they were visiting Abingdon on the frontier in 1804. They debated issues of the early years of the Republic that still resonate today. Jefferson and Hamilton both served in George Washington's cabinet but had differing views for the future of the new nation.

Hamilton, a hero of the American Revolution, died in July 1804 after a duel with Jefferson's Vice President, Aaron Burr.



Bill and Ian attended a downtown tour hosted by Dr. Garrett Jackson the previous evening, and were impressed with Abingdon's collection of early buildings and histories.



Programs like this not only raise money for the Society, but increase awareness of Washington County's role in early American history and the importance of historical tourism to the local economy. Discussions are already underway for Mr. Jefferson to return in 2023 with another of his friends. We appreciate everyone who attended as well as the volunteers who made the program a success.



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Mark Hagy - Walter & Rose Ann Jenny - Martha Keys

Continued from Page One

Washington County issued its own currency, and Kreger hand-signed each bill. When Kreger learned in December 1864 that the Federal troops were approaching, he loaded up what Washington County records he could in a wagon and hid them in a cave outside the town. He and his wife Mary Elizabeth (Bradley) Kreger had nine children; he also served as a trustee of Martha Washington College.



Judge Robert M. Hughes (1821-1901, Walter Jenny) was a lawyer and prominent secessionist newspaper editor in Richmond who married Eliza Mary Johnston of Abingdon in 1850. After the war, he became active in Reconstruction and

ran unsuccessfully for Governor and Congress as a Republican. President Grant appointed him to the federal bench in eastern Virginia, where he served for 32 years. The family maintained a summer home in Abingdon called Val Verde where he raised thoroughbred horses.

Minnie Baugh (1857-1935, Donna Gayle Akers) lived her entire life in the family home on Abingdon's Main Street, where she operated an apothecary and store. An avid genealogist and traveler, Miss Minnie printed postcards and brochures about Abingdon's history and laid the foundation for the Society which was organized the year after her death.



Many thanks to our volunteers who put in hours of research and planning to make this event a success, serving as guides and staffing the ticket table. Thanks also to Frost Funeral Home for providing a hearse and water on that hot day, to the Town of Abingdon, and to the many good citizens who attended.

Headstone Workshop Draws A Crowd

Our resident cemetery expert, Charlie Barnette, provided a workshop during the Festival on the best way to clean cemetery headstones and monuments using D2. It was well attended, as you can see! Thanks for all you do, Charlie!



Juneteenth Conference Attracts 40

The Society's second annual African American history conference, "Reclaiming Our History," was held virtually on June 18 with forty people participating. Several cousin connections were made during the 3 1/2 hour conference.

The keynote speaker was Ruth D. Hunt of New York. A member of the Historical Society, the DAR and the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, she spoke of the research she's done on her ancestors from the Glade Spring and Saltville areas. Her great-great grandparents were Richard and Elizabeth Lewis of Washington County.

Dr. Jerry Jones led a discussion about prominent African Americans from Washington County, including members of the Glade Spring and Abingdon Town Councils and Ambassador John Reinhardt from Glade Spring.

Links to the videos of the conference will be available on the Historical Society website. The family trees research project is available through Ancestry.com under the name "WashCoVA African American Family Tree." It now contains the names of 4,212 individuals with connections to Washington County and continues to grow. The next conference will take place in June of 2023; all are invited to attend.



Monetary Donations

March 1 through July 31, 2022

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In Memory of Charles C. Seaman and Shirley W. Carrier

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In Memory of Diana Powell

Martha Keys - *Abingdon, VA*

Laura Seielstad - *La Crosse, WI*

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In Memory of Ina Stephenson

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In Memory of R. K. Knott, III

Peggy and Walter Norris - *Ruther Glen, VA*

William and Phillipa Smith - *Chester, VA*

Thanks to all our donors for your support!

Donations of Items

1924 Stonewall Jackson Annual
Bristol Herald Courier article dated 8/5/1951
Documents, photos, maps, deeds, court records and other items

Arrowheads found in Washington County
Copy of 1891 school contract, information about Howard Foran
Washington County VA Survey Book 2 (1791-1836) and Survey Book 3 (1836-1890)
White Caps - Johnston Memorial Hospital, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1971
The DeSoto Chronicles, Vol. I, Vol. II; U.S. Post Offices, Vol. VI - The Mid-Atlantic; The Juan Pardo Expeditions by Charles Hudson; A Tour in the United States of America, Vol. I by John F. Smuth Stuart; The Yuchi Indians of Southwest Virginia And Their Roll (Historical Journal of Western Virginia); miscellaneous papers on Shawnee, Chisca, Catawba, Cherokee and other Indian tribes
Southern Exposure magazines, 1978-1990
A New River Heritage, Vols. 2, 3 and 4; The Big Sandy Valley Valley by William Ely; Twelve Generations of Farleys; The Land of the Guyandot by Robert Spence; The Battle of Point Pleasant; Clay Family Settlement on the Bluestone; 301 Years of Lievelys, 1960-1991; David Vance and Family; McDowell Co. WV Births, Marriage sand Wills; Annals and Antiquities of the Counties and County Families of Wales, Vols. VI, VII
Washington County VA Bonds (Guardians, Administrators, Executors) 1870-1901
Topographical maps of Winston-Salem NC and Johnson City TN
The Great Wagon Road by Parke Rouse, Jr.; History of Southwest Virginia 1746-1786 by Lewis Preston Summers
History of Dunmore's War, 1774; Wise County Courthouse 1896-1996; Appalachian Coal Hauler; Northern & Western Clinch Valley Line
The Clarks in America, Our Pioneer Ancestors in Southwest Virginia by Lynn Stowe Tomb Robert. E. Lee, Vols. I through 4 by Douglas Southall Freeman, Pulitzer Prize Edition
Great Civil War Heroes And Their Battles
Brick engraved "Peebles Block 1908" found during renovation of Norfolk Southern footbridge In Abingdon
Hoover vacuum cleaner
Two notebooks and miscellaneous mining logos and information
1888 photo of Samuel P. Miller and first wife; 1925 photo with second wife

Al Bradley, *Abingdon VA*
Caroline Bundy, *Abingdon, VA*
Lecy Campbell, Estate of E. Malcolm and Ellen Campbell, *Knoxville, TN*
Fred Garrett; Chris Lowe, *Southern Pines, NC*
Betty Foran, *Abingdon, VA*
Donna Jean Ford, *Aptos, CA*
Jenny Frei, *Salem, VA*
James Hagy, *Abingdon, VA*

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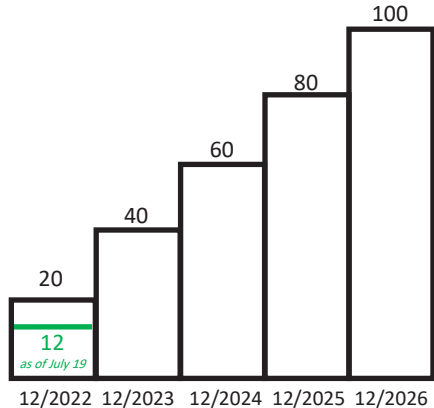
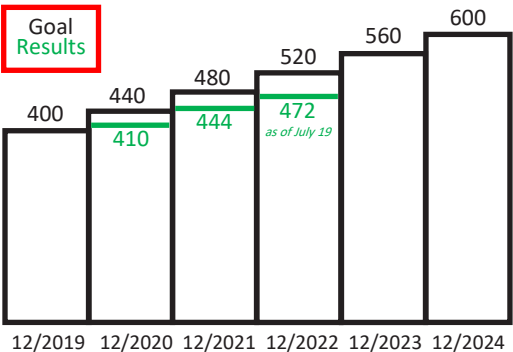
Kathy Shearer, *Emory, VA*

Lynn Stowe Tomb, *Gill, MA*
Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous

Anonymous
Anonymous
Anonymous

The Board of Directors currently has two membership goals. The first is to increase our overall dues-paid membership from 400 to 600 by December 2024. The second is to increase the number of business memberships in that total to 100 by December 2026. Both goals are achievable, and will reflect support of the community and improved financial stability for the organization. Thank you for your help in meeting these goals.

50% increase in dues revenue with
0% increase in dues per member



*As of press time, we now have 16 business members as shown on the back page of this newsletter.

Fall Cemetery Event Set For October 15

The Society's Fall Sinking Spring Cemetery event has been set for October 15 by the Local History Committee.



As darkness falls and a chill wind sweeps across the ancient churchyard, the spirits appear to share their stories with the living. Some characters are familiar, others are long forgotten. But it's guaranteed to be an entertaining and inexpensive evening for all.

Unlike the summer cemetery tour, the October event brings guests to the front porch of the Cummings cabin to hear the tales of the men and women buried around them. No walking is involved, and guests are invited to bring lawn chairs or blankets to enjoy the show and the popcorn.

The program is not scary.

We can always use volunteers as spirit interpreters or to staff the ticket table and direct traffic. You may know the untold story of one of the dearly departed and would like to share it, or research one of the 2,000-plus individuals buried there. It's a great way to try something new that you've always wanted to do. Contact our office or Local History committee chair Mark Hagy for more information about volunteering.

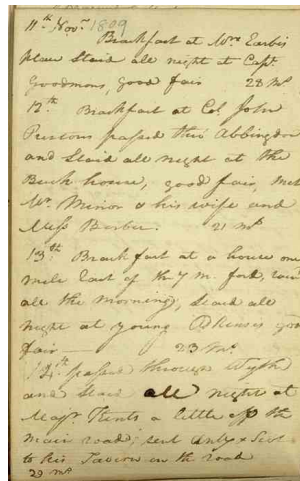
Tickets for the event are \$5 per person.

Thanks to the Abingdon Cinemall for providing the popcorn and to the Town of Abingdon for their support - and of course, thanks to our volunteers and guests for making it all worthwhile.



Do These Names Ring A Bell?

Garrett Jackson is on a mission. You may be able to help.



Garrett serves on the Board of Directors of the Virginia Lewis & Clark Legacy Trail as well as the Society's Local History Committee. He participated in a program during the Virginia Highlands Festival with Peggy Crosson and Jim Johnston, chair and treasurer of the VLCLT board, about the Trail's efforts to identify and mark the sites visited by Lewis and Clark on their way back from St. Louis. They were on their way to report the expedition's findings to President Jefferson.

There may be as many as three places in Washington County connected to Lewis and Clark.

William Clark came through Abingdon on Nov. 12, 1809. We know he stopped at the Preston house near today's Exit 7 before staying all night at the "brick house," probably William King's home. Clark's 1809 handwritten journal appears to refer to a Mr. Logan, Mr. Carpenter, Mr. and Mrs. Minor as well as a Miss Barber in the Abingdon area. Do these names sound familiar to you, either in your family tree, family lore or land records? If so, please let Garrett know so he can follow up on your lead by searching deeds and other records.



Bob Maiden samples the popcorn as Carol Hawthorne-Taylor supervises in 2021



More Photos from the Summer of 2022



Charlie Barnette's cemetery workshop drew about 60 people

Shady trees were popular with the Living History crowds

Photo by Wendy Bentley



The Local History Committee discusses plans for the July Living History program

Thomas Jefferson rebuts an argument made by Alexander Hamilton



Long-time supporter Suzanne Wilmeth Anderson of Wyoming visits with Martha Keys at the library

Fairview Farm News

Fairview Farm, the ancestral home of the Hagy family in Washington County, has recently been donated by the James D. Moore, Jr Family Limited Partnership to Old Glade Antique Tractor Association and the Fairview Farm and Homestead Foundation. This will keep the historic property in good hands for years to come.

The farm's sorghum crop will be harvested on Sept. 23 and cooked on Sept. 24, weather permitting. They planted a larger crop this year so there should be more for sale in this annual fundraiser, but it will still go fast. You can see how it's made in the video "Sorghum Syrup at Fairview Farm" on YouTube.

For more information, visit their page on Facebook.

Congratulations

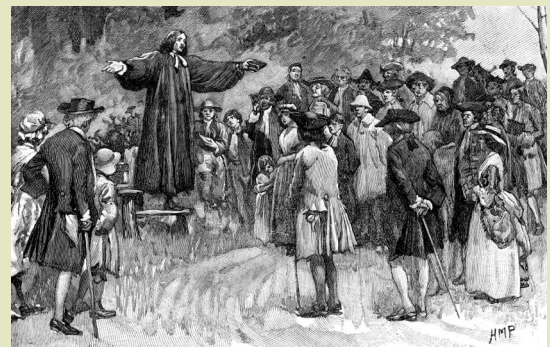
TO

GLADE SPRING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AND

SINKING SPRING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

On the 250th anniversary of your founding in 1772



Maintenance Update

Ah, the joys of home ownership.

The Historical Society has begun the process of upgrading the heating and air conditioning units at our headquarters at Main and Russell Road in Abingdon.



The building, purchased from HUB Bank, has eight heat pumps that are nearing the end of their life cycles. The units are critical for comfort in the building, but also provide a safe environment for the Society's newspapers and other artifacts stored in the building.

In March, we replaced the 3 ton Trane heat pump that serves the main library at a cost of over \$5,000. The old unit no longer cooled the library; it was installed in 2002.

This fall, we'll be replacing a 2 1/2 ton unit for the busy office, exhibit area and media center. The heat pump, dating back to 1999, no longer provides heat which will be needed this winter.

The other units are:

- A 3 ton unit installed in 2012 for the second floor; The space is currently used for meetings and storage, but will probably be the location of a future museum and educational space. The DAR also rents a room on this floor. A small elevator will eventually be installed for this space to be accessible to the general public.
- A 2 ton unit from 2001 that heats and cools the room behind the media center where our volunteers work.
- The oldest is a 2 1/2 ton unit that heats and cools our archival storage area. It was installed in 1998.
- Three units heat and cool our three rental units, two of which are occupied and provide valuable revenue. Two of the units were installed in 2000 and the other is a 2004 model.

The building's unique floor plan creates challenges for us. It would be much more expensive to replace the current units with one large system, which would not allow us to effectively close sections when not in use. Some spaces are used more than others, and it's a challenge to balance the temperatures throughout the building. Our best solution is to replace the units as needed and get the most mileage out of each unit that we can.

Earlier this year, we had several large trees removed from the slope behind the building. The aging trees would eventually have fallen or dropped heavy branches on the building. At some point we're going to need roof repairs, true with any building.

Our goal, of course, is to ensure the safety and comfort of our guests, volunteers and employees as well as protecting the artifacts we house. If you would like to help with some of these costs, feel free to contact our office. Donations to the Society are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Yard Sales

The Historical Society participated in two town-wide yard sales this year in Abingdon.

The yard sales generate revenue for the Society and help us move excess inventory to save space. Some of the goods we sell have been donated by our friends; it's a great way to empty out your attic or garage. As folks wander by to see what's for sale, they also improve our visibility in the community. They often step into our building for the first time to see what's inside or to visit the current exhibit.



Due to their popularity, Abingdon is planning more town yard sales in the future. If you'd like to donate items or volunteer to help, contact our office. We always have room for more friends!



David and Jill Dalton are making progress on renovation of the Hiram Dooley House in Abingdon.

The brick structure, built in 1849, is one of Abingdon's rare antebellum buildings. Originally located across from the 128 Pecan restaurant, the building was moved to its new location on Park Street last year. It will add to the area's collection of short-term housing near the entrance to the Virginia Creeper Trail.

The Daltons are also restoring the William King's Grace Hill house on Court Street which was built in 1803.



The Historical Society
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