

NEWSLETTER



Vol. 46 No. 4 - Winter 2025
Walter Jenny, Editor

Annual Meeting June 21

The Historical Society's 2024 annual meeting will be held on Saturday, June 21 at the Higher Education Center in Abingdon.

**Save
the
Date!**

We will, of course, have business to take care of. The biennial election of officers will take place, and two Board seats - now held by Cathy Hagy and Bob Maiden - are up for consideration.

A Nominating Committee including Charlie Barnett, Brett Compton and Diane Hulse will recommend candidates after meeting with the incumbents. If you are interested, please let our office know so you can be contacted by the Nominating Committee. Nominations can still be made from the floor at the annual meeting.

The Board has voted to recommend one change to our Bylaws - to change our financial review process from annual to biennial. The change will make it easier to recruit volunteers to serve. There are no plans to increase dues.

As usual, a meal will be provided, but any member can still attend without joining us for supper. The Local History committee is finalizing arrangements for a caterer and menu.

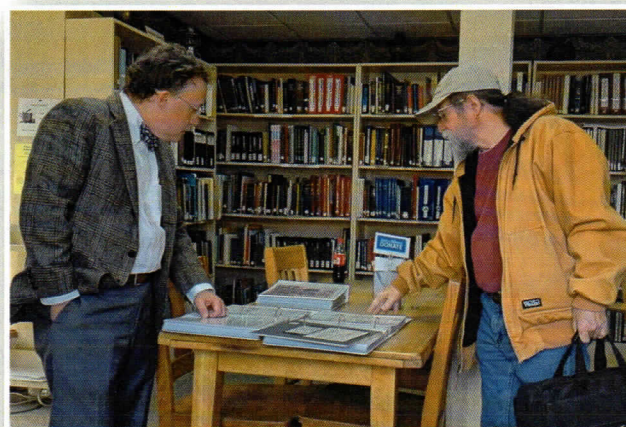
More details will be sent about the annual meeting in the next few weeks, including the cost of the dinner and deadline to RSVP, but at least please put the date on your calendars. **If you have not yet renewed your dues for 2025, please contact Nathan at the office (276-623-8337) or by email (office@hswcv.org).** You can also mail in your renewal.

We look forward to seeing you again in June!

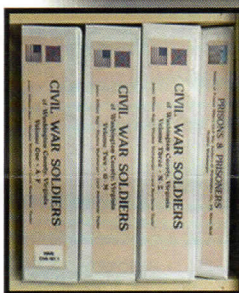


Be sure to subscribe to our YouTube channel!

<https://www.youtube.com/@historicalsocietyofwashington5798>



Commonwealth's Attorney Josh Cumbow dropped by the library in February to inspect Stephen Wolfsberger's iconic collection of Civil War veterans from Washington County. Josh was most interested in his paternal grandmother's family. Henry B. Roberts was his second great grandfather who was a captain in the reserves and fought at Saltville. Henry's brothers, John and David, both were in the 48th Virginia Infantry. John, who served in the House of Delegates, lost his leg at Chancellorsville from a gunshot wound, and David was killed at Culp's Hill at Gettysburg.



"Civil War Soldiers" Completed

Stephen Wolfsberger's three volume master work of Civil War soldiers from Washington County and a companion volume of prisons at which a number of these soldiers were detained are completed and on the shelf at the Historical Society library in Abingdon.

These volumes contain over 3,800 soldier profiles, more than 400 photos of the men and information about 32 prisons. The research is contained in ring binders so new discoveries can be added in the future.

Stephen's selfless work is an invaluable addition to the Historical Society and our knowledge about people with connections to Washington County in the Civil War. If you have additional information to contribute, feel free to let Stephen know through our office.

Thank you, sir!

Annual Update

Walter Jenny, President

I'd like to take this opportunity to share with you some information about the status of the Historical Society as we begin this new year.

The Board has been meeting every other month to keep track of our activities, and their service is greatly appreciated. We have an outstanding Board with a rich depth of skills and backgrounds that keep the organization moving forward, and their support and commitment are invaluable.

Our library finished 2024 with 831 visitors - practically the same as the 847 from 2023, but still higher than in earlier years. We had 539 in 2022 and 426 in 2021, so we're doing well as far as library patrons are concerned. I expect those numbers to increase in the coming years.

We opened the library on February 4 this year. We have a full complement of dedicated volunteers staffing the library. As usual, cold weather has discouraged people from visiting the first few weeks. But as spring comes on, the numbers will go up, and we hope to have a record year in 2025.

We can always use more volunteers for various projects. The Local History committee plans the Living History tour in July and Evening with the Spirits in October, and we always welcome new people to tell some of the stories of the dearly departed at Sinking Spring cemetery in Abingdon. It's not just interpreters - we need guides and runners to provide water for our interpreters in July, researchers to help the interpreters with their scripts, a team at the front gate to take donations at both events and serve popcorn in the fall, and a crew to help with the lighting and sound systems in October. There's a lot of behind-the-scenes activity to make these fundraising events successful, and you can be a part of it.

Our membership has remained over 400 for several years, and it's good to have a solid core of support. But we need to grow those numbers. There are over 50,000 residents in Washington County - Abingdon alone has over 8,000 - and of course there are many more around the country with roots in Washington County. We only have 18 business members, and we could certainly use more support from our business community. Both of those offer great opportunities for growth which would solidify our financial base without raising dues, and this is a good time for a robust membership campaign.



We'd also like to have someone serve as property manager. This is the first building we have owned by ourselves, so there are always light bulbs that need replacing, contractors to schedule and squirrels to be evicted. At Main and Russell Road, we're also located at a highly visible location in Abingdon, so we need to project a good physical image in the community; that takes a little planning and execution. These aren't major commitments, but it would be better if we had a go-to person who can oversee our physical facility, within our budget, without distracting our media center or library volunteers and staff from their essential tasks.

As you know, we're also developing our "Family Reunion Project" on our website for folks planning family get-togethers in Washington County. Historical tourism is big business in our area, and it goes hand in hand with family history. This need will increase as we approach the 250th anniversary of the United States, Washington County and Abingdon. The Local History committee could use one or two more local people to work with local businesses to develop those programs.

A significant financial challenge on the horizon is an upgrade to our computer equipment. As anyone who has owned a computer knows, they need to be replaced from time to time. We have stretched our current software and hardware about as far as they will go, and the time will come when one or more parts fail on us - if we do nothing. We have a quote from our IT experts, and it won't be cheap, but it's doable. We can easily meet those challenges if we have enough of two things - dues-paying members and volunteers.

2025 is the time to step up to the plate and address these challenges and opportunities. If you're ready to participate - or if you know someone who should be a member or who can be a good fit - please don't hesitate. Contact me, our staff or a Board or committee member directly or through our office, and we'll visit about how you'd like to help with your time or talent.

Thank you for your support!

"Our vision is to be an educational resource and community leader committed to collecting, preserving and sharing the records of people, places and events, so that future generations may find common interest and knowledge in the unique heritage of our County and surrounding region."

Monetary Donations

November 1, 2024 through January 31, 2025

Foxglove Antiques & Etc./Karen McClanahan - Abingdon VA
Janna McConnell - Miami FL
Steven Mulvaney - Tannersville VA
Charlotte Parsons - Abingdon VA
David Snodgrass - Greenwood Village CO
Dick Whittington - Aledo IL
Janet Woolwine - Abingdon VA

Monetary donations help the Society meet our budget and make it possible to keep membership dues from rising. They constitute about 15% of our annual spending, so without them we wouldn't be able to meet all our goals each year.
Monetary donations are always sincerely appreciated.

Donations of Items

Photos, letters and documents of Dorothy Buck Boucher
History and genealogy books

Collection of Williamson papers; 1952 Damascus and
1951 The Clevelander yearbooks
"Lynching in Virginia: Racial Terror and Its Legacy,"
de Fazio, G., UVA Press (2024)
1967 John Battle yearbook (reprint)

Hon. Rick Boucher, Abingdon VA
Lena Burnk, Princeton WV
and Pat Hatfield, Abingdon VA
Janet Williamson Fuller, Abingdon VA

James W. Hagy, Abingdon VA

Ylanda Thomas McQueen, Abingdon VA

The Historical Society values its role as archivist for Washington County's history.
We simply cannot accept everything that people want to donate for several practical reasons - for example, duplication of what we already have, size and relevance to our mission.
If a donor agrees, some donated items can be sold by the Society instead of being retained.
We hold yard sales from time to time to convert non-historic donations into cash.
For photographs and family treasures like portraits, letters and deeds, we always give the donor the option of allowing us to scan the image and return the original to the donor undamaged. This allows us to preserve the image for future researchers. We would not sell anything unique or of value without the consent of the donor/owner.
If you have items you're interested in donating, feel free to contact our office.

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Thanks to all our donors and members for your support!

Fincastle Resolutions, Part Two

Our last newsletter described the Fincastle Resolutions, the first document advocating armed rebellion against the Crown at risk of life and limb in order to protect their rights.

We don't know how the delegates were selected; there's no record of an election. We don't know if there were dissidents or if any delegates voted against the proposal. So who were the fifteen men whose names appear in this document? We know they were all men, and that they were freeholders - in other words, land owners free and clear of any mortgages. Each has a story to tell.

Several had substantial roots in Washington County.

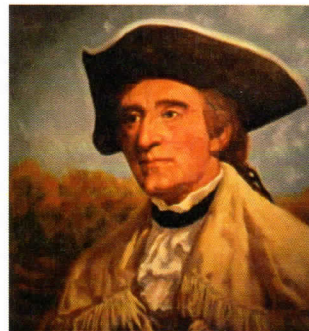
Arthur Campbell (1742-1811) was born in Augusta County to David and Mary (Hamilton) Campbell and joined the Virginia militia at the age of 15. He was captured by Wyandotte Indians and held in the Midwest for three years before escaping, still a teenager, on foot 200 miles back to British forces. Because of his knowledge, he then became an Indian agent for the British for which he was granted 1,000 acres near Louisville KY.

He served in the General Assembly (where he played a role in the creation of Washington County in 1776), became the county's first justice of the Court of Chancery, first lieutenant, a sheriff and a trustee of Abingdon. He also served in a constitutional convention, butted heads with William Russell and Patrick Henry over the creation of a state of Frankland, and led military regiments against Indians and Tories for over 30 years. He moved his family to present-day Middlesboro KY about 1800.

Campbell married his cousin Margaret Campbell (also a sister of Gen. William Campbell) in 1773; they had twelve known children. His will listed land holdings of at least 20,000 acres, mostly in Virginia, at the time of his death in 1811; he gave most of his land to his children. His original grant of 1,000 acres alone sold for \$23,306 in 1815 - the equivalent of about half a million dollars today.

David Campbell (1750-1812), brother of Arthur Campbell, was the clerk of the Fincastle group and the first clerk of Washington County. He was a major under Gen. Nathaniel Green's division of the Continental army, then moved to Tennessee where he became a Supreme Court judge. He is buried in Rhea County, Tennessee.

William Campbell (1745-1781) son of Charles and Margaret (Buchanan) Campbell, was a first cousin of Arthur Campbell and husband of Elizabeth Henry, sister of Patrick Henry. Campbell moved to Aspenvale about 1769 after the death of his father, inheriting the saltworks from him.



William was at the Battle of Point Pleasant but is best known as the commander at King's Mountain. He was promoted to brigadier general and fought under Lafayette at Jamestown but died in August of 1781. His widow then married Gen. William Russell and helped establish the Methodist church in Southwest Virginia. Their daughter Sarah Buchanan Campbell married Gen. Francis Smith Preston, who built the heart of the present-day Martha Washington Inn as their residence.

William Christian (1742-1786) served as the chair and probably delivered the resolutions to Williamsburg. Born in Augusta County the son of Irish immigrants, he served in four of the first five Virginia conventions as well as in the Virginia Senate. His wife Anne was a sister of Patrick Henry under whom he studied the law. They moved with their six children to Louisville KY in 1785 and helped establish Fort William to defend Louisville against Indian attacks. He was killed by an Indian raiding party in Indiana in 1786. Their Oxmoor home still stands.

Walter Crockett (1732-1811) was a captain at Point Pleasant, a major in the Fincastle militia and lieutenant colonel in the Montgomery County militia during the American Revolution. He represented Montgomery County in the House of Delegates and in the convention to ratify the U.S. Constitution in 1788. Crockett became clerk of court in Wythe County in 1790 and died in Wythe County in 1811. He is buried at Poplar Camp near the Lead Mines.

Rev. Charles Cummings (1732-1812) is best known as the parson of the Sinking Springs Presbyterian Church in Abingdon. He accompanied expeditions with Christian, Shelby and others against Native Americans. He was well educated and might have been the author of the Fincastle Resolutions; he also drafted a petition from the Hanover Presbytery to the General Assembly in 1776 asking for separation of church and state. He and many of his family members lived and are buried in Washington County.

William Edmondson (1734-1822) settled at Lodi in the 1770s. He was a lieutenant colonel in the Fincastle militia, served in Dunmore's War and fought at King's Mountain in 1780. Edmondson served for many years as sheriff of Washington County. He and his wife Elizabeth (Kennedy) had seven children and are buried at the Old Glade Spring cemetery.



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"These are our real, though unpolished sentiments, of liberty and loyalty, and in them we are resolved to live and die."

William Ingles (1729 - 1782) was an Irish immigrant who settled in Augusta County by 1746 and helped found Draper's Meadow, now Blacksburg. He operated Ingles Mill at Draper's Meadow as well as Ingles Ferry and a tavern on the New River. Shawnee warriors captured his wife Mary (Draper), two sons and two other hostages in 1755, but she escaped and returned home, covering almost 600 miles in 43 days. William served as a justice of the peace, was at the Battle of Point Pleasant as a major and commissary and rose to the rank of colonel in the Continental Army. He and Mary are buried in Radford.

Thomas Madison (1746-1798), a lawyer and first cousin of President James Madison, married Susanna Henry, sister of Patrick Henry, in 1770. He served as a general in the Virginia militia, a member of Virginia's Council of State and in the House of Delegates.

James McGavock (1728-1812) was born in County Antrim, married Mary Cloyd in 1760, and arrived at Ft. Chiswell in the 1770s where he ran an ordinary, mill and trading post. His tavern was centrally located and served as a frequent meeting place for the committee. He served as a justice of the peace in four counties and helped establish a courthouse, jail, church and school in the area. The James McGavock cemetery is located near the site of Ft. Chiswell, just south of exit 80 on I-81.



John Montgomery (1717-1802) was born in County Donegal and settled in Wythe County as early as 1756. He was a captain during the French and Indian War, justice of the peace, a delegate to the General Assembly and a sheriff in Montgomery County. He and his wife Ann Agnes Crockett are buried near Ft. Chiswell.

William Preston (1730-1783) was born in County Donegal and came to North America at the age of nine. Head of the extensive and prominent Preston clan in Virginia, he was a surveyor and land speculator with George Washington and colonel in the militia. He lived at his Smithfield plantation and died at a muster of the Montgomery County militia. He and his wife Susanna Smith are buried at Smithfield near present-day Virginia Tech.



Evan Shelby (1720-1794) was born in Wales and served as a scout during the Braddock campaign in 1758. He moved to present-day Bristol TN about 1771, led a militia group at the battle at Point Pleasant and rose to the rank of brigadier general. Evan is buried at East Hill in Bristol. His son Isaac became governor of Kentucky.

Daniel Smith (1748-1818) was born in Stafford County and moved to Southwest Virginia about 1770. A surveyor, he was a captain in the Fincastle County militia and defended the frontier settlements with Daniel Boone during Dunmore's War. He later served as a justice of the peace and sheriff in Washington County. In 1784 he moved to Tennessee and played a formative role in the state. He and his wife Sarah Michie are buried on their Rock Castle property.

Stephen Trigg (1742-1782) was born in Bedford County and became a merchant at New Dublin. He married William Christian's sister Mary. Stephen served in the militia and as a justice of the peace. The family moved to Kentucky in 1777 and Stephen was killed at the Battle of Blue Licks, one of the last American Revolution battles ten months after the surrender at Yorktown.

The January 20th meeting was not the only time the Fincastle citizens met; it was merely the first recorded one. They also gathered in March 1775 and adopted an "address" in which they expressed their gratitude to Lord Dunmore for his leadership in the Ohio Valley campaign. There is no list of attendees or signatories, and the report is simply titled the "Address of the freeholders and a number of the inhabitants of Fincastle County," suggesting that the number in attendance had increased. The report was published in Dixon & Hunter's Virginia Gazette on April 8, 1775 along with Dunmore's response in which he pledged to "exert my best endeavors for every purpose which may tend to the security, or promote the happiness, of the people of Virginia."

After that meeting, the Fincastle men met at least nine more times between March 1775 and the dissolution of Fincastle County by the new Virginia government in December 1776. We'll look at those resolutions in future newsletters. The names of some of the attendees changed, but some of the more prominent names from today's Washington County appeared on an ongoing basis, reflecting their commitment to the cause of rebellion.





The Historical Society
of Washington County, Virginia, Inc.
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Abingdon, VA 24212-0484

Annual Meeting Information Inside!

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