



NEWSLETTER

Oct 2012
Vol. 34, No. 4

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S FALL PROGRAM

Open to the public

Please join us on Sunday, October 21 at 3:00pm

HOME TOWN PAPER MONEY

Presented by Ron Dickenson

The title refers to paper money that was issued locally from 1863 to 1935 and which is a part of our history which has gone largely unrecognized.

Mr. Dickenson will display part of his personal collection, and explain the significance of the local historic bank notes and how our region played a part on the national stage regarding the country's monetary history.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

There will also be a short business meeting for a vote on the dues structure; this requires at least 50 Society members, so please make every effort to attend.

Sunday, October 21 at 3:00pm

Abingdon Public Library meeting room

Light refreshments will be served

Celebrate and Remember Veterans Day Weekend with a Special Excursion Trip

November 10, 2012

Roanoke to Abingdon, VA (Bristol) ♦ Round-Trip

Last year the trip to historic Abingdon, VA, from Roanoke was tremendously well received. And who can argue? It IS a great trip! The scenery of Southwestern Virginia is truly wonderful. Passengers will have approximately three and a half hours to take advantage of a variety of popular historical attractions found in this pre-Revolutionary War city.

The Historical Society of Washington County, housed in the 1912 N&W Passenger Depot, will be open to greet passengers, answer questions, and welcome all to Abingdon.

Schedule

LV Roanoke 8:00 AM	AR Abingdon 11:45 AM
LV Abingdon 3:15 PM	AR Roanoke 7:00 PM

For internet sales, see: www.RoanokeNRHS.org

**Tickets for the Bristol/Abingdon round trip are on sale for
\$35 at the Abingdon Visitors' Bureau (800) 435-3440**

A Volunteer's Story: Meet Carol Hawthorne-Taylor



Many times I am asked how I got involved in documenting cemeteries and in cemetery restoration. The story begins when I was a sophomore in college, and one of my professors gave us an assignment of making a family tree that went back five generations.

Having little idea of my family history, I went straight to my grandmother, Stella Ryan Hawthorne. She took me to a small upstairs room and opened an old trunk. There on the old wooden floor in the house that my grandfather had built with the sunlight streaming in through the one window, my grandmother laid out fragile old family papers and photographs. I copied down the names and dates she gave me. I looked at old newspaper clippings and old letters. By the time I left that room I had been bitten by the genealogy bug.

Over the next few years I researched my Hawthorne and Ryan roots. I visited with older family members and gathered more names and dates. I went to Knollkreg and Mountain View Baptist cemeteries and took pictures of family tombstones. I acquired *High on a Windy Hill* and *The Hagey Families in America*. I pored through these

books seeing over and over the names Old Hagey Cemetery and Davis-Jameson Cemetery.

I wanted to find these cemeteries and visit the graves of my great great grandparents and their parents, but day to day life intervened. I started my teaching career, married, raised a family, and later took care of aging parents. Genealogy and cemeteries got pushed to the back burner.

Although I was busy, I didn't completely give up genealogy. I researched my McCulloch roots and entered DAR through my ggggg grandfather, Thomas McCulloch who had been mortally wounded at the Battle of Kings Mountain.

My cousin's wife, Judy Cole, and I spent many Sunday afternoons driving the back roads of Washington County. We found and visited both Old Hagey and Davis-Jameson. Later I made a trip to Kings Mountain and visited the grave of Thomas McCulloch in Britain church yard in Rutherfordton, North Carolina.

Upon retirement, with my children grown and my parents no longer living, I started volunteering at the Historical Society. It was there that I heard of the committee documenting the cemeteries of the county for Volume 3 of *High on a Windy Hill*. To my surprise and delight, I was asked to join this committee, and a whole new chapter of my life began.

Over the last two years, I have been to more than 300 cemeteries. I have used topo maps and word of mouth to find long forgotten cemeteries. I have learned to chalk tombstones to bring out almost illegible letters. I have hiked to the top of Clinch Mountain in search of a few graves. I have climbed gates, fought briars, ticks, chiggers and poison ivy. I have crawled under fences, waded creeks and through mud, and swung down steep banks holding on to a tree limb. I have dug with my bare fingers to uncover a lost stone. I have been shocked by electric fences. One time I was even shot at (accidentally, of course).

Throughout it all, I have retained a fascination and an ever-growing excitement for "The Hunt". Roaming the fields and woods in search of a long lost cemetery and finally finding it is a rewarding experience. Entering documented cemeteries and finding stones lost or over-looked by others is equally rewarding. I have sought out fragments or pieces of tombstones and put them together like a jigsaw puzzle in order to read their story. Over time, I have come to realize that each cemetery seems to have its own unique 'personality' and stories to tell.

I have repaired broken stones, reset stones, probed for, located, and dug up lost stones ... all with a grand sense of discovery and pride for my small efforts to record and restore as best I can.

The work I do will endure whereas the old cemeteries themselves are disappearing right before my eyes. I am helping to document the past for those who will do genealogy in the future.

It is my fervent hope that others will find it in themselves to follow me, as I have followed Catherine McConnell and others, and in the doing...will find their own rewards.



Was It Really James Wyatt Who Burned the Courthouse in 1864?

Lewis Preston Summers in *History of Southwest Virginia*, (540-543), says that when federal forces entered Abingdon on December 14, 1864, they met with little resistance and took possession of the town. The troops burned the train depot, a store, two wagon shops, the county jail, and the military barracks. The U.S. commander "issued orders [which were not recorded] forbidding the troops to enter private houses or to plunder or burn any portion of the town other than the places mentioned." The federal soldiers then moved eastward. While Union troops typically burned courthouses, Summers says that after the troops had passed through the town, James Wyatt, "a straggler...dressed in a Federal uniform...dismounted in front of the court-house, had a negro to hold his horse, went to the cupola of the court-house and set it on fire. He then remounted and proceed[ed] to fire all the buildings on the south side of Main Street, riding into the buildings and firing them as he went. After he had partially completed his work, he halted his horse at the intersection of Main and Court street...put his leg across the horn of the saddle and watched the fire as it rapidly devoured the building on either side of the street. He would not permit any one to extinguish the flames... While Wyatt was occupying the position last stated, [a] company of Confederate soldiers, partially disguised in Federal uniform, were seen rapidly galloping down the hill fronting Jackson Institute." Two of them came up Main Street and Thomas Findlay began firing on him. When Wyatt fled to the west, Findlay shot him at Hayes street (now Church). "The fire started by Wyatt consumed all the buildings, including the courthouse, on both sides of Main Street from the Court street to Brewer's Street" (between Court and Pecan Street, then Slaughter). Summers got his information from a single eyewitness, W. H. Mitchell.

More information is found in *The History of the Thirteenth Regiment, Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry, U.S.A.*, (1903), of which Wyatt was a member. The book was written by Samuel W Scott, Captain of Company G and Samuel P. Angel, Adjutant of the 13th Regiment, both of whom were on the expedition. They reported: "Our Brigade completed the destruction of rebel stores at Bristol and left there on the night of the 14th, passing through Abingdon on the morning of the 15th. When our Regiment passed through Abingdon, that morning Capt. James B. Wyatt asked permission of Major Wagner to remain there a short time. The Major refused and warned him not to remain or commit any overt act. Wyatt, however, incensed by having been mistreated by rebel citizens because he was a Union man remained after the command had passed, and it was alleged by the citizens, set fire to some buildings and then got on his horse and started to leave. He was pursued by armed citizens a short distance east of the town when his horse fell and the men coming up, shot him. Capt. Wyatt was a handsome, dashing, young officer, and his death was greatly regretted by all." This account is not specific about the court house and is not consistent with other accounts that say he fled

west, although his attackers were supposed to come from that direction.

James Allen Baggett in *Homegrown Yankees: Tennessee's Union Cavalry in the Civil War*, (2009), reported, "After his [General Stephen G. Burbridge's] regiment left Abingdon, having 'burned the Court House square & square opposite...with Depot and jail,' Capt. James B. Wyatt of Company M, remained behind to see to his own personal war. He did this despite Major Wagner's warning 'not to remain or commit any overt act.' But the 'handsome, dashing, young Officer,' embittered by earlier mistreatment from his relatives and the community, set fire to other buildings. Wyatt had not ridden far to rejoin his company before armed citizens hastily organized and pursued him. When he reached a gallop, his horse fell, making the captain an easy target of the fatal shots of the posse." This book indicates the court house had been burned by the troops, and Wyatt set additional buildings on fire.

According to the Historical Society's vertical file, *African American People*, Joseph F. Trigg Campbell, a former slave for the Cummings family who was about ten to fifteen years old at the time, remembered "the time when a renegade soldier set fire to the buildings near the county court house. He kindled fires in building on both sides of Main Street. The biggest fire I ever saw. When I got there he was still at work building more fires. He dared anybody to stop him, waving his gun at the crowd. Mrs. Polly Lynch...came running up, got down on her knees before him and begged him to stop. In a little while he stopped and was looking on the fire when two or three soldiers came running up the street from the west end and began shooting at him. He got on his horse in a hurry and took out down the street going toward the west end of town. The soldiers who first came along, with some others who came from the east end, followed him so fast that I could not keep up with them, and they shot him just this side of where governor Floyd lived, afterwards Stonewall Jackson school."

Michael K. Shaffer in *Washington County Virginia in the Civil War*, (2012), quotes an undated account by Mary Morrison Ballance in the Historical Society's vertical file, *Civil War, Vol. I*, in which she said her sources were her father, grandfather, and others; however, what she penned about the court house is almost verbatim of what Summers wrote: "James Wyatt rode up to the Courthouse, had a negro hold his horse, and went to the cupola of the building where he set fire to it. Then he set fire to the buildings on each side of the street for a block."

As a result, there is enough evidence to put in question the account that the arsonist burned the court house that Summers got from W. H. Mitchell.

James W. Hagy

Backbone Rock and the Civilian Conservation Corps

By Eleanor Grasselli

Backbone Rock, which is over 450 million years old, consists of Cambrian-age quartzite called the Chillhowie Group. Quartz is extremely stable and has weathered very little over time.

The tunnel that runs through Backbone Rock was cut through the spur ridge of Holston Mountain in 1902 to permit a rail bed to be laid for transport of logs from Shady Valley to processing mills in Sutherland, TN, and Damascus, VA. My neighbor, Vernon Waters, explained how his grandfather worked on cutting through the rock. One man would hammer a steel rod and Vernon's grandfather would turn the rod to dislodge many particles of rock at each turn. If you stand in the tunnel, be sure to watch for automobiles while you look at the grooves made by the steel rods. The extra notch at the top of the "shortest tunnel" was cut to accommodate the smoke stack of the train engine. Most of the logs were harvested by the 1928. Soon afterward, the tracks of the narrow gauge were removed and a dirt road from the TN line to Shady Valley replaced the rail bed.

About 1912, my mother was among other family members and executives of Thayer Dimension Factory, on a narrow-gauge excursion trip, which started in Damascus and traveled through the Backbone tunnel for a picnic.

Civilian Conservation Corps

As part of the New Deal, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established, on March 31, 1933, the CCC to provide meals, training, and income for many young men all over the United States of America. The monthly income was \$30.00 of which \$25.00 was sent to the family and \$5.00 could be used as spending money. One of their services was to plant young trees on the slopes from which so many mature trees had been removed. About a mile and a half north of Backbone Rock Camp McArthur, aka #357 Camp, was built around 1935. One rock column which was part of the bridge leading to the camp over Beaver Dam Creek is still visible beside the road and another can be found down by the river bank.

By October 1935 a camp newspaper, *Backbone Star*, began publication; the last issue which has been preserved was February 1937. The *Backbone Star* reported that the young men went, after work hours, to classes at the Damascus Rock School. Ones who needed to learn how to read and write were taught by Miss Alice Riddle, the first grade teacher. Miss Russell offered arithmetic and spelling. Mr. George Ed Copenhaver taught history, civics, and government. Dr. Charles M. Clendenen, a medical doctor of Damascus, was also the camp physician, who instructed the young men about good health habits. Soon after Dr. Rector LeGarde began his general practice in Damascus, he offered opportunities to look through his microscope at various materials.

In the years between 1935 and 1937, under capable supervision by Army officers and Forest Service Rangers, the young men built picnic shelters, stone walkways for climbing to the top of the stone ridge and other trails for Backbone Rock Park. They even built a substantial half-log bridge (of three huge half-logs) with rock abutments over the Beaver Dam Creek by the exposed end of the Rock; crossing over it was one of the treats of picnicking there; it was washed out by high water sometime after 1949.

The young men were sent out to fight forest fires. They built a telephone line for forest protection from Damascus through Konnarock to Carroll County. They built 32 miles of Truck Trail, including the one through Taylors Valley to Green Cove. (You may have heard about Chestnut Mountain Road being closed because of a washout, which may take two years to be repaired.)

They built Denton's Valley Truck Trail.

A few years ago, I obtained permission from the Drs. Lee, who own the adjacent land, to walk onto the former Camp McArthur property and found a few concrete remnants among the shrubbery and trees which nature has brought forth.

Camp McArthur closed about 1938 when Camp #357 was moved to Sugar Grove, VA, for TSI, aka Timber Stand Improvement. Then in 1942, the CCC program was discontinued. Where did the young men go before and after the closing of this camp? Many found work as civilians. Many, who joined some branch of the armed services after Pearl Harbor, were given higher ranks because of their experiences in the CCC. I know of two who married relatives of mine: Charles Clifton Taylor married my second cousin Velma Cole; and Edward Armistead Wright married my first cousin Virginia Ellen Mock (I was a flower girl in their wedding, which was a double wedding with Gin's sister Carolyn Waugh Mock who married Howard M. Browning, June 21, 1938).

As soon as the large pavilion was built, reunions of descendants of Henry A. Mock, Jr., and his brother Peter Mock, III, were held in and around it. I remember riding with family in a car from Damascus on a paved road to the TN line where the road changed to dirt. Anticipation of seeing many cousins and tasting many different picnic foods made the clouds of dust seem insignificant. After the meal, I joined others in walking the trails by the Beaver Dam Creek.

I have climbed the Rock many times at many ages and have approached it from the Appalachian Trail high on the Holston Mountain ridge, by way of a side trail. Since that side trail is so steep, I prefer walking up it instead of slip-sliding on either dry or wet leaves.

In conclusion, we can thank the CCC for their development of this park and the State of Tennessee for additions and other improvements in recent years; we can appreciate the grandeur of the natural assets in all seasons; and we can keep wishing that this park were in the Jefferson National Forest in VA instead of the Cherokee National Forest in TN.

Your membership in the Historical Society is appreciated. Please help us stay in touch with you!

- send a change-of-address card when you move,
- or call our offices at 276-623-8337,
- or e-mail us at office@hswcv.org

UPDATE from the July Newsletter

Do you know the Who, What, Where & When of this photo?



After doing some detective work, Charles Seaver sent the picture to VA Tech for ID. Here is the response he received from the University Archivist.

Dear Mr. Seaver,

It's an image of the 1909 freshman football team. You can see the image in the Bugle <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/archives/bugle/1900.html>

Unfortunately, the pages in that Bugle aren't numbered, so you will have to search a bit.

My best,

Tamara Kennelly
University Archivist, University Libraries
Virginia Tech



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For information, call 276-623-8337, email office@hswcv.org, or visit
our website at www.hswcv.org.

Genealogical Connections

***Rebecca (Rebekah) Kendrick m. William Phipps d. 1818 Wythe Co. VA. She went with son, William, to Mo. ca. 1837. Any info on **Phipps** or **Kendrick** would be appreciated. Known children: George; Catherine m. Adam Miller; Mary; William A. m. Barbara Stroup; Jacob m. Nancy; James m. Juley; John; Jasper m. Margret Murphy; Isaac m. Mary .

Wanza Barker Merrifield - wanmerri@cablone.net

***Searching for the parents and ancestors of both **Andrew Jackson Holloway** (1832-1862) and **Sarah Ann Smith** (1826-1871) who were married in Washington Co VA on March 14, 1850. Jackson Holloway enlisted with the Glade Springs Rifles (CSA), served as a teamster with Gen Stonewall Jackson and was killed at the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862. They had two children: Mary Holloway (1856-1880) and Jeremiah M. Holloway (1862-1949). Jerry was born two months before his dad was killed and his mom died leaving him an orphan at age nine. As a teenager Jerry ended up as an indentured servant in the household of an Abingdon VA family until he married Mary Angelin Pippin (1864-1923) in 1886 and moved to Johnson City TN where he helped build the Mountain Home Veterans' Hospital. Jerry's sister Mary Holloway married Stephen M. South (1850-1922) in 1871 as a 15 year old at the same time as her mother's death and had three children before her own death at age 24 in 1880.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

John A. Miller - cinnameg@sbcglobal.net

To list your Family Research surnames, please email your name, email address and surnames to Karidancer@aol.com

IN MEMORIAM

Leonard Chester Angle, Jr.

October 25, 1918 - July 21, 2012

President Emeritus,

Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia

James Phillip Widener

October 13, 1936 - September 3, 2012

A loyal volunteer

Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia