

# NEWSLETTER



## Annual Meeting June 13

The Historical Society's 2026 annual meeting will begin at 6 pm on Saturday, June 13 at the Higher Education Center in Abingdon. The doors will open at 5:30.



Our Local History committee has put a lot of time and effort into planning this year's celebration, and it will be great to see everyone together again.

We will, of course, have some business to take care of. The Board seats now held by Charlie Barnette and Brett Compton are up for consideration. Our Nominating Committee recommends that Charlie and Brett be elected to new three-year terms. There will also be updates on the Society's financial condition and activities.

Entertainment for the evening will be provided by The Boys from Bristol, Easton Compton and Eamon Russell, who will share their traditional Appalachian bluegrass music. After dinner, Society member Arthur "Scrapper" Broddy from Washington State will discuss his research on his sixth great grandfather John Broddy, who was with Gen. William Campbell at King's Mountain and helped preserve the history of that key Revolutionary War battle. Scrapper will also be on stage at the Lincoln Theater in Marion on June 21.

The Local History committee has managed to keep the cost of the optional catered dinner at \$30 per person. **If you have not yet renewed your dues, you can do so at the event.** We need a head count for the caterer by Wednesday, June 26, so reservations for dinner are **required** by then. You can make reservations by calling Nathan at the office - 276-623-8337, or by email - [office@hswcv.org](mailto:office@hswcv.org). You can pay at the door or at the Historical Society office, but we will need your dinner RSVP in advance.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to a Board member, an officer or Nathan at our office. We look forward to a big turnout this year to celebrate our history and progress!



## The Society Turns 90!

In addition to the 250th anniversaries of the United States and Washington County, the Society also celebrates our 90th anniversary this year.

The Board has decided to use this opportunity to pay off the remaining mortgage on our property this year. We currently owe about \$30,000. Thanks to a \$10,000 generous donation from an anonymous member, we're a third of our way to our goal, and we'd appreciate your help in finishing the job. Paying off the remaining debt will save us \$718.11 each month, about 9% of our monthly expenses.

With your recent Bulletins, each member has received a static cling with our new 90th anniversary logo. These clings are designed for interior windows so you can show your pride in your Society. Extra clings can be purchased at the Society and the annual meeting for \$2 each.

We have created a line of t-shirts in gray and white options with our new logo. Locally printed, they can be purchased at the Society for only \$16.

We've also partnered with Tumbling Creek Cider Company for a limited run of locally made apple cider with the same logo. A generous portion of the profits will come to the Society. Bottles of their cider will be available for purchase at their location behind The Commons in downtown Abingdon.

More about our celebration in the near future!



# A Busy Summer of History Ahead

History is going to be a big topic here this summer!

After our annual meeting in June, it'll be all hands on deck for the upcoming 250th celebrations - for the United States and Washington County.

Both Abingdon and Damascus are planning traditional fireworks displays to celebrate the Fourth of July.

The Virginia Highlands Festival will kick off July 25 and 26 with a colonial village called "Threads of Time" at the soccer field east of the Higher Ed Center. A collection of exhibitors, performers, craftspeople, musicians and Native American dancers will give a glimpse into life here on the frontier 250 years ago. Cost is \$7 per person.

The Historical Society is promoting a group of historical interpreters who will stroll the sidewalks and tell their stories to visitors. We now have over 30 signed up and hope to have at least 50 by the Festival. If you're interested in being a well known character, an ancestor or an everyday resident, contact Walter Jenny, Mark Hagy or the office for workshops and resources. We're also collecting a small wardrobe of clothing for use; if you have something that "looks old" (primarily natural fibers for example) that you'd like to donate, drop it by the office.

The pool of historical interpreters will also help us with our popular Living History tour at Sinking Spring on July 25 and our fall program. This year's tour will focus on military veterans buried at Abingdon's oldest cemetery. The more volunteers we have, the more stories we'll be able to share in the future. Tickets are \$5 per person.

July 26 and 27 will feature Kurt Smith and Ron Carnegie from Colonial Williamsburg who will share the stories of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington at the Martha Washington Inn ballroom. We're very fortunate to have these two nationally recognized interpreters in Abingdon, and both nights always sell out. Tickets are \$25 per person, and each paid adult can bring a child 12 years or younger at no cost.

Kurt and Ron will also present a workshop for historical interpreters on Monday, July 27 at the Higher Ed Center. Get expert advice, ask questions and learn what it's like to take on the persona of our Founders in this free program.

Walter Jenny will be giving a lecture at the Higher Ed Center on July 28 about the creation of Washington County in 1776. Dr. Michael Puglisi, historian and vice president at

Emory & Henry, will give a lecture on July 29 about the free and enslaved African American community in Washington County before emancipation. Both lectures are at 7:30 pm and are free to the public.

There will be ongoing free events at the Muster Ground throughout the festival. Also, the Festival's popular Historic Homes and Buildings tours will take place August 1; tickets are \$25 per person

For more details, pick up a *Highlander* schedule of events at numerous locations, or visit the Festival's website, [vahighlandsfestival.com](http://vahighlandsfestival.com).



## Troy Eugene Taylor

March 22, 1939 - March 17, 2026

A son of Stuart and Gladys Taylor, Troy graduated in 1955 from Hayter's Gap High School, where he was a talented baseball player and Homecoming King. His love for baseball never waned, and he was a devoted Dodgers fan from their earliest days.



An entertaining storyteller and skilled photographer, Troy was employed at United Telephone System/Sprint for 47 remarkable years. An active member of our Society, Troy was also a passionate genealogy enthusiast. His many contributions to genealogical publications showed his mastery in family tree research and reflected his deep-rooted interest in history. For example, his name appears over 10,000 times in our database index alone.

Survivors include his wife Betty, his daughters, Tambra Barry and Bethany Sirois (Michael), daughter-in-law Libby Taylor (Terry); two grandchildren, two great-granddaughters, and extended family and friends.

A graveside service was held to honor Troy's life at Sunrise Cemetery. In his memory, the family graciously requested that donations be made to the Historical Society, ensuring that Troy's passion for history and genealogy continues to inspire future generations.



Our seventh annual “Conversation with Jefferson” fundraiser returns again this year, and you won’t want to miss it.

Kurt Smith, who interprets Thomas Jefferson at Colonial Williamsburg, will be accompanied by none other than George Washington to the Martha Washington Inn ballroom. Ron Carnegie portrays Washington at Colonial Williamsburg. This will be Kurt’s second appearance in Abingdon, and the first for Ron.

The pairing of Jefferson and Washington this year is even more special because our county was one of the first named for General Washington. Jefferson, who served in the Virginia House of Delegates in the fall of ‘76, carried the legislation to break Fincastle County into Montgomery, Washington and Kentucky counties. The transition in part was the result of requests from settlers in far-flung Fincastle County for more places to transact government business.

The men will appear in two programs, on Sunday July 26 and Monday July 27. The doors will open at 5:30 PM with a cash bar and the programs will begin at 6:30.

General admission tickets are \$25 per person and will be available online, at the Historical Society office and at the door until sold out. One child 12 or under can be admitted free with a paid adult. Contact our office if you have questions.

Smith and Carnegie will also participate in a free workshop July 27 at 1:30 at the Higher Ed Center. Anyone interested in learning how to do historical interpretation is encouraged to attend.



*Thomas Jefferson visits with guests after last summer’s “Conversation” event at The Martha.*



Washington County and the Society have participated in a quilt project for America’s 250th anniversary with other counties named for George Washington.

The Virginia square depicts the seal of our county which was adopted in 1978. The county seal draws from the Washington family coat of arms bearing three stars and two bars. The family crest has its roots in the Wessyngton family estate in England as early as 1203.

Mary Warner created the square. She is president of the Board of Directors of the Holston Mountain Artisans Cooperative in Abingdon. Mary and her husband John, a retired State Department diplomat, live in Bristol VA. She has been quilting for over 25 years.

The finished quilt will tour the country and will be on display in Abingdon during the Virginia Highlands Festival.



Shep Parsons models one of the Society’s new 90th anniversary shirts. Available in gray and white, the shirts are \$16 each and can be purchased at our library or ordered online with an added shipping charge.

Shep, an honor student at Virginia High School in Bristol, recently won a DAR Youth Leadership Medal. Besides being an active supporter of the Society with his parents, he is a state champion swimmer and has qualified in six events at the Junior Olympics this summer in Des Moines.



# EXHIBIT

HONORING 250 YEARS  
OF THE  
U.S. ARMED FORCES

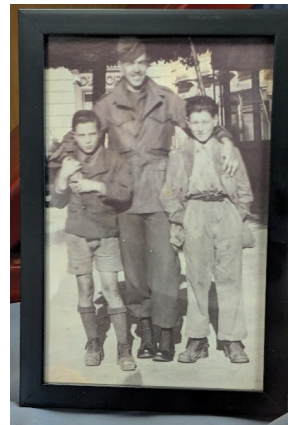
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APRIL 4 - JULY 4

10 AM - 4 PM TUESDAYS THROUGH FRIDAYS  
10 AM - 3 PM SATURDAYS  
FREE ADMISSION



Drop by the Historical Society and visit our current exhibit!  
Thanks to Nancy Leasure for the many hours of work she put  
into this project.



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
MAIN AND RUSSELL ROAD - ABINGDON

## Monetary Donations

Abingdon Olive Oil Company - Abingdon, VA  
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Ronald Cassel - Los Gatos, CA  
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Mary Cox - Richmond, VA  
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Paul and Jaymie Derden - Abingdon, VA  
Ann Doege - Hinsdale IL  
Susan Elliott-Chikar - Limestone, TN  
Eye Physicians of SWVA - Abingdon VA  
Joyce Ferratt - Abingdon, VA  
First Bank & Trust - Abingdon, VA  
James Hagy - Abingdon, VA  
Mark Hagy - Abingdon, VA  
Kathryn Harrison - Bingham Farms, MI  
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Ben and Merry Jennings - Abingdon, VA  
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Sandra Kruse - Friendswood, TX  
John Legard - Abingdon, VA  
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Wayne Snodgrass - Highlands Ranch, CO  
Carol Hawthorne-Taylor - Bristol, VA  
Greg Thomas - Cleveland, TN  
Stanley Tucker - Damascus, VA  
United Daughters of the Confederacy - Abingdon, VA  
Leigh Van Blarcom - Tega Cay, SC  
Janet Woolwine - Abingdon, VA

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## Donations of Items

Four Clintwood High Yearbooks; Virginia's Baby book  
Old newspapers from Southwest Virginia and Bristol, 1970s to present  
Portrait of E.B. Stanley  
"This Day and Time" - novel by Anne W. Armstrong, critical edition, forward by Linda Behrend  
Abingdon Garden Club scrapbooks  
History of Johnson County TN, 2000 edition, vol. II  
*Washington County News* newspaper clippings  
Clothing for historical interpreters - hat, dress, shawl  
Items from Findley House on Smith Chapel Road  
Books: *Elson Readers #4* (1920), *Johnson Reader*, *Early Schools in Draper Valley* by S.Painter  
Clothing for historical interpreters - 1800s handmade prairie dress and apron  
Miscellaneous books, photos and research material  
Book: *Father of the Land we Love*, music of George Washington's time  
Smyth County VA Order Books ##6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 19 (1843-1897)  
Door prizes for Conversation - tote bags, coffee mugs, T. Jefferson & Martha Washington books  
  
Photos of county schools by Harry Denton; projector  
  
Ledgers from James Stone Mitchell's General Store in Mountain City, TN  
  
Greendale High School yearbooks, 1947-1958  
Two hand sewn quilts and handmade chair  
48 star American flag  
Post card, illustration by Roma Baker  
Book: "Opportunities," history of Leonard Land & Livestock  
*Life Magazine*, July 31 1939 with story about the Barter Theatre  
CD of "The Abingdon Virginian," 1862-1864  
Scrapbooks and photos of Hassinger Lumber and Konnarock Training School  
Old projector and slide carousels  
*Meadowview Mirror* 1950s publication  
Book: *Families and History of Sullivan County, TN*  
Wilkes Co. NC Genealogical Society Bulletins; books: *Randolph County IN 1818-1990* and *Before the Bar*; binder on the families of Thomas Roberts and Elizabeth Jennings

Nancy Adkins, *Abingdon VA*  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Linda Behrend, *Knoxville TN*  
Rosemary Blevins, *Abingdon VA*  
Myrtle Buchanan, *Abingdon VA*  
Jane Caldwell, *Abingdon VA*  
Lacey Smith Dillard, *Abingdon VA*  
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Dede Goldsmith, *Abingdon VA*  
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Walter and Rose Ann Jenny,  
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Ester Land, *Abingdon VA*  
Michael Lawrence, *Bristol VA*  
David Leonard, *Lebanon VA*  
Janna McConnell, *Miami FL*  
Sally Morgan, *Emory VA*  
Sandra Odem, *Abingdon VA*  
Joe Reiff, *Abingdon VA*  
Frances Snead estate, *Abingdon VA*  
Carol Hawthorne-Taylor, *Bristol VA*  
Michelle Thomas, *Abingdon VA*

## Memorial and Honorarium Monetary Donations

**In Memory of Lorena Bolling**  
Doris Wells - *Meadowview, VA*

**In Memory of Janet Rike Eve**  
Diana Eve Rosen - *Flowery Banch, GA*

**In Memory of Sue Ray**  
Doris Wells - *Meadowview, VA*

**In Memory of Rachel Mutter**  
Doris Wells - *Meadowview, VA*

**In Memory of Troy Taylor**  
Sally Blackburn - *Bristol, TN*  
Diana Hulse - *Abingdon, VA*  
Chilhowie Elementary School - *Chilhowie, VA*

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*Thanks to all our donors for your support!*

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# *The Birth of the Historical Society*

Nine decades ago, in the midst of the Great Depression, a group of Washington County men and women met for the purpose of establishing a historical society. All of them are no longer around, but what we do today in the this Society owe a debt of gratitude to them for their vision and commitment. Who were they and what were they wanting to create?

The Black's Fort chapter, DAR, under the leadership of Regent Josephine Butt, formed a committee for the purpose of making plans, according to the handwritten notes of Ethel Baugh at the time. Five ladies - Kathy Hurt, teacher Margaret Davis, Josephine Butt and her daughter Lillian, and Rachel Booher - met on January 21, 1936 at the home of Ethel Baugh, who was appointed chair of membership.

On March 9 the committee met again and made plans for an organizational meeting with Mrs. Mongle to make an opening talk about the objectives of the society. By this time they had recruited thirty members outside of DAR chapters.

The organizational meeting took place in either April or May at the court house. F.B. Kegley gave an address about the history of the county, The following officers elected:

President: Judge Walter H. Robertson  
Vice President: Mrs Mongle.  
Secretary: Lillian Butt  
Treasurer: Ethel Baugh  
Corresponding Secretary: S.F. Hurt

The dues were set at \$1 per year. The charter members (including 16 DAR members) were: Joe Latture, Margaret Davis, Chap Brown, Mary D. Frye, Victoria Gilliam, L.P. Summers, E.D. Worley, S.F. Hurt, J.F. Mast, Mrs. Eugene Anderson, Jennie Pennywitt, Mary Ballance, Frank Brownlow, S.G. Edmondson, Elizabeth Porterfield, James and Martha Hortenstine, Raleigh Hortenstine, Caroline Rambo, Carl V. Eskridge, Flora Duncan Woltz, Judge and Mrs. Walter Robertson, Lillian Patterson, J.G. Woodward, E.W. Potts, Eleanor Rhea Crouch, Pauline Mason, Judge Preston White Campbell and Louise Campbell, W.N. Neff, Lillian Hillenburg, Fannie Kegley, Joseph

Gottschalk, Charles H. Carson, J.P.Honaker, Edgar A. Goble, Stella Hamilton, Roberta Semones, Mrs. J. Walter Wright and Mary Elizabeth Davenport.

By 1937 the membership had reached 177.

By 1986 the Society had 496 members representing 34 states and Great Britain. They owned the Summers law office and a collection of portraits, maps, antiques, Biblical records, church histories and family files and furniture. The library "of hundreds of historical volumes" reported 271 visitors in the preceding year. The Society also conducted public tours of historic places that were advertised in *Southern Living* magazine.

Some of the early artifacts donated to the Society were:

- a gavel made from wood from the Cummings log home;
- A spinning wheel from Ms. Fred Davis;
- A Bible used in 1818 in administering oaths of office at the courthouse, from Elizabeth Kreger;
- A portrait of Judge Robert Hughes from Bessie Watson;
- A pamphlet about Revolutionary War soldier Abraham McConnell and his sons in the War of 1812;
- A dagger owned by Charles Cummings and said to have been carried by William Campbell at King's Mountain, from Bessie White Cummings;
- Nearly 100 books from the R.B. Kreger estate;
- A McGee pottery jar, a scutch, a hackle and a tin basket made of spoons by David C. Grim from Mrs. Rhea Anderson;
- A glue pot and powder horn belonging to James Deadmore;
- A framed portrait of "the Preston family" presented by Lewis P. Summers;



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Washington County, VA

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14,000 page members!

## **Visit us on YouTube!**

87 videos, 233 subscribers,  
and 26,880 views since 2020



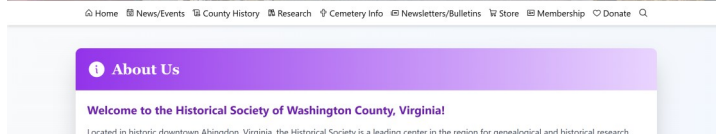
@historicalsocietyofwashing5798

- A pair of bellows belonging to Jemima Hutton from her granddaughter Mary Ballance;
- “The Women of Old Abingdon” from the auxiliary of Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church.

The Society kept its records in the homes of members until a room was made available in the county courthouse. As the collection grew, the railroad depot was leased from the Town of Abington until the Society was in a position to purchase our current building at Main Street and Russell Road in Abingdon.

We’ve long relied on the hundreds of volunteer hours and support of our communities to survive and grow. Many of the early volunteers are no longer with us. But our 90th is a good opportunity to pause and reflect on their generosity and commitment, without which we wouldn’t be where we are today. Our challenge is to continue and expand on their legacy so future generations will be able to understand and learn from our history.

*Source: Historical Society Bulletin Series II Vols. 13 (1976) (from Ethel Baugh’s notebook) and 23 (1986), the latter written by Lillian Butt.*



## Website Gets a Fresh Look

The Society’s website - the public gateway to our holdings - has recently been redesigned thanks to our talented webmaster John Neal.

If you haven’t been to the site recently, pay it a visit. You’ll see it’s brighter and easier to use. For the first time, for example, online viewers can see some of our 273,940 digitized images and get a better idea if it’s the image they’d like to purchase. Merchandise like our 90th t-shirts can also be ordered.

Our web address is [hswev.org](http://hswev.org). Let us know what you think or any suggestions you’d like to make!

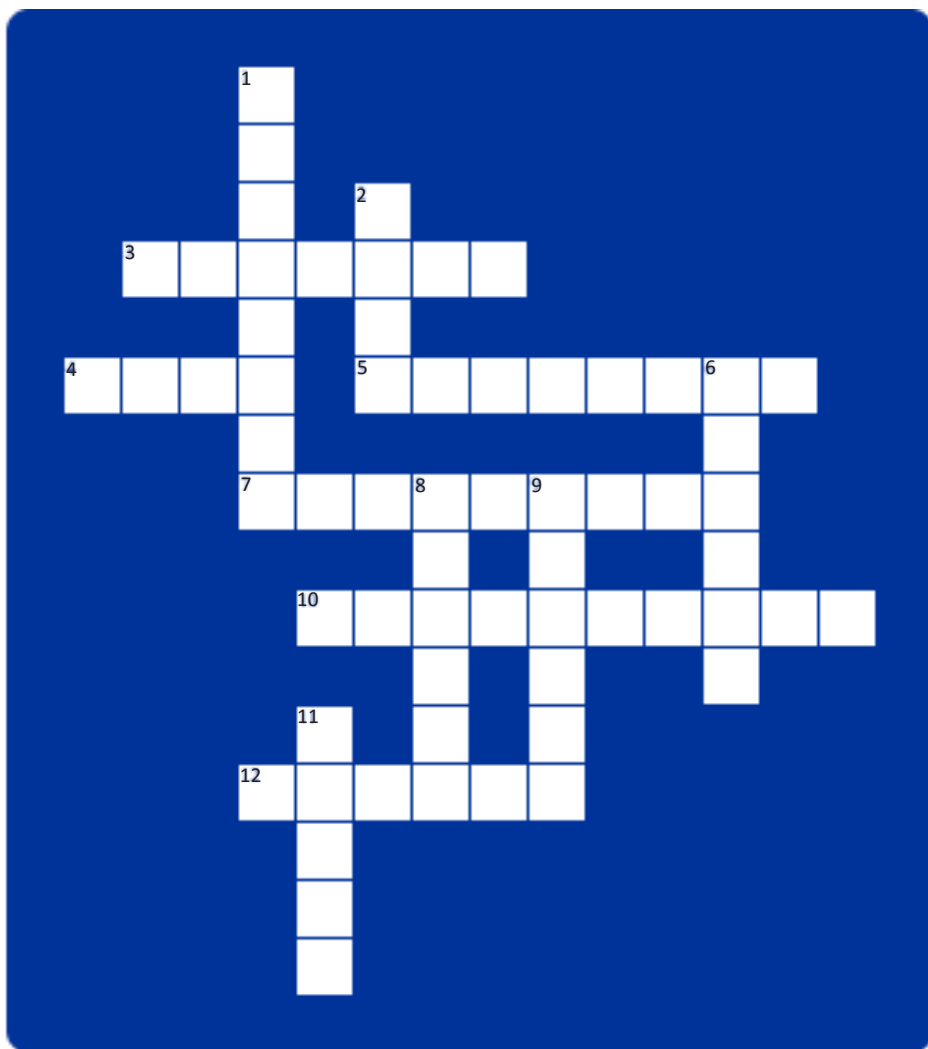
*Quick! Can you do the puzzle without looking back for clues?*

### Down

1. Annual meeting speaker.
2. Black’s Fort DAR Regent in 1936.
6. The Society is now \_\_\_\_.
8. One of the Boys from Bristol.
9. Dodgers fan and genealogist.
11. Ethel and Minnie \_\_\_\_.

### Across

3. Exhibit volunteer.
4. He’s all wet.
5. \_\_\_\_ Creek.
7. First Society president.
10. Washington family estate.
12. Quilt maker.





The Historical Society  
of Washington County, Virginia, Inc.  
P.O. Box 484  
Abingdon, VA 24212-0484

## Annual Meeting News Inside!

## Thank you to our Business Members and Sponsors!

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Kathy Shearer, Author-Publisher

**Corps Values  
Music Heritage**



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Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia

276-623-8337  
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Tues. - Fri. 10 am - 4 pm  
Sat. 11 am - 4 pm



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341 West Main Street, PO Box 484, Abingdon, VA 24212

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HISTORY  
LOVERS™**