

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project

Winter Update – February, 2015

Greetings!

As winter begins to wind down there is more activity revolving around the Blue Ridge Heritage Project. The Project's board has been meeting monthly throughout the winter. Committees are forming in two counties, and a fourth county is scheduling an organizational meeting for the spring.

Children of Shenandoah Reorganization Meeting, Saturday, February 7, 10 am to noon at the William Monroe High School cafeteria in Stanardsville.

Formed over 20 years ago, the original Children of Shenandoah was made up of descendants of the families who were displaced from the park and other interested people. The group worked to urge Shenandoah National Park to revise the displays in the Byrd Visitor Center and to redo the film that is shown to visitors so that the story of the way in which land was acquired by the State of Virginia for the park in the 1930s would be accurately told. After several years of lobbying with park and government officials members of COS toured the newly redone displays and to viewed the remade film. Having accomplished its main mission, COS slowly disbanded. Lisa Custalow, one of the founding members and former COS president, has been working to reorganize the group.

The featured presenter for this meeting will be Madison County's Jim Lillard. On both sides of his family Jim's ancestors were removed from their lands. Jim has gathered photos of his relatives and others and created an interesting and moving slide show of the history of his family and of Madison County.

Craig Lam will make a presentation on his Facebook group, Blue Ridge Genealogy, and his Mountain Memories project to capture oral histories and stories. Bill Henry will give a presentation on the Blue Ridge Heritage Project's goal to establish monuments to the displaced people in each of the eight counties where land was acquired for the park.

Check out the Children of Shenandoah Facebook site

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/205973782874608/>

and <https://www.facebook.com/events/734953863255390/>

Anyone with an interest in the human and cultural history of the Blue Ridge Mountains is welcome to attend.

Greene County's first Mountain Heritage and Antique Festival: Downtown Stanardsville April 11-12.

This festival will celebrate our heritage with period crafts, displays, demonstrations, music, and food. There will be a Grand Antiques Tent in town with indoor antique venues around the area. Local antiques dealers will be a part of an Antique "crawl", and a flea market will be held in Ruckersville next to the area's newest shop, The Woolly Lamb. For more information visit [Discover Virginia Festivals - Mountain Heritage Festival](#)

Open House at the Thornton Gap Primitive Baptist Church, Sperryville, VA (Rappahannock Co.) - April 11, 2015 10:00 am - 4:00 pm.

The Piedmont Environmental Council and the Rappahannock County Historical Society are sponsoring a trip back in time to learn about the mountain culture of Virginia's Blue Ridge. This event will include tours of the church building, family photo displays, oral histories, and presentations on the history of the church and the area. The Open House is free, though pre-registration is required. Learn more and register at:

[Rappahannock Mountain Heritage Open House](#)



Greene County Historical Society

GCHS has acquired the property at 360 Main St. in Stanardsville and is working to turn the home into a museum for the Society's collection and records. Plans are progressing for how the space will be used. The Society has been a strong supporter of the Blue Ridge Heritage Project from the beginning, and Blue Ridge Heritage history will have a prominent place in the new facility. GCHS member and volunteer, Charlene Swartley, has agreed to take the lead in developing the displays for this part of the new museum.

At the GCHS's annual meeting on May 17 Jim Lillard will give his Mountain Memories program at the Greene County Courthouse. Learn more about the activities of the GCHS at the [Greene County Historical Society](#) website.

Madison County News:

The Madison County Historical Society has been working closely with the Blue Ridge Heritage Project. Last year the Germanna Foundation, stepped up to offer support for the Blue Ridge Heritage Project because of the great number of people of German descent who were displaced from the mountains. Germanna Foundation member Judy Mahanes has been regularly attending our board meetings. Learn more about the Germanna Foundation at: www.germanna.org.

Jim Lillard's Mountain Memories slide presentation has been in demand around the area. Jim has also been busy helping to organize and promote the Blue Ridge Heritage Project in Madison County, where he has been building substantial interest. See the article on Jim from the Madison County Historical Society's newsletter that is attached to the email.

Greene County

Bill Henry is actively working to promoting the Blue Ridge Heritage Project. On February 4 he spoke to the board of the Art Guild of Greene. In addition to presenting at the Children of Shenandoah meeting on February 7 he will be talking to the Greene County Board of Supervisors on February 10 and has been asked to give Project presentations in the coming months to the Rappahannock Lions Club and to an organizational meeting for the Front Royal/Warren County committee.

If you are in the Stanardsville area on Tuesday, February 10 please come to the Board of Supervisors meeting to show support for the Blue Ridge Heritage Project. The meeting will begin at 7:00 in the Greene County Administration Building on Celt Rd. across from the post office.

Virginia Festival of the Book presentation - *Shenandoah - A Story of Conservation and Betrayal*

On Friday March 20 at 7:00 pm. at the Greene County Library in Stanardsville there will be a presentation that will appeal to people interested in the human history of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Author Sue Eisenfeld will be participating in a Virginia Festival of the Book event and will be discussing her recently released book, *Shenandoah - A Story of Conservation and Betrayal*. Learn more about Sue's book at www.sueeisenfeld.com, and come out to hear Sue talk about her book on the 20th. This event is free, and copies of her book will be available for purchase.

Get Involved With The Project

There is a lot of work to be done! The Project would like to get a web site up and running, and we need someone to design and maintain it. We will need design suggestions for the monuments. We need people with expertise in finding and applying for grants that will provide support for the work that lies ahead, And we need good ideas for fund raising to bring support from the communities around Shenandoah National Park. To become a part of the Blue Ridge Heritage Project contact Bill Henry.

Support the Blue Ridge Heritage Project

Money will be needed in order to realize our goal of establishing monuments in each of the eight counties where people were displaced when Shenandoah National Park was created. The Blue Ridge Heritage Association, the Project's parent organization, is a 501c3 non-profit group. You may make a donation to the Project by sending a check to BRHA c/o Bill Henry, 437 Evergreen Church Rd., Stanardsville, VA 22973.

What is the Blue Ridge Heritage Project?

The BRHP is a grassroots effort to create a monument and related displays that will tell the story of and honor the sacrifices made by the people of the Blue Ridge Mountains whose land was acquired so that Shenandoah National Park could be established. Our goal is to develop monument site in each of the eight counties where land was acquired to create the Park.

The project hopes to accurately educate visitors about the people who lived in the mountains before the park; and, through living history presentations, programs of traditional music, exhibits of photographs, and displays and demonstrations of the tools and utensils of daily living we want to bring to life the day to day world of those who gave up so much to make Shenandoah National Park possible.

Thank you for your interest in the Blue Ridge Heritage Project. To become involved with or to support the Blue Ridge Heritage Project, or if you need more information you may contact me.

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