

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project

Fall Update – September, 2014

I want to let you know about two events that will be taking place in the next few weeks.

On Friday, September 26 there will be a panel discussion on "The Displacement of Families and the Shenandoah National Park" at Blue Ridge Community College as part of BRCC's **Appalachian Heritage Arts Series**. The Panel will feature authors Sue Eisenfeld and Dr. Katrina Powell, and Superintendent Jim Northup and Claire Comer from Shenandoah National Park. The panel will discuss the displacement of the families from land that was to become Shenandoah National Park and how the park today honors those who were removed.

Sue Eisenfeld teaches in the Johns Hopkins University M.A. Writing Program and the M.A. in Science Writing Program. Her book, *Shenandoah - A Story of Conservation and Betrayal*, will be released in February, 2015.

Dr. Katrina Powell, a associate professor at Virginia Tech, is a native of Madison County, VA. Her works include; *The Anguish of Displacement - The Politics of Literacy in the Letters of Mountain Families of Shenandoah National Park*, and *Answer at Once - Letters of Mountain Families in Shenandoah National Park*. Both books analyze the communication between the people of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the government and park officials that were overseeing their relocation.

Jim Northup began his National Park Service career as a seasonal employee in Shenandoah National Park. He went on to serve in parks across the country before returning to Shenandoah in early 2013 as Superintendent. He is committed to honoring the cultural legacy of the people who lived in the mountains before the creation of the park.

Claire Comer is a long time Interpretive Specialist with Shenandoah National Park. She is a native of Page County, and her family lost their land near Big Meadows when the park was created.

The panel discussion begins at 7:00 in Building P, room 104. It is free and open to the public. For more information on the discussion or the Appalachian Heritage Arts Series go to: [Blue Ridge Community College :: Appalachian Heritage Arts Series](#)

On Saturday, October 11 the first **Blue Ridge Homecoming** will be held at the Elkton Pentecostal Church pavilion, on Rt. 33 between Elkton and Shenandoah National Park.

The Homecoming is being organized by Craig Lam and others involved with the Facebook site, Blue Ridge Genealogy. Craig says the idea for the Homecoming "started as a way to connect the people of our generation to their roots. Many of today's families have lost touch with their ancestors and the stories that made them. This gathering, The Blue Ridge Homecoming will be the first annual gathering for this group. We plan on having this every year as a way to celebrate and remember those folks who went before us. The mountain residents, the valley folks, the old town 'regulars' will all be remembered during this gathering. It's my hope that you'll join us and enjoy a day of music, stories, pictures, and fellowship."



There will be a potluck dinner (bring a dish), numerous speakers throughout the day, & displays showcasing families from the area. This will be a chance for descendants of families displaced from their homes by the formation of Shenandoah National Park and anyone from the area or who has an interest in the cultural history of the region, to share old photographs, swap stories, play music, and to meet others with similar interests and family histories.

The Blue Ridge Reunion begins at noon. To RSVP you can Message Craig Lam on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/craig.lam.39>). Hope to see you there!

Madison County's Hoover Day is a grand success!

On Saturday, August 16 Madison County renewed its traditional Hoover Day celebration on the 85th anniversary of the original event. In 1929 President and Mrs. Herbert Hoover purchased a tract of land at the headwaters of the Rapidan River in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western Madison County. The President wanted a retreat where he could escape from the summer heat and the pressures of Washington, DC, a place where he could enjoy his passion for nature and for trout fishing. Rapidan Camp became the predecessor to today's presidential retreat, Camp David, located in Western Maryland.

In August of 1929 the people of Madison County put on a celebration to welcome the Hoovers to the county. This year's Hoover Day featured citizens dressed in period clothing, portraying the dignitaries who were present for the event in 1929. The Hoovers arrived in an antique automobile, and the original speeches given by the President and others were reenacted. As on the first Hoover Day, fresh churned peach ice cream was cranked in huge ice cream freezers powered by small gasoline engines from the day, and was available to all. In conjunction with the Madison County Historical Society the Blue Ridge Heritage Project was represented at Hoover Day.

Today Rapidan Camp is on the National Register of Historic Places and can be visited by the public. There are several hiking trails that access the camp. On weekends Shenandoah National Park offers free shuttle rides to Rapidan Camp from the Byrd Visitor Center at Big Meadows. Sign up at the information desk. Check at the Visitor Center for the schedule - 540-999-3500, ext. 3283. More information on Rapidan Camp can be found at [Rapidan Camp - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

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.

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

Hope you are enjoying the welcome, cooler fall weather. Thank you for your interest in the Blue Ridge Heritage Project.

Bill Henry (onarock01@yahoo.com or 434-985-7905)