

# The Blue Ridge Heritage Project

Update – March, 2017

Greetings!

As I write this update the Mid-Atlantic region is being embraced by what will hopefully be the last blast of winter. This cold weather brought a sudden halt to a premature springtime that had many people believing warm weather was here to stay. Lured early from their winter sleep by April-like temperatures, the daffodils blooming in my yard are a sign to me that this is a good time of year to wander the Blue Ridge Mountains in search of home sites. When I come across a patch of spring-blooming flowers deep in the forest I know that someone had once lived there, someone who wanted to bring beauty to their yard, someone who was hoping that the bitter winter was over. The daffodils I find at the home sites are silent reminders that the people who lived in the mountains were not that much different from me.



## The Blue Ridge Heritage Project, County By County:

**Albemarle County:** Saturday, November 8 was a most beautiful fall day. Old time string music, played by Pete and Ellen Vigour, drifted through the through the air as friends and families gathered, creating the atmosphere of a reunion. This large group of descendants and members of the community came together at the Patricia Ann Bryom Nature Preserve Park to celebrate the dedication of the monument to the people of Albemarle County who lost their homes to Shenandoah National Park. This dedication was the culmination of Phase I, an efficient and cooperative effort that involved descendants and community members, businesses and local organizations, joining together to create a lasting tribute to the displaced families.



Descendants pose in front of the chimney at the dedication of the Albemarle County monument.

Phase II of the project, constructing a covered pavilion near the monument suitable for small gatherings will begin later this year.

**Greene County:** The Greene County committee continues to meet regularly to plan their monument that will be located at the corner of Main Street and Celt Road in the town of Stanardsville. The monument will be part of a new development next to the county administration building that will include a performance pavilion and a town market place. A community development block grant to pay for the pavilion and market space has been awarded, an architect has been engaged, and the committee is awaiting completion of a site plan before construction on the chimney can begin.

**Rappahannock County:** Only two weeks passed between the day a crew of volunteers got together to collect and move stones to the monument site and the day when the last stone was laid atop the chimney! Descendant Missy Sutton, who is heading up the Rappahannock BRHP committee, had the honor of placing the final stone. This is the third BRHP monument for stonemason Daryl Whidby and his wife and assistant, Jackie Weakley Whidby. The final steps in completing the monument site are finalizing the names to go on the plaque, installing the plaque, and landscaping the site. Read more [HERE](#).



Missy Sutton places the final stone on the Rappahannock Co. monument.

**Madison County:** Support is building to encourage Madison County to designate the Criglersville School property as a county park, protecting the Madison monument from nearby development.

**Page County:** The Page BRHP committee has selected the Ed Good Memorial Park, in downtown Stanley, as the site of their monument. Groundbreaking will take place on Saturday, April 8 at 11:00. Descendant Clyde Jenkins will be doing the stonework.

**Warren County:** On Thursday, April 6 Jim Lillard will present his program, Mountain Memories, at a meeting to promote the BRHP and organize a committee to begin the process of building a monument. The program will take begin at 7:00 pm in the Front Royal town hall conference room, 102 E. Main St. in downtown Front Royal. To learn more you may contact Darryl Merchant (540-683-6878 or [heritage@measure-map.com](mailto:heritage@measure-map.com)).

**Rockingham County:** Interested people in Rockingham are being sought to help create a monument to the displaced families of the county.

**Augusta County:** Bill Henry is offering to make presentations on the BRHP to civic and community groups in the Waynesboro/Augusta County area to promote the Project and to begin forming a steering committee in the area. Do you know anyone who should be involved? Pass the word to them!

### **YouTube Videos Related To The Displacement**

YouTube is a wonderful resource. There are a number of videos that relate to the people who once lived in the Blue Ridge Mountains:

*The Iris Still Blooms* is a short special made by WVPT featuring interviews with local people and archived footage. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkWH3iqL\\_gQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkWH3iqL_gQ))

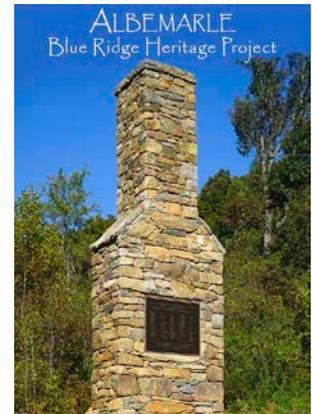
*Cemeteries of Shenandoah National Park* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64qS8Ptm31A>) offers an overview of several important cemeteries in the park.

There are other cemetery videos by Craig Lam and Florida Trailblazer that cover the Bolen, Dean, Samuels, Tanner's Ridge, and Wyant cemeteries. Use the YouTube search and look for "Shenandoah National Park Cemeteries".

### **The Blue Ridge Heritage Project In The News**

Late this winter the BRHP received a flurry of publicity from newspaper and magazine articles, bringing what we are doing to the attention of many more people!

- Wednesday, March 8 – the *Richmond Times Dispatch* ran Bill Lohmann's article on Sherman Shifflett, of Louisa, whose family was evicted from their Rockingham County home: [“Through Hardship and Displacement a Mountain Family Maintained Their Love and Humor”](#)
- Thursday, March 9 – Chris Green, writer for the *Rappahannock News*, featured the BRHP monument in her Sperryville column - [“Date Set \(in stone\) for Memorial Dedication”](#)
- Sunday, March 12 - Bill Lohmann wrote a feature article for the Flair section of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*: [“New monuments to honor people forced from their homes to make way for Shenandoah National Park”](#)
- The *Piedmont Virginian* magazine, in its January/February edition, ran an article, [“The Stones Shall Rise Again”](#), written by BRHP board members Kit Johnston and Kristie Kendall.
- A short article by Cathy Herbert appeared in the March/April issue of *Blue Ridge Country* – [“New Monuments in Virginia's Blue Ridge”](#)



### **Mountain Heritage Event At Cecil Mission On April 22**

Join The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) on Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10:00-2:00 for a trip back in time to learn about the mountain culture of Virginia's Blue Ridge. Cecil Mission, one of the missions established by the Episcopal Church to reach out to the



people of the Blue Ridge, was formed about 1910. This event will include tours of the mission's chapel building, family photo displays, memorabilia, oral histories, and a historical overview of the area. Members of the Taylor, Lamb, Samuels, Conley, Herring, Meadows, Collier, Roach, Shifflett families and others will be present to discuss their memories of mountain life in Greene County. Archival materials, including early film footage of the area and historic maps, will also be on display. There will live music from local musicians throughout the day.

The PEC looking for more people to share displays of their mountain heritage at the event. If interested, please contact Robin Cross at 540-347-2334, ext. 7061 or [rcross@pecva.org](mailto:rcross@pecva.org)

The Cecil Mission is not far from some of the area's best hiking trails, many of which pass by historic features that are partially hidden in the forest. With a little closer look, you can often see old home sites, rock walls, garden terraces, and cemeteries – particularly before the plants begin to bloom. Shuttles are being arranged, and sign ups for shuttles will begin in early April.

This event is free, but pre-registration is required. You may register [HERE](#).

### **Children of Shenandoah To Hold Homecoming – August 20**

The Children of Shenandoah, a group dedicated to the preservation of the heritage and culture of the people who once lived in what is now Shenandoah National Park, announces its annual Homecoming to be held on Sunday, August 20th, 2017 at 1:00 pm. Please bring a lawn chair or blanket and a covered dish to share. The Homecoming will be held at the Blue Ridge Heritage Monument at Patricia Ann Byrom Forest Preserve Park, 6610 Blackwell's Hollow, Crozet, VA 22932. All are welcome to attend. For more information contact Lisa Custalow ([lisacustalow@gmail.com](mailto:lisacustalow@gmail.com)).

### **Quilts Are Coming Soon To A Barn/House/Yard Near You!**

As you were driving through the countryside you may have spotted a colorfully patterned quilt block on the side of a barn, a house, a garage, or perhaps attached to a fence. This 'barn' quilt may be part of a local barn quilt trail. The terms are confusing – a 'barn' quilt doesn't have to be on a barn, and the 'quilt' is just a single quilt block that is painted onto a piece of plywood. Usually the blocks are 4'x4', but often they are smaller. There are many, many patterns from which to choose, the more colorful the better, and they are usually hung where they are visible from a nearby road.

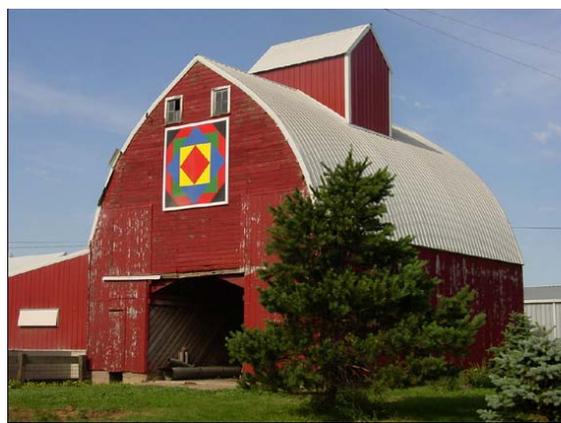
Barn quilt trails are formed when a community group recruits neighbors, local businesses and others to display a quilt block on their property. A brochure with a map is printed up showing where the quilts on the trail are located, and residents and visitors follow the "clothesline of quilts." The first quilt trail was created in 2001 in Adams County, Ohio. Since then the project has developed a wide appeal as being not only attractive, interesting, and a link to the past, but it offers a way to bring tourism and economic benefits to a rural area. Find quilt trails across the country with the locator map [HERE](#).

Interested property owners can obtain quilt blocks in several ways. In communities where there is an interested and artsy group, people work together to create the quilt blocks selected by the property owners. People can choose and paint their own blocks, and there are businesses that take orders and ship them out ([Amish Workshops](#)).

There is a lot of information out there about barn quilts and quilt trails. Two websites are very helpful: to locate existing quilt trails visit [Barn Quilt Info](#); and to learn how to make a barn quilt block go to [Craftsy](#). Quilt squares can be ordered from Amish Workshops.

Suzy Parron is the guru of barn quilts. She has traveled the US to document over 1000 barn quilts, and she has written two colorful books on the topic - *Barn Quilts and the American Quilt Trail Movement*, and *Following the Barn Quilt Trail*.

Suzy will be at The Studio School at The Palette Art Gallery in Stanardsville to speak on barn quilts and forming a barn quilt trail. Her presentation will begin at 11:00 on Saturday, April 1. For more information, contact Vyvyan Rundgren 434-990-5763 or [vyvyanr@gmail.com](mailto:vyvyanr@gmail.com).



## Mark Your Calendar

**April 1:** Stanardsville - Suzy Parron will speak on the barn quilt movement at 11:00 at The Studio School at The Palette Art Gallery. See the article above for more information.

**April 6:** Front Royal - Jim Lillard will present Mountain Memories, at 7:00 pm in the Front Royal town hall conference room, 102 E. Main St. in downtown. Contact Darryl Merchant (540-683-6878 or [heritage@measure-map.com](mailto:heritage@measure-map.com)) for more information.

**April 8:** Stanley - The Page County BRHP committee will hold a groundbreaking ceremony for their monument. It will be held in the Ed Good Memorial Park, 332 E. Main St. at 11:00 am.

**April 22:** Stanardsville - Mountain Heritage Event, sponsored by the Piedmont Environmental Council, at Cecil Mission, located a few miles west of Stanardsville on Rt. 33. The event is free and open to all, though you need to register in advance. See above for more information. You may obtain more information or register [HERE](#).

**April 29:** Sperryville - Dedication of the Rappahannock County monument will take place at 10:00. The monument is located on the grounds of Thornton River Orchard and Market, 11587 Lee Highway (Rt. 211), Sperryville, VA 22740. Bring your own chair.

**August 20:** Crozet - Children of Shenandoah Homecoming at the Blue Ridge Heritage monument in Patricia Ann Byrom Forest Preserve Park, 6610 Blackwell's Hollow, Crozet, VA 22932. See above for more information.

## Visit Our Website – [BlueRidgeHeritageProject.com](http://BlueRidgeHeritageProject.com)

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project website is up and running. Webmistress Teresa Lam has created an attractive and easy to use site that features a page for each of the eight counties. You are encouraged to click on "Submit Images to Share" to post photos related to the families of the Blue Ridge and life in the mountains. The website also has a "Donate Now" button so you may made tax deductible donation with a credit card. Your donation may be marked to support the Blue Ridge Heritage Project as a whole, or you may direct it to a specific county or counties. Teresa is working to add new photos and material, so visit the website often!

## Follow Us On Facebook

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project has a Facebook page, where we make announcements and post information and links that will be of interest to those following the Project. The Albemarle, Greene, Page, Rappahannock, Rockingham, and Warren County committees have set up their own Facebook pages. Take a look, Like and Follow us!

## Get Involved With The Project

There is still a lot of work to be done. We will need landscaping suggestions for the monument sites and photos for the website and the interpretive signs. For counties where the monuments are still being developed we need people interested in historical research to compile accurate lists of the families displaced in each county. 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.



The completed Madison County monument in Criglersville.

Most of all, the Blue Ridge Heritage Project needs to get the word out. The most effective way to do this is through word of mouth. Tell your family, your friends, your co-workers, people at your church – tell *EVERYBODY* about the Project. Bill Henry and others are available to speak to community, church, and government groups to introduce the Project. To become a part of the Blue Ridge Heritage Project contact Bill.

### **What is the Blue Ridge Heritage Project?**

The BRHP is a grassroots effort to create a series of monuments 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 a monument site in each of the eight counties where land was acquired to create the Park.

The standing stone chimney was chosen as the design for our monuments because of its significance to the removal of the people who were living on the land that is now Shenandoah National Park. The park was created in the depths of The Great Depression, and there were many people who did not have a home. When a family was evicted their house would often quickly be reoccupied. To keep the park rangers from having to repeat evictions over and over, the house would be burned, sometimes while the families watched. After the ashes cooled the stone chimney often remained, a silent reminder that this had once been a home. Today, scattered throughout the backcountry of the park, there are many chimneys still standing, symbolizing the strength and endurance of the people who once lived in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project hopes to accurately educate visitors about the people who lived in the mountains before the park. 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, to support the Blue Ridge Heritage Project, or to get more information, please contact me (onarock01@yahoo.com or 434-985-7905)

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[BlueRidgeHeritageProject.com](http://BlueRidgeHeritageProject.com)

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