

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project

Update – May, 2017

Greetings!

It is hard to believe that in just a little over three short years the Blue Ridge Heritage Project has moved from an abstract idea being discussed by a handful of people to an effort that has brought hundreds of people to work together across eight counties to create long overdue monuments to the people who lost their homes and land. I am always amazed by the powerful and emotional reactions that the completed monuments evoke from those who experience them, and I am grateful for all those who are helping to make the monuments come to life.

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project, County By County:

Albemarle County: Phase II of the Albemarle BRHP project - constructing a covered pavilion suitable for small gatherings - is now under way in the Patricia Ann Byrom Forest Preserve Park!

Greene County: The Greene County 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. An architect has been engaged to create the site plan for developing the property. A donation from the Shenandoah National Park Trust and a grant from the Perry Foundation, as well as many generous donations from the community have helped the committee toward its financial goal for the project. As soon as the site plan is finalized volunteers will begin moving stone to the site from a donated chimney, and construction will begin.

Madison County: The Madison BRHP committee has been busy constructing a walkway from the parking area to the monument. As a fund raiser the committee is sponsoring a Murder Mystery Dinner Theater at Graves Mountain Lodge on June 17. See the Madison Co. attachment for the menu, ticket information, and more details.

Page County: The groundbreaking ceremony for the Page County monument took place on Saturday, April 8. Descendant Clyde Jenkins has begun construction at the site in Ed Good Memorial Park in downtown Stanley. Committee member Stacey Montgomery created a wonderful exhibit on the displacement of the families that is on display in the Page Public Library through May. The library is located at 100 Zerkle St. in Luray. Check on library hours [HERE](#).

Rappahannock County: The dedication of the Rappahannock County monument will take place on Saturday, May 20. See the Rappahannock Co. attachment for more details.

Rockingham County: Rockingham County's committee has been busy laying the groundwork for their monument and will hold a meeting on June 15. To find out more about work on the Rockingham monument you may contact Jim Lawson (540-298-0582 or yallcome2@verizon.net).

Warren County: Presentations on the BRHP have helped raise community interest in the project. Descendant Darryl Merchant is forming a committee to begin the work of creating the Warren County monument. Contact Darryl for more information (540-683-6878 or heritage@measure-map.com).

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!

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).

Visit Our Website – BlueRidgeHeritageProject.com

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project website is up and running. Webmistess 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.

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 (434-985-7905 or OnaRock01@yahoo.com).

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 family watched. After the ashes cooled the stone chimney 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

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