

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project

Update – August, 2017

Greetings!

So far 2017 has been an active year for the Blue Ridge Heritage Project. The Rappahannock County committee dedicated their monument in May, and the Page County committee will dedicate their monument on September 17! With Madison and Albemarle Counties' monuments completed in previous years there will now be four up and four to go! Committees in three of the other counties – Greene, Rockingham, and Warren – are busy with planning the details, making the decisions that must be taken care of before construction can begin, and in one case, watching as the wheels of local government slowly turn.

The completion of construction of a county's chimney monument doesn't signal the end of the need for financial support. The chimney is phase I of a multi-part project to develop a county's site. Landscaping, hardscaping (adjacent stonework, walkways, etc.), and displays of photos, stories, and information about the people from the county as well as the need to set aside money for future maintenance and improvements all require funding. Please consider making a tax deductible donation to the county or counties of your choice, or make a donation to support the entire Project through the General BRHP Project Fund. Your donation may be made in honor of someone or as a memorial. Make your donation on line (BlueRidgeHeritageProject.com and click on 'Donate Now'). You may also send a check to the BRHP at P.O. Box 1172, Stanardsville, VA 22973. Be sure to designate which county or counties you would like your donation to support or if you are donating to the General BRHP Project Fund in support of the whole project.



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 - has been completed. The next step is to install the display panels to tell the stories of the people of Albemarle County.

Greene County: The building permit for the monument has been approved, the plaque has been received, and the steering committee is in the process of reviewing designs for the displays that will accompany the chimney. The county will be removing a tree on the site. Once that is completed then construction can begin.

Madison County: The Madison BRHP committee hopes to work with the county board of supervisors to plan for the future use of "The Cottage", one of the buildings on the Criglersville School property, as a museum and display space.

Page County: After the groundbreaking in April construction of the Page County chimney moved very along quickly. The dedication is planned for Sunday, September 17 at 3:00. See below for more information.

Rappahannock County: Following the spring dedication of their monument the Rappahannock BRHP committee is taking a well-earned break before moving on to Phase II of their project. Stay tuned for details.

Rockingham County: The Rockingham committee is actively moving forward with plans for their monument. The committee has chosen a location on Elkton town property next to the Elkton Area Community Center, and they are working closely with the town to secure permits and take preliminary steps so that construction can begin as soon as possible.

Warren County: Darryl Merchant reports that subcommittees are formed and the Warren County group is moving forward with identifying a site, finalizing a chimney design, and other tasks to prepare for creating a memorial. In September a presentation will be made to the Front Royal town council that will finalize the site selection process.

Augusta County: Support is being sought from individuals and organizations in the Eastern Augusta/Waynesboro area in order to form a steering committee that will guide the development of the Augusta County BRHP monument. Bill Henry is seeking opportunities to make presentations on the BRHP to community civic, service, and church groups. Anyone interested in becoming involved with the Augusta monument project may contact Bill at 434-985-7905.

Mark Your Calendar!

August 20: Children of Shenandoah To Hold Homecoming 1:00

- 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).

September 17: Dedication of the Page County Memorial 3:00

- The Page County BRHP committee will host a dedication ceremony at the site of their chimney in the Ed Goode Memorial Park in downtown Stanley. The park is located on Main Street (Business Rt. 340) at the railroad tracks in downtown Stanley.

New Book – *These Hills Were Home*

BRHP board of directors member Kristie Kendall is now a published author! Her first book, *These Hills Were Home: A Walking History Guide to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Northern Greene and Western Madison County, Virginia*, was recently released. Based on her years of research and exploration in this area that is now part of Shenandoah National Park, Kendall hopes her book will “breathe new life into the history of the mountain communities that once flourished in the Blue Ridge Mountains.” The book provides a historic context and a trail guide for learning about the lives of the people who lived in these mountains, from the earliest European settlers to the residents who were removed for the creation of the National Park. 132 pages, 97 photographs and 12 trail maps. *These Hills Were Home* may be ordered from the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club bookstore [HERE](#). \$14.00 (20% discount for PATC members).

***Hollow Memories: One Hiker's Journey Through Shenandoah National Park* by Court Ogilvie**

The stories and the history of the people who once lived in the Blue Ridge Mountains were the inspiration for an article recently written by Court Ogilvie. Like many SNP hikers, Court was intrigued by the artifacts, cemeteries, and remains of homes and farms he came across in the backcountry, and the more he learned about people who had lived there the more interested he became in their stories. Court's recent article, *Hollow Memories: One Hiker's Journey Through Shenandoah National Park* is attached to the email you received with this update.

Help Wanted: BRHP Website Assistant

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project is seeking a part-time assistant to help our webmistress keep our website attractive and up-to-date. This is a volunteer position that offers unlimited satisfaction. If you have experience in working with website maintenance and would like to share your skills with the BRHP please contact Bill Henry.

Visit Our Website – BlueRidgeHeritageProject.com

The Blue Ridge Heritage Project website has been a popular destination since it was set up. Visitors to the site are seeking information about the overall project as well as updates provided on the county pages. We are gathering photos from each county to include in our archives. 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, our webmistress, 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 best 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 for several reasons. Before cast iron stoves were available the fireplace was the center of family life, providing heat for cooking and for warming the house in the colder months. The Shenandoah National Park was created in the depths of The Great Depression, and there were many people throughout the country who did not have a home. When a family was evicted their house, if left standing, would sometimes be reoccupied. So that officials didn't have to repeat evictions, a house would be dismantled or sometimes burned. Poignant and painful stories are told of the burning taking place while the family watched.

After the ashes cooled the stone chimney often remained standing, a silent reminder that this had once been a home. Today, scattered throughout the backcountry of the park, there are many chimneys, 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)

Bill Henry

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We are a 501c3 non-profit, and your contribution is tax deductible