

BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Newsletter

September 2018

COMING EVENTS

September 8, 2018, 1:30 PM - Fall Membership Meeting at the Bland County Library. Program: Vintage Base Ball

September 7-8, 2018 – Bland County Horse Show.

October 6, 2018 - Lord's Acre Sale

October 12-13, 2018 – Festival of Leaves

November, 2018 – Small Business Saturday

December, 2018 – Christmas at the Market

Our office hours continue to be Fridays from 9 to 3. However, if you need something and cannot come in during those hours we will gladly attempt to meet you at another time.

You may contact us at 276-688-0088 and leave a message or email us at info@blandcountyhist.org.

FALL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

September 8, 2018, 1:30 pm

**Conference Room
Bland County Library**

Program: Vintage Base Ball

Speaker: Michael Gillman from the Wythe County Historical Society

Light refreshments following the meeting. Please join us and bring a friend.



President's Message

It's hard to believe that August is quickly sliding into September. The days are getting shorter, the nights a little cooler and there's a crisp feeling in the air during early mornings. I hope that each of you had a memorable and safe summer! It was hard for me, personally, to see the school bus running on that first morning of the new school year.

Our little county has been busy lately and there are new adventures on the horizon. In the month of August alone the county events were numerous. Ceres had a BBQ fundraiser. The Farmer's Market has had record turnouts. Heritage Day was a fun and education event, despite the rains. The county canneries have been in full swing. The Bland County Historical Society held the voting for the 2019 calendar entries. A rodeo came to the fairgrounds. The horse barn on the fairgrounds got a facelift and new roofs were put on the fairground buildings. School started back in Bland and surrounding counties. And the Bland County Fair was the "hopping" place to be! I'd like to add that the Historical Society received over 170 photos for the 2019 calendar photo contest 55 were chosen to be voted on. Over 80 people cast their votes. Thank you to everyone who entered photos and/or voted!

What does the future hold? Mike Gillman from Wythe County Historical Society will be introducing Vintage Base Ball to Bland at our September 8th Membership Meeting. Love's Truckstop and Arby's are soon to open in Bastian. The Lord's Acre Sale will be the first Saturday in October. The Farmer's Market will continue until the end of October. The Bland County Festival of Leaves will be the 2nd weekend in October. There will be Small Business Saturday events in November and a craft sale at the Market in December. I hope I see many of you at some of these event. Please find me and say Hello! I would love to personally get to know all of our members.

You, the members, and the volunteers are what keeps our Historical Society going! Thank you for all that you do to help us preserve Bland County History!

Eisle Havens, President

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June Membership Meeting

Tiffany Carter, a teacher at Bland County High School and the leader of the Forensic Team there was our guest speaker as well as some of the members of the Forensic Team at our membership meeting. She gave an interesting overview of the Forensics Program which has brought Bland County Schools' awards and state wide attention over the last decade. Audiovisuals she brought underlined the great experiences the students have gained in these competitions. The program was enjoyed by the group and many questions followed.

Also at the meeting we presented the **Nancy Clark Tate and Zareda Earnest Scholarship** to Allison Hull, a new graduate, from Bastian. Allison, who brought her whole family to the event, plans to attend Wytheville Community College this fall and major in history with hopes of becoming a history teacher. We are proud of her work and wish her well in her future.

Photo Contest for the 2019 Calendar

This year's photo contest for the 2019 calendar "Country Life in Bland County" inspired folks to send in the largest number of photos we have ever received, 170 pictures! Faced with so many photos, we had to take on the awful task of choosing 55 of the pictures that we felt most represented the theme of "Country Life" and were clear enough to work well on the calendar. Those pictures have been posted in the BCHS office for the month of August and were also displayed at Heritage Day for public voting. August 31 will be the last day to vote. After the votes are counted the 2019 Calendar will be produced. Fingers crossed, we will have that 2019 calendar available for the Festival of Leaves.

A sincere **Thank You** to everyone who participated in the Photo Contest. Every photo submitted was appreciated and the number received while overwhelming was also gratifying. Keep your cameras at hand for next year's calendar. We don't have a theme picked out yet so if you have an idea let us know!! Again thank you to all participants.

New in our Gift Shop from Ann Hardy Beardshall!

"Mark Hager Short Stories"

Collected by Ann Hardy Beardshall & Mark Hager III

In 2015 Mark Hager's family visited the Bland County Historical Society in hopes of gaining more family information and in the course of the discussion told Ann Beardshall they would really like to collect and publish the numerous stories he had written and sold over the years. They talked to the right person. Over the last few years Ann Beardshall has worked with the family, investigated several avenues and finally published this book this year.

Mark Hager (1889-1960) was a native of Bland County and a prolific short story writer. In her preface Ann notes that "Mark Hager wrote over 250 short stories that appeared in a wide range of publications including Collier's, Progressive Farmer, Household, The American Legion Magazine, and Woman's Day." Many of his stories were also published in short story collections.

An excellent biography is provided giving you a sense of whom this man was, as well as a summary of his background as it pertains to his writing. As an example, Ann writes that his stories were written on a used typewriter (originally bought for his children) on his dining room table. These stories were then published across the United States, one story was adapted for television and shown on "Fireside Theatre".

This is a large book, with over 300 pages, and contains 53 of Mr. Hager's 250 stories. They should provide many hours of enjoyable reading as well as a glimpse of another time and different places. It should also be noted that all of the stories besides being well written are wholesome, frequently amusing and often teach a moral lesson. These stories just beg to be read out loud for the whole family.

"Mark Hager's Short Stories" are available at the Bland County Historical Society for \$30 and can be shipped for an additional price.

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Play Ball in a Historical Way!

Michael Gillman of the Wythe County Historical Society has developed a new passion for baseball but not the current baseball as it is played in schools and professionally in the USA, but he has helped develop 2 local teams in what is known as Vintage Base Ball. Vintage Base Ball is very similar to baseball as we know it but is based on the game as it was played around 1864 with softer balls, no gloves and “gentlemen’s rules.”

Randy Kiser of Bland is a convert to the new game and acts as umpire, which he says because of the “gentleman’s rules” is an easy task. Mr. Gillman will be our speaker on September 8th at the Quarterly Meeting and will tell us more about the game, its origins and the hopes for the newly organize teams.

This game is currently gaining popularity across the country. Randy advises that if the weather allows, there may even be a demonstration following the meeting. Please bring a friend and join us for this presentation.



Sue Ellen Tate
Newsletter Editor

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New Items in the Gift Shop

- ❖ Bland County T-shirts with the Old Jail shown on the upper left front and the Bland County outline with “Bland County Established 1861” on the back. Shirts come in 5 colors: gray, red, bright blue, forest green and burnt orange. Sizes are Small thru 2XL.
- ❖ Small painted rocks with Bland County themed designs.
- ❖ Locally handmade wooden ballpoint pens with Bland County imprinted on them. They come in various woods and are quite handsome.
- ❖ “Mark Hager’s Collected Short Stories” by **Ann Hardy Beardshall and Mark Hager III**. (see review in this newsletter)

To view all the items currently for sale go to www.blandcountyhistsoc.org

Recent Events

During the last few months the Bland Historical Society has participated in the following:

Ceres Day – We set up a table and greeted many friends.

Heritage Day – We decorated and set up a table and our photos for voting on the 2019 Calendar.

Bland County Fair – We provided prizes.

2018 Officers/Board of Directors

President	Eisle Havens
V. President	Molly Thompson
Secretary	Barbara Justice
Treasurer	Brenda Thompson

Other Board Members

Kathy Havens - Johnny Goins - Virginia Gills
Barbara Laban - Sue Ellen Tate