

# BLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2018

## COMING EVENTS

### **December 8<sup>th</sup>** –big Christmas Events

11 to 2 - **Santa** will be at the  
Bland County Library!  
1:30 to 3:30 - Bland County  
Historical Society **Christmas  
Social**  
5pm - **Bland Christmas  
Parade**

**December 23-24** Central  
Methodist will have its live  
Christmas Manger from  
6:30 to 8pm

### **WINTER MEMBERSHIP MEETING & OPEN HOUSE**

December 8, 2018, from 1:30 to 3:30pm

Historical Society Office in  
the Old Jail

Please join us for our annual  
social. Cookies and drinks will  
precede the Christmas Parade.  
It will also be a chance to pick  
up any last minute gifts from  
our gift shop.



## President's Message

It's hard to believe that December is already upon us! I have truly enjoyed my first year as the President here at Bland County Historical Society. None of this would have been possible without the board of directors, officers, volunteers and members. I want to say thank you, to everyone involved, for this past year.

With that, I would like to share my favorite, no fail, recipe for a Merry Christmas:

A dash of Joy, mixed with

A touch of Peace,

Add a pinch of Magic,

Stir with Hope.

Garnish with Love and Have a Wonderful Holiday Season!

May each of you be Blessed with Love, Laughter and Hope during the Holidays and in the coming year!

Until next year,

*Eisle Havens*

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## Historical Society Ornament At the Hotel Roanoke

We received the following exciting information about one of our ornaments from Rachel Havens, District Manager, Big Walker SWCD. This year the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts will hold their annual meeting at the Hotel Roanoke on December 2-5<sup>th</sup>. Each district was asked to provide an ornament that best represents their district to decorate a tree for their annual Christmas Tree exhibit, "Fashions for Evergreens". She chose our ornament featuring the shape of Bland County.

If you get to Hotel Roanoke be sure to look for our ornament. The trees will be on display from Thanksgiving until New Year's Day for public viewing. The ornaments will then be put up for a silent auction to raise money for the Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees Association who sponsors educational scholarships for studies.

**Thank you Rachel for  
choosing our ornament!**

**The 2019 Calendar titled "Country Life"** is a beautiful calendar picturing scenes of Bland County chosen from 170 submitted photos, voted on by local people and now on sale at the Gift Shop.

All was going well with the calendar production to get the calendars well before the Festival of Leaves, our biggest sales days. Then, bad news from the company printing our calendars that their equipment had broken down and we went to the Festival of Leaves without any calendars. Many patrons came by requesting calendars and we were all very disappointed that they were not yet available.

Although the commercial printer did not offer us any lower cost despite the delay, the Board of Directors has decided to reduce our calendar this year from \$15 to \$10 in hopes of selling more calendars and decreasing our losses! They are now available online or in our office.

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### Christmas Memories

*Several of our board members share their childhood memories.  
We hope they bring happy memories to all of you.*

As I reminisce about past Christmas memories, my favorite memories included my parents and two older brothers getting up before daylight on Christmas morning, opening family and Santa gifts and then immediately leaving, travelling an hour and visiting our beloved friends, the Siffords, in Parrott, Virginia. Even as a small child, I didn't care that I had to leave my presents at home. The Siffords were my favorite people on Earth, next to my immediate family and grandparents. Barbara made THE BEST peanut butter balls and pinwheel candies and Donald, with his long Santa beard, told the most exciting stories! Their home felt like Christmas all year long! It wasn't about the presents. It was about being with loved ones and sharing laughter, hugs and cheers. Those are the most important Christmas memories... togetherness! *Eisle Havens*

A case of Pepsi Colas and a case of oranges, bags of hard candy and nuts all were placed on the hearth under the Penley girls socks. Santa would leave a gift of clothing and sometimes a gift that we all could share. Memories at Central Church, with the live tree and the Christmas Program are stored in my mind. Family being together, decorating, visiting with friends all bring back a smile to me. Through a child's eyes it was the most wonderful time of the year! **Molly Thompson**

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*We didn't have a fireplace and Santa certainly couldn't get down the chimney and through the fire in the wood stove to bring our presents, so we had to improvise. There were 4 of us and each had a little chair of their own. On Christmas Eve our little chairs were lined up in a row for Santa. One of our socks was clothes pinned to the back of the chair for our treats. The treats usually consisted of an orange and maybe candy. One Christmas I remember I got a big doll with dark hair and my sister got one with blonde hair, just like ours. Another Christmas I remember, I wanted a toy typewriter so bad. I searched everywhere even after Christmas, because I just knew Santa would bring that typewriter! Christmas was the time we got such things as store bought grapes, oranges, tangerines, orange slices and chocolate covered peanuts. It was also a time when we visited family throughout the holiday, probably leftovers from one day or the other but we shared a meal, not only with grandparents but also uncles and aunts and their family.*

*I especially remember the boiled country ham that was part of Christmas. Boiled to perfection, kept in a cool place and sliced when "company" came! Church was a big part of Christmas for us. Decorating the big tree cut from an open field. I loved the "bubble lights" that graced the tree! Caroling was always a special time. "Drawing names" for the gift exchange and practicing for the program were preliminary to the Christmas program. "Baby Jesus" was always the focus of the night. Sometimes He was a doll and sometimes He was a real baby, if there happened to be a new baby in the congregation. The night of the program could include a "pounding of the preacher". Food, home canned or baked, was given to the pastor serving at that time. Finally, it was time to exchange gifts from the huge pile under the tree. None were extravagant, maybe a book or bible, a small trinket or game but special when it was revealed "who had your name". As each person departed they were given an orange, apple and a candy bar as a gift from the church.*

*Brenda Thompson*

A few weeks before Christmas, Mom and Dad left my Aunt to babysit while they went to town. (My brother always got to go to town so he could get a haircut.) My sisters and I decided to "explore" while they were gone. Imagine our delight when we found five baby dolls hidden away. One for each of us. When Mom got home, we each told her which doll we wanted. I'm happy to say I got the baby doll with long hair and curlers.

**Barbara Justice**

**Wishing all of you a Christmas and New Year's full of good memories.**

## **OFFICE CLOSING FOR WINTER**

The Bland County Historical Society Office will be closing for the winter months with our last day being December 21<sup>st</sup>. We will still answer genealogy and history questions about Bland County. Submit your questions to [info@blandcountyhist.org](mailto:info@blandcountyhist.org).

We will also fill orders for our books and other items while we are closed. Just fill out the form available online and mail to us. The order form is available on the link “Items for sale” at the BCHS website [www.blandcountyhistsoc.org](http://www.blandcountyhistsoc.org).

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### **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