

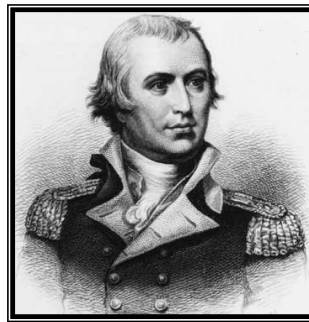
Greene County Historical Society Newsletter



360 Main Street, PO Box 185, Stanardsville Virginia 22973

Year 2021, November

Volume 27 Issue 3



Nathanael Greene

Major General of the Continental Army

Born 1742--Died 1786

To close out the year, make sure to mark on your calendars our customary Open House. This year it is on December 4th, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Join us at 2:00 pm in the Gallery with local poet Jamie Reaser, who will read some of her beautiful and touching poetry and sign copies of her books. Refreshments will follow in the museum, after which people can make their way up to the High School for a drive-by Parade of Lights that will start at 5:30pm. Thinking ahead to 2022, don't forget that we **will** have our Historic House Tour, on April 10th. Our next newsletter, in March, will have details.

DIGITIZATION OF GREENE COUNTY RECORD - We are excited to report that a project is underway to digitize early issues of the Greene County Record and its predecessor, the Greene County Register. Record Editor Terry Beigie is working with the Library of Virginia and with us to make this happen. Bookmark <https://virginiachronicle.com/> and browse for other papers until the Record is available.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

For the first time in a long while, we have no new memberships to report, and we are sad to say that some of the people who have most recently joined did not renew for 2021. It is coming up for membership renewal time once again. Membership by the community is tremendously important to us, not just for dues, but for the active support of members in so many of our activities. So please do remember to pay your dues for the calendar year 2022, and volunteer for one or more of the many activities that we undertake on behalf of the Society and the community at large.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

In my last correspondence with the Historical Society, it was looking like we were getting past the worst of this COVID-19. Alas, that turned out to be a false hope. What happened? The delta variant appeared and Greene County became a "hot spot" for COVID-19 cases.

However, the Society stayed quite active during this time. Our museum has been reopened for 15 months. Visitor attendance has been up for the summer months but after Labor Day weekend there has been a decline in visitors. We hope to see more of you over the winter, we'll be there.

We've also begun coordinating activities with Greene County Parks and Recreation. Director Justin Bullock reached out to us for ideas and we were pleased to respond. A guided walking tour of Historic Stanardsville, a presentation about Governor Spotswood and the Golden Horseshoes, and a Stanardsville cemetery tour were well attended and enjoyed by all. A huge thank you to Lifetime Member and local resident Amanda Moon for her well researched cemetery tour. In the Spring, we hope to have more coordinated events, perhaps including more town tours, cemetery tours with different themes, scavenger hunts, genealogy workshops, and a wildlife presentation in the Rhodes Wildlife Gallery. STAY TUNED!

Other ways that we have been active in the community include being present at the Farmer's Market, Holiday Market, and the Greene Farm and Livestock Show. We try to have a presence in the community at every opportunity.

This summer, starting in late July, the museum complex buildings got a new paint job. We thank Glenn's Painting and Powerwashing crew for a job well done. Everyone, please come to our December 4th Holiday Open House to see the bright new look of the buildings and enjoy fellowship, refreshments and some discounts in our gift shop.

I hope all of you have taken time to make use of our relatively new and updated WEBSITE. For those who have not yet done so, it has articles, Society news, a photo gallery, prior newsletters and much more information about the Society and the history of Greene County. We continue to get many inquiries from people all across our country from the website - <https://greenehistoryva.org/>.

The Greene County Record and Historical Society have been working with the Library of Virginia to digitize past copies of the Record, making them accessible in an online database that will be searchable. <https://virginiachronicle.com/> provides a link to the database. Scott Mingle dorff is the Society contact for this project. As the project moves ahead, we'll let you know about progress, perhaps provide a few gems as we ourselves explore this fabulous resource.

Anyone with ideas for the Society, things you would like to promote, let us hear from you. We need more museum volunteers. We are a non-profit organization supported by membership dues, donations and gift shop sales. The Society could not function without active and dues-paying members. The museum complex with four buildings makes the Society a homeowner, with the same type of monthly bills. Therefore the support of our membership base is very important. So for 2022, let's make a strong effort to increase the membership. I ask each member to try to get at least TWO new members for 2022. Especially, we encourage younger members and friends who might be interested in joining GCHS leadership in the future.

Thank You Very Much!!

Happy Holidays,

Joann
GCHS President

DONATIONS

We received a donation at the end of October that practically deserves a whole newsletter to itself – 18th and 19th Century Orange County Will Digests and Deed Abstracts. Even the story of how we got them is interesting.

In January 2020, we received an email from a Brent Paul in Maryland, who was a friend of the then recently deceased Margaret Prather Ezell of Germantown MD. Both Margaret and her mother Mildred Seab Ezell had devoted a lifetime to genealogy research, and there were many paper records to dispose of. The gift revealed itself as a treasure trove, although the ‘only’ items in his list that pertained to Greene County were lines 213 and 214 in a long spreadsheet! *Line 213: Orange County VA, Digest of Will Books - 1734-1838; Line 214: Orange County Deed Abstracts - 5 Volumes.* The 5 volumes comprise Orange County Deed Books 9 through 20, covering 1743-1795. As well as these books, which had been painstakingly transcribed in the 1980s by Ruth & Sam Sparacio and published by them through The Antient Press, the box Brent sent us also included many pages of typed lists on subjects such as ‘*Original lists of emigrants in bondage: from London to the American Colonies 1719-1744*’.

The indexes of all of the deed books and will digests are of course full of local names, such as Buckner, Davis, Dulaney, Morris, Powell, Stannard [sic]. But of course prior to 1838 they are mixed with what we might call these days ‘Orange County names.’

Acquisition of these books gives the GCHS a huge resource and an even greater opportunity to study these deeds without having to travel to the Orange County Courthouse – or perhaps more important – struggle to interpret 18th century handwriting.

One Example – from Orange County Deed Book 19, pp 441-443 “*This indenture made 27th September 1790 between James Head of Orange County & Elizabeth his Wife of one part and Philip Seal of same County... Witnesseth that in consideration of the sum Sixty Pounds Current money of Virginia have sold unto Philip Seal & to his heirs 119 acres of land in Orange County on both sides of the road that leads to Swift Run Gapp & is bounded Beginning at a pine on a hill side near a small branch[stream] thence North to a large white oak on the West side of the said Road Corner to Stannard[’s property] thence North to Spanish oak saplins on the flat of a branch Corner to the said Stannard’s thence North to a red oak Corner to Michael Louer thence South to a Stone in the Plantation Corner thence South to a red oak Saplin on a ridge in Mr. John Goodall’s line thence with his line to the Beginning place.... At a Court held for Orange County the 27th day Sept 1790: This indenture acknowledged by the sd James Head & Elizabeth his Wife she being first privately examined an[d] order[ed] to be recorded.*”

WANTED

A researcher, probably retired and with time to spare, knowledgeable about the history of Greene County, its family names and local geography, and with boundless curiosity. This person would have access to the newly acquired Deed Abstracts & Will Digest in order to extract interesting information about the activities of early Greene County residents and relate it to today, for inclusion in GCHS publications. Is this YOU – or someone you know? We’d love to hear from you if so. Email us for more information at Jackie.pamenter@gmail.com

**A POEM FROM THE FREDERICKSBURG
FREE-LANCE – FROM GREENE COUNTY**

These are the people of Stanardsville,
Who meritorious places fill;
Will each in turn receive a chance
To be a reader of The Free Lance.

Therefore, my letter now begins
With mention of Dr. Edgar Sims,
Who wears a most sagacious look,
And holds the county's pocket-book.

John S. Chapman, the law expert,
Does Commonwealth Attorney's work;
And to a Senatorship aspires –
Since George W. Morris' term expires.

Jos Smith, the Sheriff for thirty years,
Makes no restraint at hiding tears –
Not before the mercy seat,
But at the charming widow's feet.

Mr. R. S Thomas is by far
The most successful at the bar,
As the firm of Thomas and Gen. Fields
Quite a competency yields.

Z. K. Page is County clerk;
Chas. Miller assists him in the work;
While the shrewdest man in town to-day
Is Attorney-at-law, **John T. Bray**.

D. B. Eddins, thrice been married,
And off the Jewess Queen has carried.
Sam Silvey the biggest profit brings,
Repairing watches, clocks and rings.

Ivy Bickers passes out the mail;
Keeps drugs and notions, too, for sale.
Dr. Davis takes an active part
In pursuit of turkey, roe and hart.

Dr. Pennington also at the north,
Pulls and makes teeth and so forth.
Ed. Marshall for furniture and goods;
Eddins and Co, also at Hood's.

Zirkle Blakey is the hardware man;
T. Roberson is B flat in the band;
But the hardest workers – be known this fact –
Are Chastine Gibbons and Gallie Mac.

Bricks are sold by Charly Riddle;
Jerry Deane wields the bow and fiddle;
Matt Mallory plays accompaniment.
The janitor's name is Georgie Bent.

Mrs. Blakey keeps the brick hotel,
Which the public patronizes well.
Across the street Geo. W. Price
Comes in for an equal slice.

While over in the Oakland grove –
Where the gay ones love to rove –
Mrs. Stephens spreads her royal fare,
And captures all who visit there.

Dr. Quintus Hume, a paralytic,
Who is conceded to be a critic.
David Jacobs, a hustling clerk,
The first for books, the last for work.

Jim Blakey deals in merchandise;
His sisters share the enterprise.
Mr. Sandy Rhodes' widower-hood,
If changed, would make a husband good.

George W. Shelton is a free school teacher;
W. A. S. Conrad is M. E, preacher.
Disciple Houston holds ritual;
Rev. R. C. Cowling Episcopal.

I also mention in this list
Miss Stella Shelton the pianist.
The Shelton sisters, in number three,
Render sacred music in churches free.
J. E. H.

Published in the Fredericksburg Free-Lance, April
8th, 1901.

Note : pictures of the people whose names are in
bold are on the next page

The poem opposite was read by Amanda Moon when she conducted a tour of Stanardsville Cemetery in October, and we are delighted to reproduce it here. Interestingly, we have in our records a photograph, courtesy of Julie Dickey, from somewhat earlier than 1901, in which several of the people in the poem appear. The photograph is also in our *Images of America: Greene County* book

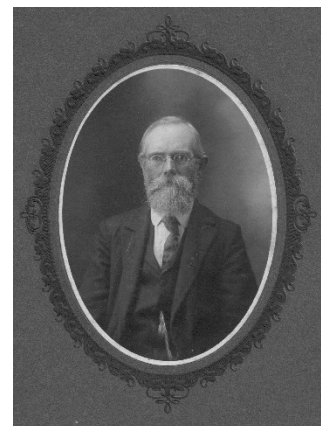
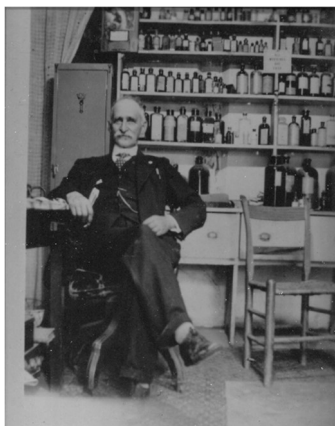
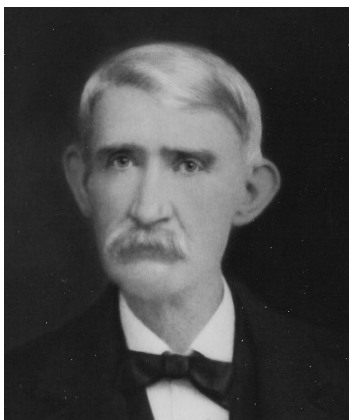


From left to right: Mr. Morton, caretaker; on fence, unidentified boy and Zirkle Blakey Sr.; W. B. McMullen, Sr.; Z. K. Page, County Clerk, in background; John Thomas Bray, Commonwealth's Attorney, in front of fence and holding what is presumably a law book in his right hand; Russ Melone; unidentified boy;

and Reuben Thomas.

The photograph may have been taken around 1894 or earlier. Zirkle Blakey was born in 1883, perhaps he was 11 in the picture? John Thomas Bray was no longer Commonwealth's Attorney when the poem was published; by then he was 'the shrewdest man in town, Attorney-at-law John T. Bray;' Reuben Thomas is likely to be the R. S. Thomas who is 'the most successful at the bar.'

We have pictures of some other people mentioned in the poem too. From left to right, below: Sheriff Joseph Smith, Dr. E. D. Davis, and schoolteacher George W. Shelton. Of course, you can meet Ivy Bickers whenever you visit the museum at 360 Main Street, he stands on one side of a display cabinet, his wife Irene on the other. Smith was Sheriff for the years 1869-1903; and note that, from the group in Court Square, Russ Melone was Sheriff from 1908-1937, and again from 1944 to 1947.



FINANCIAL DONATIONS

Several people have made financial donations since those recorded in our last newsletter. We are exceedingly grateful to all our donors, first and foremost of whom is the donor of a tremendously generous gift of \$2,000, in September. This donor wishes to remain anonymous, as are the several kind people who have contributed to our donation box. Other donations include those from: Henry & Ann Shelton, Ross & Amy Stevens, Elizabeth & Neil Shawen, Ms Williams and Ann Little. We thank you all.

RAILROADS AND CENTRAL VIRGINIA

Recently, we were asked whether or not there had ever been a railroad in Greene County—possibly before the Civil War. We were not aware of any but I went for a little dig. I studied Library of Congress maps in search of any sign of a railroad near Stanardsville and found none.

Early railroads in Virginia—though they may have received some support from the Virginia Board of Public Works--were privately owned. The Blue Ridge Railroad was incorporated in 1849. The Louisa Railroad Company (renamed Virginia Central in 1850) was chartered by the Commonwealth in 1836 and had reached a western point around Mechum's River by 1852. Their intent was to cross the Blue Ridge at Swift Run Gap here in Greene but it was determined that a crossing at Rockfish Gap from near Afton to Waynesboro would be more practical. It's interesting to speculate about how Greene County would have evolved had the northern crossing of the Blue Ridge been chosen.



East Portals, old and new, circa 1950

Under the leadership of Claudius Crozet (now I know where THAT name comes from) four tunnels were dug. The railroad was eventually incorporated into the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and CSX; a new train tunnel was built in the 1940s. Fast forward from Claudius to the 21st Century, and the work of over twenty years by the Claudius Crozet Blue Ridge Tunnel Foundation - <http://blueridgetunnel.org/> - to make the original tunnel part of a park and trail. Opened a year ago, you can visit the Crozet Railroad Tunnel in the new park from either end, Afton on the Eastern and Waynesboro on the

Western side. Walk, or ride a bike. Springs cause “rain” in the tunnel and there are no lights. Bring a flashlight! The tunnel is 2.43 miles long and there is a walk of 0.63 miles from the parking at the Afton (Eastern) end or 0.81 miles at the Western end. The Foundation has a great website with lots of information, and our thanks go to the Foundation for permission to include the above photo from their history of the Tunnel. Nelson County also has a dedicated website that contains a short video from VDOT that explains what happened to make the Tunnel Park a reality: <https://www.nelsoncounty.com/blue-ridge-tunnel/>.

Jeanne Rexroad

BUSINESS CORNER

Once again, thanks to our business members for their support: Business members include Jos. T. Samuels Inc., the Charlottesville Realty company run by Joe Samuels (www.jtsamuels.com); Stanardsville Shopping Plaza, home to Greene County's own Great Valu and many other businesses, and owned by members Frank and Betty Ruppert; The Cottages at Chesley Creek Farm in Dyke (www.chesleycreekfarm.com), owner Chuck Swinney; Armstrong and Associates International (www.armstrongassoc.com) of Stanardsville, President Shari Bedker; the Farm at South River, owners Judy and Cliff Braun; Performance Signs of Ruckersville, owners Robbie & Katherine Morris; United Bank, Stanardsville Main Street Branch, Manager Donna Harlow (www.bankwithunited.com); Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (www.myrec.coop); Charlottesville Sam's Club (www.samsclub.com), and The Greene Hills Club on Route 230 (www.GreeneHillsClub.com), PGA Professional and Senior Manager Mike Moyers. We are grateful to all of these businesses for their support, and encourage members to use their services.

Business supporters are acknowledged in all newsletters; receive a 10% discount on rental of the Rhodes Gallery for business events; are able to purchase a brick for our walkway at a discount; and receive a certificate acknowledging their support to display in their place of business. We look forward to welcoming many business members from within the County and beyond.

Greene County Historical Society Membership Form

Please complete this form and mail it with your check to us at PO Box 185, Stanardsville VA 22973, or bring it by the museum at 360 Main Street any Friday or Saturday, between 10 am and 3 pm. You may also renew online from the Membership page of our website. Membership dues, and additional gifts, are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Please check one of the following: This is a new membership This is a renewal

NAME _____ DATE _____

STREET _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____

E-MAIL NEWSLETTER? YES NO TELEPHONE _____

INDIVIDUAL \$15.00 FAMILY \$20.00 SPOTSWOOD SOCIETY \$50.00

BUSINESS: \$100.00 NATHANAEL GREENE SOCIETY \$200.00 LIFETIME \$500.00

ADDITIONAL GIFT - \$ _____

Open Fridays and Saturdays 10-3, and by appointment. Call 434-985-1834

www.greenhistoryva.org

www.facebook.com/greenhistoryva

The Greene County Historical Society

360 Main Street
PO Box 185
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