



# *The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society Newsletter*



Volume 31, No. 1

Winter 2009

Published quarterly by the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Dayton, Virginia.

## **Baker Country Store Records Invaluable To New HRHS Exhibit**

Story by Pat Turner Ritchie

One of the country stores portrayed in the Society's latest exhibit, "Country Store: Lifeline of the Community," is the Michael Baker store, which was located in Brocks Gap in northwestern Rockingham County. Baker's descendants through the Harnsberger family donated the store journal (containing entries dated 1804 to 1828) to HRHS many years ago. An inventory of all the existing Baker store goods was discovered among Michael Baker's estate settlement recorded in the March 1804 Rockingham County Court. Both of these sources were invaluable in setting up the country store display.

Michael Baker's store reportedly was located at the mouth of Lairs Run, now the intersection of state Routes 259 and 921 near Fulks Run, Va. His home plantation was about a mile southeast of that location in a wide valley along Route 259.

Baker, a former captain in the Rockingham County militia and a Revolutionary War veteran, operated the store himself with the help of his large family until his death in 1803. His will, written in January 1801 and probated December 1803, revealed that he wanted his wife Elizabeth and several of his sons to continue operating the store. Elizabeth and son Abraham kept the store running until 1821 when they formally closed the business.

When Michael Baker died, a complete inventory of store and personal property was made and recorded with the court. The inventory and Baker's will were thought to have been destroyed during the Civil War. However, a complete copy of the will is recorded in Augusta County in a lawsuit against the estate. Recently, part of the estate inventory was found in the Local Government

*(Continued on page 4)*



Site of Michael Baker farm in Brocks Gap, which reportedly was located about a mile from his store (Photograph courtesy of Pat Turner Ritchie).

President: Dale MacAllister  
Vice President: Vacant  
Secretary: Vacant  
Acting Treasurer: Bonnie Paul  
Administrator: Mary Nelson  
Museum Curator: Vacant  
Administrative Assistant: Wanda Painter  
Archivist: Dale Harter  
Newsletter Editor: Dale Harter



**Heritage Center Hours Of Operation**

Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

(Office is closed Saturday)

Office / Library (540) 879-2616 Museum: (540) 879-2681

Internet site: <http://www.heritagecenter.com>

Email: [heritage@heritagecenter.com](mailto:heritage@heritagecenter.com)

**2009 Newsletter Submission Deadlines**

- Spring 2009: June 19
- Summer 2009: Aug. 10
- Fall 2009: October 9

All articles are subject to editing. Ideas for feature articles must be submitted in advance of the article.

The editor reserves the right not to use unsolicited feature articles. Submissions should be sent by email to the editor ([dharter@bridgewater.edu](mailto:dharter@bridgewater.edu)), or placed on a computer disk and mailed to Dale Harter, 5641 Glade View Dr., Bridgewater, VA 22812.

**Calendar Of Events**

Through Aug. 29 - "The Country Store: Lifeline of the Community," an exhibit at the Heritage Center.

Through Labor Day - Miller-Kite Museum, in Elkton, open Sundays, 1-5 p.m.

Sept. 17 - "The Life and Times of John Brown Baldwin," by John Hildebrand, Strickler Lecture Series, 7 p.m., Heritage Center.

Oct. 7 - Annual Banquet and Lecture, "Slavery Sentiment in the Valley and the George Bourne Case," by Dr. Charles William Blair. Details to follow in upcoming newsletters.

Nov. 19 - "Dating Old Photographs," by Jeffrey Ruggles, Strickler Lecture Series, 7 p.m., Heritage Center.

**New Members**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Richard & Linda Ankrum<br>Purcellville       | Mabel Martin<br>Harrisonburg                         |
| Jeanne Artner<br>Front Royal                 | Nelson & Phyllis Miller<br>Harrisonburg              |
| Cassandra Baker<br>Harrisonburg              | Paul & Reane Mitchell<br>Staunton                    |
| Rob Baldwin<br>Harrisburg, Pa.               | Sylvia Moore<br>Harrisonburg                         |
| Gerald & Carolyn Beam<br>Mt. Crawford        | Sidney Rader<br>Virginia Beach                       |
| Ted & Stephanie Byrd<br>Harrisonburg         | Barbara Roberts<br>Bridgewater                       |
| Michael Clanahan<br>New Market               | Peggy Shifflett<br>Salem                             |
| Kathy & Mark Cline<br>Scottsdale, Ariz.      | Glenda Siegrist<br>& Loren Hostetter<br>Harrisonburg |
| Dan Dunfee<br>Frazeyburg, Ohio               | Emily Sherrill<br>Harrisonburg                       |
| Gerald Fawley<br>Bridgewater                 | Joann Wenger<br>Broadway                             |
| Christy Fitzpatrick<br>Williamstown, N. J.   | C. Winston Wenger<br>Broadway                        |
| Michael Heatwole<br>Harrisonburg             | Ethel White<br>Staunton                              |
| Dan & Jan Jones<br>Bridgewater               | Martha Wise<br>California, Md.                       |
| Dr. & Mrs. Jerry Linder<br>Orange Park, Fla. | Stephen & Darlene Young<br>Harrisonburg              |
| Nathan & Jamie Marsh<br>Harrisonburg         |  |

**If you change your email address,  
please let us know by emailing  
Mary Nelson, HRHS Administrator,  
at [heritage@heritagecenter.com](mailto:heritage@heritagecenter.com)**

Continued from the Fall 2008 newsletter

## The Diary of John B. Sheets, of Mt. Crawford Co. I, 33rd Virginia Infantry, C.S.A.

Transcribed by Dale Harter  
HRHS Archivist

John B. Sheets enlisted June 22, 1861, in Harrisonburg, as a private in Co. I, 33rd Virginia Infantry Regiment. He was killed in action near High Bridge, Va., April 7, 1865, 18 days after his 27th birthday.

*Editor's note: The diary is being transcribed as it was written, to include errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Any information added by the editor will be enclosed in brackets [ ]. If a word is illegible, it will be noted with a question mark*

### June 7, 1863

Clear & pleasant all day. left camp about day light & encamped about 8 miles from Culpepper Court H-. Crossed the Rapidan at Somerville ford. Waded it. good news from Vicksburg in yesterdays paper not far from Ceder Mountain battle field Cold for the season, Distance about 16 miles.

### June 8, 1863

Clear & pleasant cool. left camp at 6 a.m. passed through Culpepper C.H. & encamped on the Sperryville road about 3 ½ miles from C.H. (very nice little town) 5 days rations drawn to be cooked Distance about 11 miles

### June 9, 1863

Clear & pleasant. orders not to move to day. [Illegible] down on the river. Marched to C.H. & returned to camp in the evening roads very dusty.

### June 10, 1863

Clear & warm, all quiet this morning\_ Left camp at 3 ½ p.m. Moved towards Sperryville & encamped at dark near Woodville Distance 12 miles.

### June 11, 1863

Cloudy in the morning Moved at day light (4 A.M.) passed through Woodville to Sperryville 8 miles, thence down the Warrenton road through Washington to gaines X Roads [Gaines' Cross-Roads], & encamped on a hill, distance 17 miles 1? Oclock P.M., made junction with Rhodes [Maj. Gen. Robert E. Rodes] Div.

### June 12, 1863

Clear & very warm all day. left camp at sunrise on Front Royal Road through Flint Hill. Crossed the ridge at F Royal waded the river & encamped about 4 miles on F Royal & Winchester pike Distance 21 miles. All quiet in (front?) up to this time.

### June 13, 1863

Clear & very warm all day, left camp at 4 A.M. marched in direction of Winchester arrived within 3 miles of the town & drew up in line of Battle, on the right of Road, nothing but canonading & skirmishing. Distance 12 miles

### June 14, 1863

Cloudy in morning, rained a very hard shower last night. Still in line of battle Moved to the right of Winchester within ¾ of a mile. 5<sup>th</sup> Regt skirmishing all day. Several killed & wounded. Early [Maj. Gen. Jubal A. Early] opened upon the fortifications on the west at 6 p.m. & carried the first hill. Canonading continued until after dark.

### June 15, 1863

Clear. Left at 1 (a.m. ?) and marched in direction of Martinsburg road (via?) Jordans [Jordan] Springs Infantry commenced at day light & continued for about 1 ½ hours. Yankees surrendered, our Brigade captured 5 stand of colors, our regt. got the 5<sup>th</sup> M. D, fight near Stephenson[']s Depot (?) miles from Winchester. Orders to cook 3 days rations.

### June 16, 1863

Clear & warm all day. Moved at 3 o'clock p.m. in direction of Shepherdstown & encamped for the night at Smithfield distance 10 miles. Sunset met some Yankee prisoners.

### June 17, 1863

Clear & warm all day, left camp at sunrise passing through Smithfield LeeTown crossing B & O R.R. at Kearneysville encamped within 2 miles of Shepardstown, distance 12 miles 11 o'clock (?) very warm.

### June 18, 1863

Clear & warm in morning cloudy in evening some rain. Moved at 3 P.M. passed through Shepardstown & crossed the river below town & encamped on the bank of Sharpsburg road. (cook?) 3 days rations Waded the Potomac, nice looking ladies in town. Distance 5 miles.

*(Continued on page 7)*

*(Baker Store . . . - Continued from page 1)*

Records Collection at the Library of Virginia. Much of the inventory is intact, although some of the data is missing from pages singed by fire during the war.

The store inventory shows a surprisingly large variety of goods were available for sale, including kitchen utensils, dishes, kegs, steel saws, gun locks, shoemaker hammers and saddles. The number of bolts of cloth is astonishing. There is bonbaste, striped cotton, silk satin, cut velvet, plain velvet, cotton, calico, Russian sheeting, cottonette, blue cloth, gauze, muslin, coarse linen, Irish linen, ticking, striped coating and much more.

Even the country people in Brocks Gap wanted to be fashionable. For those customers dying their own fabrics, there was Indigo and Turkey Red. There were two grosses of pins, nine gross of buttons, 100 shanes of sewing silk and numerous ready-made stockings and shawls. Four clothes brushes were in stock to help people take care of their garments.

For the kitchen, the store sold tea pots, tea cups and saucers, chocolate and punch bowls. Door locks and latches for sale indicate the area's log homes had proper door hardware. There were two pounds of casteal soap, looking glasses and "rayzors," which surely were luxury items at the time.

Country stores were financial centers of the community. The Baker store inventory lists 86 people who owed money to the store in 1803. These debtors are in addition to the people who owed money to Michael Baker personally. The store also bartered with customers, exchanging store merchandise for animal skins and other goods.

In late 1803, there were 100 dozen rabbit skins, 32 fox, raccoon and wild cat skins and 24 wt deer skins in inventory. These items probably were sold at Harrisonburg, Fredericksburg or other larger urban areas. For medicinal purposes [?], the store carried 32 gallons of rum and wine and 54 gallons of whiskey.

The store inventory provides a snapshot of what the store was like, but the Baker store journal is more akin to a video of the store and its customers during a 20-year period. Some observations from the store accounts include:

- When the account book began in 1804, money was recorded in pounds, shillings and pence. There were 12 pence in a shilling and 20 shillings in a pound. A day's worth of reaping was worth about three shillings at the store, while a gallon of whiskey cost four shillings. Around 1817, Abraham Baker began to use the decimal system of money in his day book.
- The Baker family boarded travelers, charging for food served to both people and their horses.
- The Bakers took animal skins, butter, bacon and other goods for payment on accounts. They also accepted labor as payment.
- By 1804, settlers in Brocks Gap could afford luxuries like chocolate and nice dinnerware like cups, saucers and tea pots. The word "Saucer" is spelled "Sasser" in the store journal, a pronunciation still used in the area in the 1970s.
- Customers seem to have bought chocolate more often in the fall months.
- Customers came from a wide area: Runions Creek,

Bergton, Dry River, Criders and even Pendleton County, now in West Virginia.

- The store sold expensive lottery tickets which cost one pound, six shillings and four pence each. If one day's reaping earned three shillings, a lottery ticket was worth more than 10 days of hard labor.
- People sold butter to the store. In 1823, the Bakers took butter to Richmond to sell.
- A purchase of "home make shuger" probably meant maple sugar.
- Uriah Waring sold four saddles, three collars and a bridle to the store. He may have been a traveling salesman or a saddle maker in the area.
- Someone sewed clothing to sell at the store, because John Dotzen had six shirts and one pair of socks made there.
- A neighbor, Caty Fulk, wove eight yards of cotton which she sold to the store.
- The Bakers were equal opportunity employers, at least for field work. Polly Shafer and Elizabeth Sirk were paid for three days' reaping, and they were paid the same amount as the men who had worked an equal amount of time.
- "Schoolmaster" Michael Moyers was a customer.

The late Dr. M. Ellsworth Kyger transcribed the store journal, and Pat Turner Ritchie typed and indexed it in 1993.

The typescript version, with index, a photograph of the Baker farm and more about the Baker family and customers, is available for sale from HRHS as the "Michael Baker Store Account Book."

The original journal, which is on deposit at Special Collections, in the Carrier Library at James Madison University, is identified as the Joseph and John Baker Daybook, 1804-1828. It is part of a larger collection, Shenandoah Valley Miscellaneous Ledgers, Minute Books and Register, 1804-1933 (SC# 2005). A guide to the entire collection can be viewed online at [www.lib.jmu/special](http://www.lib.jmu/special).

While employed at the Library of Virginia, Dale Harter, HRHS Archivist, arranged to have this collection, including the Baker Daybook, microfilmed to ensure its long-term preservation. A copy of this microfilm is available for use at the Library of Virginia. More recently, Pat Turner Ritchie had a digital copy of the collection produced for the use of researchers visiting the HRHS library in Dayton.

Michael Baker is the ancestor of author Carrie Allen McCray Nickens (1913-2008) and two past presidents of HRHS, Shelvie Ritchie Carr and Pat Turner Ritchie.

**Don't Rely On The Newsletter For  
All Your HRHS Information!**

**Check Out Our Website at  
[www.heritagecenter.com](http://www.heritagecenter.com)**

## Library Photocopy Fees Increase

Due to the increased price of paper, toner and copy machine operation, HRHS has found it necessary to increase the rate for photocopies in the library.

Effective July 1, the cost will be 25 cents per copy for members, and 50 cents per copy for non-members.

## Miller-Kite Museum Open For Summer

The Miller-Kite Museum is now open on Sundays, 1-5 p.m., through Labor Day.

The museum, which served as Stonewall Jackson's headquarters, April 19-30, 1862, is located at 310 E. Rockingham St., in Elkton, Va. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated.

For additional information, call 540-578-3046, or email [historyed@msn.com](mailto:historyed@msn.com).

## Linville-Edom Grads Identified



Numerous people answered the call to identify the graduates of the Linville-Edom High School Class of 1927 who appeared in the Fall 2008 newsletter.

Winston Wenger, of Broadway, responded first. He credited Eldon Layman as his source and said Layman is the most knowledgeable source on Linville-Edom High School history.

The graduates are: (Bottom row, left to right) Murriel Good Tutwiler, Eva Belle Arthur Davis, Principal Raymond P. Bowman, Lottie Pennington Gwynn and Nellie Mundy Wampler; (Top row, left to right) Martha Holsinger Browder, Rebecca Miller Whetzel, Edna Spereau Bean, Carl Garber, Dorothy Smith, Howard G. Lanham, Dorothy Miller Myers, Frances Hulvey and Minnie I. Wenger.

The photograph was donated to HRHS by Edward Tutwiler, of Waynesboro.

## Get The Most From Your Membership: HRHS Library Computer Resources

Your annual dues provide much more than this newsletter. By visiting the HRHS Library, you can find a plethora of information about local families and history in the on-site computer:

**Names Database**—More than 400,000 surnames have been extracted from the following resources and listed in a searchable index. Once you have a surname, you can find more information in these resources:

- Cemeteries in Rockingham County – data from approximately 400 cemeteries
- Family Books in the Library – ongoing project of names extracted from family history indexes
- Bible Records – copies donated from family Bibles
- WPA Articles – compiled in 1937
- Funeral Homes – records from some local mortuaries
- Obituaries – local newspapers in card files
- Marriage Records – records, 1778 to 1932, in notebooks
- Tax Records – lists of some early land records
- Burned Wills – many of the original wills that were partially burned during the Civil War

**Digital Resources**—The computer also contains digital images of the following resources:

- Rockingham Recorder: 12 issues containing historical information published by the Society
- HRHS Newsletters: Issues from 2000 to 2007
- Store ledgers, Sons of Confederate Veterans applications and more from original materials on deposit in Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University
- Commissary Book: Digital images of a ledger kept in Harrisonburg during the Civil War that lists stores issued to military units
- Personal Property Tax Records: images of Rockingham County records from 1782 to 1813

**Although you can access the names index from your home computer, you must come to the library to see all the information that the index reveals. Staff and volunteers are available to assist you.**

## “Oh Shenandoah!” Migration and Settlements Across the Valley

A Conference Co-Hosted by the Virginia  
Genealogical Society and the  
Shenandoah Valley Genealogical Society

Oct. 10, 2009, Winchester, Va.  
See [www.svgsg.org](http://www.svgsg.org) for details.

## Acquisitions

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society appreciates the following acquisitions received since the Fall 2008 newsletter was issued:

### Archives Acquisitions\*

- Phil Hearne donated a copy of *Blaine Smith's Album of Songs-Poems-Photos*.
- Dorothy Bridgman Hawkins DeShazo donated 21 essays written by seventh-grade students at Harrisonburg High School on May 10, 1945, entitled "What V-E Day Means To Me." She assigned the essays while attending Madison College and student-teaching at HHS.
- Al Saufley donated a photograph of the 1953 graduating class at Montevideo High School.

### Library Acquisitions

- Richard Dilworth donated *Historic Landmarks of the Shenandoah Valley*, by John Wayland.
- Louise Perrin donated two copies of a reproduced 1866 Rockingham County map.
- Barbara Hannum donated *History and Genealogy of the Gaines Family – From Rockingham County, Virginia to Montgomery County, Ohio*.
- Pat Turner Ritchie donated a copy of her new book, *Genoa School 1919-1961, Fulks Run, VA*, co-authored with her mother, Lena Albrite Turner.
- Nancy Jones donated *Notes on Virginia, 2008*, by the Virginia Department of Public Resources.
- Chris Smith donated a copy of his new book *From the Shenandoah to the Kanawha—The Story of Colonel John Smith, His Descendants and Their Ancestors*
- W. Harvey Wise IV donated a copy of his history of the Wise family, *From The Rhineland To The Promised Land of the Shenandoah*.

\* Archival donations, unless noted, must be processed and are not available for use at this time. Check upcoming newsletters to find out when they will be available for researchers or contact the Society's archivist, Dale Harter, at [dharter@bridgewater.edu](mailto:dharter@bridgewater.edu).

## Three Events Scheduled For Fall 2009 Strickler Lectures

The Fall 2009 Strickler Lecture Series kicks off Sept. 17 when John Hildebrand speaks about John Baldwin, a 19th century Staunton lawyer and an influential leader in Virginia during the Civil War era. The lecture will be based on Hildebrand's new book, *The Life and Times of John Brown Baldwin, 1820-1853: A Chronicle of Virginia's Struggle with Slavery, Secession, Civil War and Reconstruction*.

On Oct. 7, Dr. Charles William Blair will present "Slavery Sentiment in the Valley and the George Bourne Case" at the Society's annual banquet. Using the George Bourne controversy in the local Presbyterian church as a springboard, Blair will focus on slavery sentiment in the Shenandoah Valley, comparing and contrasting attitudes with that of eastern Virginia. Bourne, a Presbyterian minister in Port Republic in the early 19th century, created controversy for writing and speaking against slavery. Blair, who authored *A History of Mossy Creek Presbyterian Church*, is retired from James Madison University where he was chairman of the Department of Education.

The final lecture in the series takes place Nov. 19, when Jeffrey Ruggles, curator of prints and photography at the Virginia Historical Society, in Richmond, will demonstrate how to identify types and dates of old photographs. Ruggles, author of *Photography in Virginia* and curator of the recent VHS exhibit on the same topic, will explain how the process by which photographs were originally used and the purposes for which they were made contribute to our understanding of how they can be used as historical documents.

The lectures by Hildebrand and Ruggles, which are free and open to the public, will take place at 7 p.m., at the Heritage Center, in Dayton. Look for more details about the annual banquet in upcoming newsletters.

Submitted by Cathy Baugh, Program Committee Chair

(Sheets Diary, Continued from page 3)

## June 19, 1863

Cloudy in the morning up all night cooking rations, first night in Maryland. Boys lay in camp all day. Very hard rain late in the evening. No reports of interest. Miller [Alpheus J. B. or James A.] reported.

## June 20, 1863

Cloudy. left camp at 9 o'clock A.M. Marched through Sharpsburg thence in direction of Harpers Ferry. The only (handsome?) (ladies?) I think was all right with the South, marched a short distance & returned on the Frederick City road & encamped near town in line of battle. All quiet yet (Rain?)

## June 21, 1863

Cloudy. Heard some firing in direction of Harpers Ferry packed up & under arms in short notice. Preaching by Rev. [Beverley Tucker] Lacy some of the ladies of Sharpsburg out. Rained in the evening. Large drove of cattle come in from Pennsylvania.

## June 22, 1863

Clear & pleasant all day. Cook 2 days rations. 3 days on hand all the time. Earley's Division passed on in direction of Boonsboro [Md.]. Yankees still at the Ferry. Our cavalry (?) (?) Frederick City. All quiet. Capt (?) Q. M. [Quarter Master] of 33<sup>rd</sup> shot by Bushwhackers a few days ago. Sharpsburg Md.

## June 23, 1863

Clear & pleasant all day. left Sharpsburg at 8 A.M. & moved in direction of Hagerstown. Passed through Hagerstown at m. & encamped within ½ miles of Pennsylvania line on the road to Chambersburg. 33<sup>rd</sup> sent on picket. distance marched about 16? miles. got our supper at (?) Middleburg Pa.

## June 24, 1863

Middleburg Pa. Clear & pleasant all day. left camp at 8 A.M. passed through Middleburg[,] Greencastle & encamped ½ mile south of Chambersburg Pa. distance 17 miles. Line near Middleburg. Genl. [Lt. Gen. Richard Stoddert] Ewells Hd Qrs in Chambersburg. Goods all prepared.

## June 25, 1863

Chambersburg Pa. Clear & warm all day. Wrote a letter home. No one can leave camp for any thing without pass. Lay in camp all day. Inspection in the evening. All quiet, drew rations of sugar (red?) coffee molasses & (candles?).

## June 26, 1863

Chambersburg Pa. Cloudy\_ rained last night. Continued to rain until 4 o'clock P.M. left camp at 11 A.M. Passed through Chambersburg great many of (my?) men in town. Passed through Green Village & stopped in a field for a short time. at 6 moved to a piece of woods & remained for the night (rest of sentence illegible)

## June 27, 1863

Near Green Village, Pa. Cloudy all day. No rain, 2d and 33 Regt. left camp at 9 ½ A. M. as guard to wagon train of [Maj. Gen. Edward "Alleghany"] Johnson's Div. passed through Shippensburg & Sousestown Palmtown & Rocky Mount & encamped 4 miles south of Carlisle Pa. distance about 22 miles 4<sup>th</sup> 5 & 27 guard for (?)

## June 28, 1863

Clear & pleasant all day. Moved camp a few hundred yards & found the other regts. All quiet. Preaching in the evening.

## June 29, 1863

Near Carlisle Pa. going back Cloudy & some rain. Left camp at 1 o'clock P.M. & marched in direction of Chambersburg & encamped near Shippensburg, distance about 9 miles.

## June 30, 1863

Cloudy all day but little rain. left camp at 5 A. M. passed through Shippensburg & left the Valley (Road?) at Green Village in direction of Baltimore Md. passing through Scotland & encamped near the place. distance about 15 miles

## July 1, 1863

Clear & very warm all day. left camp at 8 A. M. passed through Fayetteville[,] Greenwood[,] Caledonia[,] (?) Cashtown[,] New Salem & Gettysburg & formed line of Battle. Fighting about 2 miles north of town large number prisoners & (drove?) them about 3 miles. distance about 20 miles.

## July 2, 1863

Cloudy, lay in line all day Some skirmishing in our front all day. Moved up late in evening Capt. [George C.] Eastham killed Cannonading commenced (?) about 3 P. M. Infantry engaged from about 4 ½ to 9 or 10 P. M. Yankees still held their position. (Moved?) (illegible)

## July 3, 1863

Clear. Advanced in line at 2 A.M. & commenced fighting at 4 A.M. & continued all day. Very heavy cannonading in the evening. Struck on the (head or heal?) with a ball. 6 or 7 wounded in our comp. Yankees still hold their position in the evening. Cloudy.

*To be continued in the Spring 2009 newsletter . . . .*

## *Pickin, Singin, Grinnin And Eatin: HRHS Celebrates The Country Store With Country Cookin And A Saturday Night Hoedown*



The May Family Singers and recently retired Judge John Paul (last on right) entertained a packed house at the Saturday Night at the Country Store event held March 28.

Story and Photos by Pat Turner Ritchie

“Do not try this at home” was good advice offered by Lena Albrite Turner and Shirley Cullers Miller as they discussed how to gather wild greens and other foods at “Living Off the Land: Growing Up in Rural Rockingham County,” a program held May 16 at the HRHS Heritage Center. The event was held in conjunction with the Society’s current exhibit, “The Country Store: Lifeline of the Community.”

The duo explained that some greens must be picked and cooked before leaves are fully developed; eating mature plants may be toxic. Other foods, like some mushrooms, are poisonous. They said the best way to recognize edible foods is to be taught by an experienced gatherer.

In their childhoods, the lady of the house spent most of her time ensuring her family would have enough food for the winter. Wild greens, fruits and nuts were only part of their diet. All families had several large gardens, and summer harvests meant drying and canning quarts and quarts of produce. Many families had root cellars for apples, turnips, cabbage and potatoes. Burying cabbage, potatoes and even apples in straw-lined pits also helped preserve those foods.

Although growing food was hard work, both women stressed that people in their communities didn’t go hungry. “My dad planted enough potatoes to feed all of Rockingham County, or at least it seemed like it when I had to help dig out potatoes,” Lena joked. If they knew of anyone in need, they would share their food. Shirley said her mother raised seven children and always had enough food to share with

needy people she frequently took into her home.

Both women grew up in the Brocks Gap area of Rockingham County before electricity came, and they told how they lived without “modern conveniences,” such as running water. Families had one or two kerosene lamps for the entire house. Because kerosene or “coal oil” had to be purchased at the store, families were thrifty about using their lamps. To show why families spent evenings together in one room, Lena lit a kerosene lamp and turned off all the lights in the auditorium. Families also carried lanterns when doing outside chores at night or when walking to a neighbor’s house. At night-time school programs, each family’s lantern would be hung from the rafters or walls to make light for the program.

Electricity came to Lena’s home near Fulks Run about 1938. Electricity wasn’t installed until 1949 at Shirley’s home at the foot of the Shenandoah Mountain in Bennetts Run. At both homes, electric lights consisted of one light bulb per room, but electricity powered some labor-saving devices such as wringer washers and small refrigerators.

Wild plants provided food for the table and medicines for the family. Shirley gave a long list of homemade remedies her mother used to keep them healthy. To treat pink eye, her mother climbed the mountain to a slippery elm tree and used the inner bark to make a salve. Shirley never went to a doctor or dentist until 1953 when she and her future husband Matthew Miller had blood tests to obtain their marriage license.

“When all seven of us children reached maturity we had good health and a nice healthy set of teeth,” she said. “It appears that our mother’s home remedies worked fine.”

## HRHS Sponsoring 50/50 Raffle

During the early 1800s, the Baker family sold lottery tickets at their store in Brocks Gap. Each ticket cost one pound, six shillings and four pence, which was the equivalent of 10 days' hard work in the fields.

In keeping with the country store theme, HRHS is sponsoring a lottery, or 50/50 raffle. Tickets are \$5 each, with half the proceeds benefiting the Society.

The drawing will be held Oct. 7, at the annual meeting, and the lucky winner will get the other half of all the ticket sales.

To be entered in the drawing, just clip out one or more tickets below and send them along with your donation to HRHS, P. O. Box 716, Dayton, VA 22821. Or, drop them off at the Heritage Center, in Dayton.

### Historical Society 50/50 Raffle

Need not be present to win.

Donation: \$5.00

**Drawing to be held at annual meeting October 2009**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Historical Society 50/50 Raffle

Need not be present to win.

Donation: \$5.00

**Drawing to be held at annual meeting October 2009**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Historical Society 50/50 Raffle

Need not be present to win.

Donation: \$5.00

**Drawing to be held at annual meeting October 2009**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



### Harrisonburg-Rockingham

### Historical Society

### 50/50 Raffle

Drawing to be held at annual meeting October 2009

Need not be present to win

**Donation: \$5.00**

Proceeds benefit Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society

[www.heritagecenter.com](http://www.heritagecenter.com)



### Harrisonburg-Rockingham

### Historical Society

### 50/50 Raffle

Drawing to be held at annual meeting October 2009

Need not be present to win

**Donation: \$5.00**

Proceeds benefit Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society

[www.heritagecenter.com](http://www.heritagecenter.com)



### Harrisonburg-Rockingham

### Historical Society

### 50/50 Raffle

Drawing to be held at annual meeting October 2009

Need not be present to win

**Donation: \$5.00**

Proceeds benefit Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society

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*Maybe it's the library, the Cromer-Trumbo House, the museum or the archives? Perhaps you want to support the business office operations or upkeep of the lawn and gardens around the Heritage Center?*

*If you see a need, consider a monetary gift to HRHS. For \$25 or more, we will recognize your contribution, the person(s) you want to honor or remember and the area/program you want to support in the newsletter.*

*You can make your donation by mailing a check to: HRHS, P.O. Box 716, Dayton, VA 22821. Be sure to designate on the check the area you want to support and the person(s) you want to honor or remember.*

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## In Memory of Dan Stark, 1927-2009

Daniel E. Stark, 81, a staunch HRHS supporter, passed away in March. He was born in 1927 in Champaign, Ill. After graduating from high school in 1945, he joined the Merchant Marines and served as a ship's purser on a tanker in the South Pacific. He graduated from the University of Illinois in 1950, then served as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force until 1952.

Dan joined the Kawneer Company in Niles, Mich., and worked in several management positions. In 1962, he was appointed to construct and manage a new plant in Atlanta, Ga., and later managed plants in Pennsylvania and Harrisonburg. In 1971, he joined Rocco Building Supplies as company president and continued in that position for 21 years, retiring in 1993.

He is survived by his wife Lelia (Lee) and three children. Dan was a member of the Rotary organization, a Harrisonburg-Rockingham United Way campaign chairman and president, and served on the Harrisonburg Board of Zoning Appeals. An avid railroad fan, Dan was a member and a board of directors member of the Shenandoah Valley Railroad Club and took a number of rail trips in the United States, Australia and Europe.

Dan was a member of HRHS for more than 20 years and was serving as our secretary and as a member of the board of directors at the time of his death. He provided HRHS with financial and business insight, while focusing on the orderly implementation of management policies, inventory control and fiscal responsibility. His influence will be missed by our organization.



Dan will realize his last wish this summer. At his request, his remains will be transported with his family by rail to the Young America Cemetery in Hume, Ill.

*Submitted by Seymour Paul*

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