



Newsletter

Fall 1990

SEPTEMBER MEETING

On Wednesday, September 19, 1990, at 7:30 p.m. in the Stealey-Goff-Vance House, Gary Hickman, president, and Ron R. Chrislip, acting curator and board member of Friends of High Gate, will present "The High Gate Story," a slide presentation that examines the architectural, social, and industrial history related to High Gate. They will also discuss progress made in preserving the 17th century Jacobean Revival style carriage house and grounds.

James Edwin Watson commissioned Horace Trumbauer of Philadelphia in 1909 to design his new residence and carriage house located between 8th and 9th streets on Fairmont Ave., Fairmont, WV. The name "High Gate" comes from the magnificent iron gates and fence which surround the immense, multigabled, half-timbered mansion and carriage house plus gardens. The property was sold in 1929 to the Sisters of St. Joseph. The mansion is now maintained as a funeral home and the carriage house with its grand carriage gate, tennis court, and gardens await the Friends of High Gate.

OCTOBER MEETING

Mrs. Betty Harr Koontz will speak on the collection at the Marion County Historical Society Museum when she appears before the Harrison County Historical Society at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 17, in the meeting room of the Stealey-Goff-Vance House.

Mrs. Koontz is co-chairman of the museum committee of the Marion County Historical Society. The museum occupies the building erected for a sheriff's residence next door to the Marion County Courthouse in downtown Fairmont. Exhibits illustrating Marion County history from pioneer days to the present are displayed on its three floors. The museum offers a variety of programs such as lectures, tours, special exhibits. Mrs. Koontz is active in historic preservation and Fairmont community activities. She is a member of the Major William Haymond Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She is a writer and a painter of considerable talent.

NOVEMBER MEETING

Richard A. Bias, chairman of the organization, and other members of the North Bend Rails to Trails Foundation, Inc., will present the program at the meeting of the Society at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 21, at the Stealey-Goff-Vance House.

North Bend Rails to Trails Conservancy currently is negotiating for the abandoned railroad right-of-way from Wilsonburg (near Clarksburg) to Walker (12 miles east of Parkersburg.) Were it turned over to the North Bend Rails to Trails, the abandoned railroad right-of-way would go into a "railbank" owned by the state and thus be secure should a railroad company ever want again to build a railroad through the area. In the meantime the sixty-mile right-of-way would be maintained as a trail for hikers, bicycle riders and horseback riders.

The trail will be historically important because it passes through many small towns the railroad, opened in 1857, made prosperous. Already local groups in two of the towns --- Pennsboro and Smithburg --- are restoring the depots the railroad built in their communities. The many tunnels on the right-of-way were built by Irish-immigrant craftsmen driven to the shores of America by the potato famine. The tunnels are important architecturally.

The trail will bring many small businesses catering to the tourists who use the surprisingly level roadbed. CSX Railroad has applied to abandon the Walker to Parkersburg line which an independent entrepreneur hopes to develop as a recreational rail line with steam locomotives. This line could carry bikers and hikers to the Ohio River.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION  
 HARRISON COUNTY, WV, HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 P. O. Box 2074  
 Clarksburg, WV 26301-2074

Please Print

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

..... Adult - \$5.00	..... Family - \$7.50	..... Contributing - \$25.00
..... Student - \$1.00	..... Institutional - \$10.00	..... Life - \$100.00

## THE COLLECTION

### Accessions:

- Surveying instrument with case once owned by Jasper Newton Wilkinson, Harrison County surveyor 1869-1873. Purchased April 1990 by the Harrison County Historical Society.
- Early Victorian sofa loaned the Society in 1969 by the late Louise Hornor. Bequeathed to him by Miss Hornor, John Hornor gave the sofa to the Society in 1990. The sofa was once the property of Ferdinand Yard and Elizabeth Ann Smith Hornor, great grandparents of John and Louise Hornor.
- Eighteenth-century small spinning wheel made by William Blair, Jr., for his bride Martha McCullough; a child's sled made ca. 1904 by Reverend William Marcellus Blair, Baptist minister and educator who once lived in Salem and moved to Kansas in 1904; various items of memorabilia that include a number of old postcards showing Salem and Clarksburg scenes. Gifts of Donald Eugene Blair of Emporia, Kansas, and his brother Robert Hale Blair (sons of Harold B. Blair). The Blair family were pioneers on Hastings Run in Harrison County.
- Iron and trivet, shoemaker's last, wood plane, waffle iron, and miscellaneous items, all antique. Gift of Mrs. Stewart Waters.
- Copies of Washington Irving High School yearbooks "Reminiscences" for 1921 and 1924. Gift of Jack Sandy Anderson.
- Booklet of area newspaper clippings, obituaries 1935-36 including funeral notices of several Civil War veterans. Gift of the Harrison County Genealogical Society.

### Heritage Days:

An unusually large number of people, many of them from out of town, visited the Stealey-Goff-Vance House on June 16 through June 18, when the City of Clarksburg marked the birthday of West Virginia with Heritage Days. Hosts and hostesses at the house during the period were Jack Sandy Anderson, Don Higinbotham, Madge McDaniel, Reverend Russell Riethmiller, and Trecia Tucker.

### Host/Hostesses:

Host and Hostesses at the museum during the regular visiting hours of 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. on each Friday afternoon from May to September in 1990 have been Jack Sandy Anderson, Charlotte Bailey, Dorothy Davis, Elsie Grant, Sally Hall, Don Higinbotham, David Houchin, Madge McDaniel, Reverend Russell Riethmiller, Trecia Tucker.

## THE PROPERTY

### Stealey-Goff-Vance House

During the summer and fall of 1989 the first phase of restoration of the Stealey-Goff-Vance House was completed when the wood portion of the outside was painted and the roof repaired and coated. Donations from members and funds from a certificate of deposit owned by the Society financed the work.

The second phase of the restoration will be sealing the bricks used in the construction of the outside walls to stop the absorption of moisture. Applications for grants will be made to the Harrison County Arts Council, as soon as the agency releases guidelines, and to the West Virginia Arts and Humanities for funds for this work. The third phase of the restoration is painting the woodwork in the interior and redecorating windows, etc. That work lies in the future.

The section of galvanized pipe which caused problems with the water freezing last winter has been replaced with copper pipe. The Society is grateful to Mark Frazier and his helper who donated the labor for the work.

Since the list of donors for the house repair was published in the Spring 1990 Newsletter, a donation to the restoration has been received from Henry and Dollie Bassel.

### The Garden

Reverend Russell Riethmiller, member of the board, turned landscape gardner to tame the shrubbery in front and back of the museum and to remove the honeysuckle and wild morning glory vines from the fence surrounding the garden. He donated hours of manual labor to make the garden a thing of beauty. This summer the garden is glorious. Come inspect it, members.

## SOCIETY BUSINESS

### Dues

The Society fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31 with names of non-paying members to be dropped in May. This means that the new members who joined during the drive for membrs in summer 1989 can pay dues now. A form for sending dues is included in this newsletter.

### National Scope of Society

Colleges and universities throughout the nation have joined the Society to receive copies of the Newsletter. A high percentage of the members of the Society reside outside the state. A month ago Marjorie M. Russell, 1445 Queen Summit Drive, West Covina, CA 91791, sent funds for a life membership. She said that she descends form Harrison County Wilsons, Watsons, Ices, and Cains.

### Other New members are:

- Janet E. Cottrill, 1906 N. 20th St., Clarksburg
- Gary E. Harbert, Rt. 1, Box 582, Lumberport 26386
- Mrs. F. M. Herring, 12016 Midlake, Dallas, TX 75218
- Nancy Jackson, 507 Haymond Highway, Clarksburg
- Ronald C. Leggitt, P. O. Box 1637, Taylor, MI 48180
- Mrs. Dotty Luzader, 307 Bridge Ave., Clarksburg
- Jacquelyn Moore, 17 Redbud Dr., Clarksburg
- Mrs. Norma E. Parks, 4029 Brandon Rd., Huntington 25704
- Jo An Sheeley, 9101-21 Stellacoom Rd SE, Olympia, WA 98503
- B. G. "Bud" Swiger, P.O. Box 218, Dawmont, WV 26344
- Mrs. Betty Clapp Williams, Rt. 1, Box 33A, Wolf Summit 26462
- Thelma M. Wilson, 700 Stealey Ave., Clarksburg
- Barbara B. Wood, 252 Carr Ave., Clarksburg
- James R. Yeater, Rt 2, Box 33, Clarksburg
- Ruth Yeater, Clarksburg - Harrison Public Library

#### Historic Sketch:

The policy of the Society is to choose a subject from the historic sketch which grows out of primary sources. For example, the current sketch grew from the availability of the original church records for the periods 1833-1845 and for 1878-1905. The spring 1991 historic sketch will develop from a box of Wilkinson family papers found in the attic of the house Jasper Newton Wilkinson built in Bridgeport in 1910. When Adelaide Pence taught Bridgeport history in her fifth grade class, she heard of the existence of the papers. Mrs. Pence rescued the papers and gave them to the Harrison County Historical Society which made them a part of the museum collection. We are grateful to Mrs. Pence.

If any member has a clutch of papers of a Harrison County family or knows where one exists, please inform the Society.

#### Harrison County Court, Minute Book 1784-1792:

Harrison County Courthouse has had on open shelves for public use every original minute book of the county court from 1784. This is the oldest continuous record of a county in the northern half of the state for Harrison is an old county and most other counties had fires which destroyed their early courthouses and the records. At a board meeting of the Society in spring 1990, David Houchin notified the board that the first book covering 1784-1792 was falling apart and was on the shelf being leafed by the public. President Anderson appointed a committee to look into the matter.

The committee met with Sylvia Basile, the county clerk, who was willing for the committee to investigate how the book could be photographed. She said she would confer with the Harrison County Court. John Cuthbert, director of the West Virginia and Regional Collection at West Virginia University, said his library staff would photograph the book free of charge. They wanted the book for one month so that the negative of the film could be checked for clarity. The Harrison County Commission gave permission for a member of the committee to carry by hand Minute Book 1784-1792 to Morgantown; the same person carried it back to the Harrison County Clerk's office August 9, 1990.

The book can now be taken from the shelf and stored behind lock and key. The public will read the book from microfilm which will always be available because the microfilm "bank can supply another reel of the film at any time. The West Virginia and Regional collection will continue to film the other volumes of county minutes if the Harrison County Court wishes them to do so.