

NEWS - NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January 2013

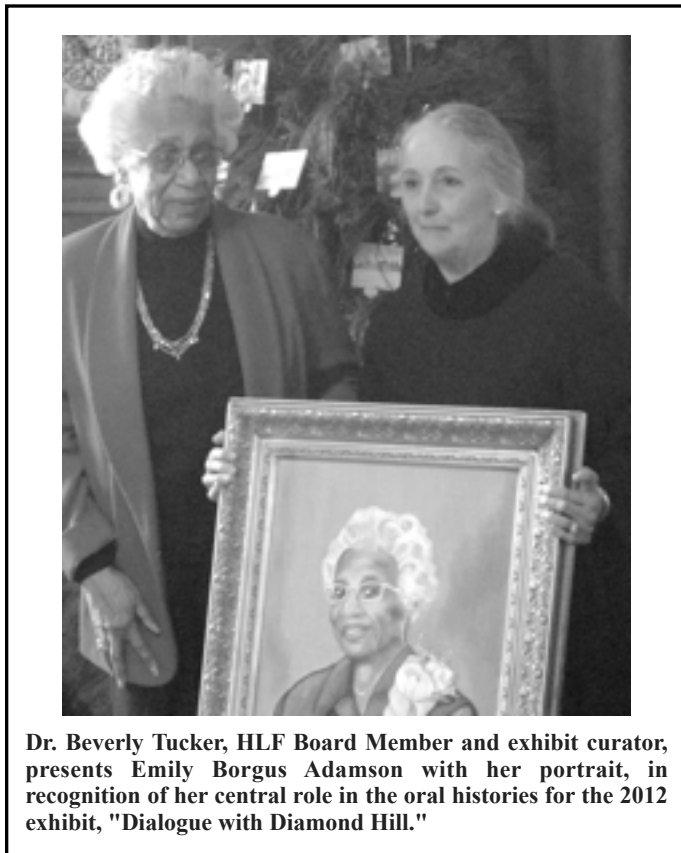
January Program **Presbyterian churches in Rockbridge**

Nancy Sorrells and Dr. Katherine Brown will speak at the first RHS meeting of 2013 on January 28. They will share some of the information they collected for their new history of Presbyterianism in the Shenandoah Valley, focusing on Rockbridge County.

Sorrells and Brown, together with Dorothy A. Boyd-Bragg, a retired dean at JMU, recently completed their latest volume, *Shenandoah Presbytery: A Heritage of Service*. In their book, several introductory chapters provide an overview of the development of the denomination in the region, and are followed by a brief, illustrated synopsis of the history of each individual church within the presbytery. This volume is a logical continuation of their previous publication of detailed histories of several churches in Rockbridge and Augusta Counties, including Brownsburg's New Providence Church. Many of our members will also remember the fascinating and entertaining talk which this team of historians gave us on the prodigious output of whiskey produced by these Scots-Irish Presbyterians two hundred years ago.

The Shenandoah Presbytery was created in 1974, with the merger of the Lexington and Winchester Presbyteries, and includes more than 100 churches stretching from Rockbridge County northward down the Shenandoah Valley to Berkeley

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Dr. Beverly Tucker, HLF Board Member and exhibit curator, presents Emily Borgus Adamson with her portrait, in recognition of her central role in the oral histories for the 2012 exhibit, "Dialogue with Diamond Hill."

RHS kicks off Annual Fund

RHS is inaugurating an Annual Fund to support its ongoing operations and future projects.

We truly appreciate those who have supported us with membership dues and donations through the years. However, those funds together with the rents from our properties are not sufficient to support the variety of activities that the society currently undertakes.

RHS is in good financial shape with no debt and a balanced budget projected for 2013, but income from an Annual Fund is needed to enable us to do more, such as making much needed repairs and improvements to our historical properties so we can rent them at a more advantageous rate.

A letter will soon be sent to all current members and past supporters, explaining in detail all that RHS does, the reason for launching an Annual Fund, and what we plan to do with the additional money. We hope that each of you will carefully consider what you might be able to contribute during the 2013 fund drive to further the mission and goals of the Rockbridge Historical Society.

A letter from the president: RHS past and future

As the newly elected President of the Rockbridge Historical Society (RHS), I greet you with pleasure. During my 35-year teaching career at VMI, I specialized in British history and world history; as some would say (especially Queen Victoria), there wasn't much difference in those two topics. Little did I realize my future involvement in local history with RHS.

When I joined the Board of Directors, I began by summarizing in several issues of our "News-Notes" all previously published volumes of the RHS *Proceedings*. By doing that, I learned about the amazing history of our organization, and I was very impressed -- so many people and so many dedicated leaders and participants in our society since its founding in 1939. If my math is right, that means we will be celebrating our 75th anniversary in 2014.

The past year was especially memorable for the Society's publication of Dr. Charles Bodie's *Remarkable Rockbridge: The Story of Rockbridge County, Virginia*. I especially like his use of the word "remarkable" in the title; the history of our county truly is remarkable. Titles of books are important, and Charles chose an excellent one—what a remarkable county.

In this our 74th year, we will continue to move forward. In particular, we will take care of and enhance our three historic properties -- the Campbell House, the Sloan House, and the Castle. We will continue to develop and present programs to our members and guests—always suitably arranged by one of our trustees, David Coffey.

We are fortunate to have with us a splendid new Executive Director, Eric Wilson, who returned to our community with his family after several years of teaching in Tidewater Virginia. Eric really cares about RHS and is focusing on how to improve it.

Thanks to current vice president, Jane Brooke, who organizes our schedule of docents at the Campbell House. I am one of the docents, and enjoy seeing visitors come in, whether from our community, Staunton, or Seattle, to look around the house, view special exhibits, or to do genealogy research in our library. Jane and I would welcome current (and future) RHS members to become active docents; the job does not require historical expertise and involves only a three-hour shift once or twice a month. Give us a call at 464-1058 to learn more, or stop in and talk to Jane, any docent, or Eric Wilson.

As I begin my presidency, I am truly impressed when I think of the remarkable leaders who have preceded me, dedicated men and women who have cared about preserving and "broadcasting" the history of this remarkable county. In future issues of "News-Notes," I will tell you about some of these people, who continue to inspire me.

The RHS Board and I thank all of you for your interest in this society and the history of Rockbridge County.

-- Thomas W. Davis, President, RHS

Rockbridge Historical Society www.rockhist.org

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Newsletter

Sally Nunneley

Holiday celebration draws visitors to Campbell House

On Saturday, December 15, the society hosted its annual Holiday Open House at the Campbell House. Along with holiday refreshments, guests enjoyed seasonal music from carolers and tunes played on our historic pump organ. Authentic decorations and greenery were arranged by the Lexington Garden Club

A special feature was a tree trimmed with ornaments hand-painted by William Bobbitt in 1984 to show historic images of churches in Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County. In addition, RHS trustee David Coffey loaned for display a historic series of miniature, hand-printed Christmas pamphlets typeset and distributed locally for many years by Harold and Ida Lauck.

The Open House reached a mid-afternoon peak with a succession of special events. The St. Francis Children's Choir of R.E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church, directed by Lacey Lynch, sang a range of holiday songs, leading members of the audience to join as well.

Their performance – and scavenger hunts for the little ones – were followed by two special presentations to celebrate the December conclusion of the RHS- and HLF-sponsored exhibit, "A Dialogue with Diamond Hill." HLF's Paul Miller formally acknowledged to outgoing RHS President Dr. Charles Bodie the transfer of the exhibit's materials to the RHS archives, with some of the paintings to be shared with local institutions for continued exhibition. In recognition of her valuable contributions to the exhibit's oral histories, Emily Borgus Adamson was then presented with her oil portrait by the exhibit's painter, historian, and curator, Dr. Beverly Tucker; Professor Ted DeLaney and Edlow Morrison were similarly acknowledged in absentia, and will be given their portraits at a later date.

It was a warm and meaningful way to close the year at Campbell House, which will reopen in March. Thanks to all who helped arrange this event and those who came to take part. And thanks to you all for your continued support of the Rockbridge Historical Society, past, present, and future.

-- Eric Wilson, Executive Director

January program

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County in West Virginia, and westward from the Blue Ridge to the tier of West Virginia counties contiguous with Virginia's western border. Opequon Church near Winchester, founded in 1735, is the oldest church in the current presbytery, followed within a decade by Augusta Stone and Tinkling Spring churches, and our own Timber Ridge Church.

Program at a Glance

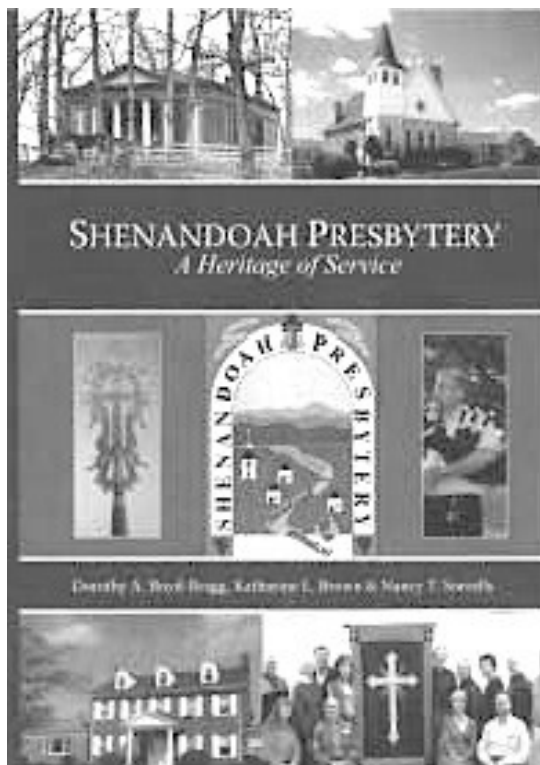
Theme: *Shenandoah Presbytery: A Heritage of Service*

Date: Monday January 28

Location: Brady Chapel, Lexington Presbyterian Church, 120 South Main Street

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Note: Access to the chapel is through the Main Street entrance to Murray Hall, the church's education building.



Copies of *Shenandoah Presbytery: A Heritage of Service* will be available for purchase and a book-signing will follow the program.

ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EST. 1939

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