

St. Albans Historical Society Newsletter - Spring 2015

April 12 Meeting:

Our next meeting will Sunday, April 12 **at 2:00 p.m. at the Coal River Group facility.** We will have a program there by Bill Currey about the Coal River Group and some river history. Getting there: Turn left over the Coal River Bridge at Tornado and another immediate left to the Meadow Wood Park to the log building.

The 10th Annual St. Albans Founder's Day will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2015 from 10-4 pm on old Main Street. Numerous activities are planned with a theme "Remembering our Past". The parade starts at 10 a.m. Sponsored by the Founders Day Committee of the St. Albans Historical Society

Bridge Dedication Books

We still have a few of the "Bridge Dedication" books. \$5.00.

Historical Society - 2015 Meetings

All meetings are at the Wm. P. Burdette Memorial Building at 404, 4th Ave. 2:00 p.m. (Regular meetings are on 2nd Sundays unless otherwise stated)

April 12, 2015 - Regular Meeting at Coal River Group Bldg.

May 9, 2015 - Founders Day

June 6, 2015 - Historical Bldg. Open House, Saturday, 11-2 pm

June 7, 2015 - Sunday Picnic, 2 p.m. at Morgan Kitchen

June . August - Morgan Kitchen Open House, Sunday, 2-4 pm

July 11, 2015 - Historical Bldg. Open House, Saturday, 11-2 pm

August 1, 2015 - Historical Bldg. Open House, Saturday, 11-2 pm

September 13, 2015 - Regular Meeting

October 10, 2015 - Morgan Kitchen Fall Festival

November 8, 2015 - Regular Meeting

December 5, 2015 - Christmas Historic Homes Tour, Saturday, 6 - 9 p.m.

2015 History Day at the Capitol:

This is always a fun and rewarding event as nearly 50 various Historical Societies throughout the state had tables and presentations in the Capitol Rotunda and halls. This year's event was on February 19, We had a table and display there with vintage St. Albans photos. Bo McClure was presented the History Hero from St. Albans. Congratulations!!

Dues:

Your 2015 dues are due at this time. Make a check out and give to Jane Milam. \$10.00 individual and \$15 for a family.

St. Francis Elem. History Lessons

St. Albans Historical Society is teaching the 4th graders at St. Francis Elementary local history !! Margaret Bassitt, Neil Richardson and Ellen Mills-Pauley presented lessons once a week. Some topics were: early native peoples, early explorers and settlers, Ft. Tackett, early churches, schools and transportation, Coal river, and Morgan Kitchen. Ellen made beautiful folders with a map inside for them to use and keep their handouts.

Newsletters Cataloged

We have cataloged and indexed all of our Newsletters from 1992 to present and placed them in a notebook. So...if you are looking for a certain history topic, you can now view this notebook for your topic and make a copy at the Society Building. Since there are over 200 of topics...you can go to our web site under Newsletters to find the complete index. At: www.stalbanshistory.com

We are now making a "Table of Contents" of articles in the "Coalsmouth Journal" (1972-1988).

Visit our web site at:
<http://stalbanshistory.com>

As we reviewed for teaching the 4th grade at St. Francis Elem. about early churches and schools, we came across these interesting newspaper articles. The original church was built in 1926

THE CHARLESTON GAZETTE, WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 1927.

PAROCHIAL SCHOOL PLANS ANNOUNCED

Plans have been prepared for building a small parochial school for the children of St. Francis Catholic church in St. Albans. It is announced by Rev. Father Ambrose, pastor of the church, who is opening a campaign for a building fund.

Father Ambrose, says the plans provide for a frame building, 18x44 feet, containing two classrooms, a rest room and a hall.

Two lay teachers are to be employed the first year, but it is proposed to put the school in charge of a religious order as soon thereafter as possible.

Quote from: "The Kanawha Valley - 1872, Resources, Developments and Special Business Directory"

West Virginia has over 94,000,000,000 tons (of coal), which at the average home value of \$3 per ton gives us the enormous coal wealth of \$282,000,000,000. At the rate of the last annual production, the coal of West Virginia would last over 100,000 years. If this production was increased twenty times it would still last 5,000 years.

Past St. Alans History Heros

1997 William %Bill+Wintz
2000 Carol Graley
2001 William %Bill+Williams
2003 Pauline Morgan
2004 Neil Richardson
2005 None
2006 Margaret Williams
2007 Margaret Bassitt
2008 Bettie Burdette
2009 Bill Dean
2010 Ellen Mills Pauley
2011 None
2012 Marion Moir
2015 Bo McClure

The Great Balloon Flight of 1835

Richard D. Clayton, a young Cincinnati watch maker in 1835, was experimenting with a hot-air balloon. According to the New York Evening Star, he had produced a large hot-air craft capable of carrying several passengers to Europe. So far, however, he had never gone aloft without being secured by a control line manned by several attendants on the ground. At that early date there had never been a free balloon flight west of the Allegheny Mountains.

One chilly afternoon in April, 1835, it was Clayton's intent to practice ascending and descending back to his station on the ground. Fate had other plans for him however, as a prevailing westerly wind broke the moorings and the balloon and its occupant went drifting off tranquilly but relentlessly in an easterly direction. He later wrote that sometime after midnight, he remembered passing through a cloud of smoke and when looking down, he could see all the salt kettle fires which told him he was over the Kanawha Salt Works.

About 2:00 a.m., Clayton's flight suddenly came to an abrupt end in a high tree on top of Keeny's Knob in Summers County. When daylight came, he managed to reach the ground unscathed. Luckily he found his way down the mountain to the cabin of Joseph Graham who was a magistrate and leader of the local Militia. After Mr. Graham finally accepted Clayton's strange story, he provided the necessary assistance to get the deflated balloon down off the mountain.

Ready volunteers came forth to help the balloon man transport his hot-air bag to Cannelton which was the head-of-the-river transportation in the Kanawha Valley. Here he loaded the balloon on a steamer and took passage back to Cincinnati. It had taken him eight days to get home from Summers County while it had only taken him nine hours to get there in the balloon. Today there is a little town in Summers County named "Clayton" which is the only reminder of the remarkable visitation that took place there in 1835



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1920's Newspaper Article (cont.)

Ft. Clendenin (Charleston) at that time was hard pressed by Indians. Cobb was delegated to go to Point Pleasant after more powder and shot. He left at night, getting as far as Ten Mile Creek above Point Pleasant by dawn. He hid in the bushes until night.

The next night he arrived at the fort at Point Pleasant. He loaded his canoe with the necessary ammunition and left that evening. No sooner had he gotten well into the stream when three Indians started to pursue him from the bank.

They kept up the chase all night and toward morning when Cobb had arrived at the mouth of Coal River one Indian started to swim across the Kanawha in order that the white man would be between fires.

Cobb then turned his canoe, made straight for the swimming Indian, and shot him. While the other two were aiding their struggling comrade in the water, Cobb made his getaway to Fort Clendenin without incident.

The incident occurred in the year 1791. It was recounted in the "Trans Allegheny Pioneers" by John P. Hale, local historian of a generation ago. The record, however, still stands.

(Ed. Note: this article is believed to be in the 1920's as "prohibition officers" are mentioned.

In 1780, Fleming Cobb, a pioneer scout and settler of what would later become South Charleston, planted at least two pear trees on Blaine Island that survived until the 20th century. Cobb inherited the Blaine Island from his uncle, Thomas Upton, in the early 1790s. It is said Cobb killed the last Indian slain in this part of West Virginia, near Coalsmouth. He traded the entire island to Charles Blaine for a flintlock rifle. (WV Encyclopedia)

Johnson Shoals at Scary Creek

The first reference to the Shoals at the mouth of Scary Creek was recorded in Col. William Fleming's orderly book on October 2, 1774, as Lewis' army was on their way to Point Pleasant.

"A sutler's canoe upset, two guns were lost and some baggage. Also two canoes that were fastened together were upset and 27 bags of flour were floated. They were all recovered but two or three were much wet. The men had two days of flour served out."

Roadside Park Opens

Charleston Gazette (August) 1943

Ceremonies Mark Opening of Park:

The St. Albans Roadside Park, 63rd of the State Road Commission's chain of recreation areas, will be formally opened at 3 p.m. Sunday with dedication ceremonies in which the State Road Commissioner Ernest L. Bailey and mayor F. D. Burgess will participate.

The three-acre park, *located on the newly completed section of U.S. Rt. 60* just inside the St. Albans city limits contains 20 picnic tables, five outdoor fireplaces and parking space for 40 cars, with other facilities scheduled to be added as labor and materials permit.

Brief addresses will also be made at the dedication by O. N. Slater of the St. Albans city council, W. T. Hannifan of the Business Men's Assoc., L. V. Bowen of Rotary, N. J. Nally of the Lions Club and P. L. Brothers of the American Legion, all of St. Albans.

1920's Newspaper Article

(WV Encyclopedia)

CANOE RECORD ESTABLISHED IN THIS LOCALITY KILLS INDIAN EN ROUTE: TOOK PLACE IN 1791

The long distance record for canoeing in this locality has been broken by Fleming Cobb, he, having paddled with a loaded canoe from Point Pleasant to Charleston in a single night—a distance of sixty miles.

He did this against the current of the Kanawha River with a canoe loaded with powder and shot. He left Point Pleasant at dusk, the time being about 6 or 7 o'clock and arrived at Charleston at 10 o'clock the next morning.

This feat of strength was not accomplished without some stimulus... for three Indians pursued him all the way. They were real Indians and not prohibition officers.

St. Albans Historical Society Year 2014 Accomplishments

- Worked with our Founder's Day Committee to have a great event in May on Main St.
- Printed two Newsletters (Spring & Summer)
- Greeted over 75 visitors at Morgan's Kitchen during our Summer Open House on Sundays.
- Had over 25 visitors during our Open Houses on the 1st Saturday of June-Oct. at the Historical Society Building. Open 4 days for Fall Train Tour.
- Presented local history to the 4th graders at Weimer Elementary and St. Francis Elementary.
- Printed 100 copies of our new book *Battle of Scary* (1932).
- Worked with the Nitro Historical Commission to have a Bridge 1st Anniversary Party at Roadside Park in November.
- Continue to maintain a web site (www.stalbanshistory.com), since 2009.
- Meeting Speakers:
 - February - Videos of the building of the new St. Albans . Nitro Bridge from remote control plane - Tim Butler.
 - April . *St. Albans National Register Properties* - Neil Richardson
 - September . *St. Albans Sketches* - Retired Architect Bob Wilson
 - November . *Virginian Rubber Company* slides . Neil Richardson
 - History Day at Capitol . (February) We had a display there.
 - Received various donations of books, photographs and maps: Papers and letters from John Cunningham, (Delmar Lacy) 1896 downtown St. Albans photo (4x5) from the Coal River Insurance Building. (Jay Miles), Homemade dolls from the 1950s (Marion Moir), Music Appreciation Club
- Minutes & Notebooks (1970-1990), Vintage animal traps and canning lids for Morgan's Kitchen (Bo McClure), 1940-1960s Maps (Anne McElhinny) Tenn., Coal River and Western R.R. spike & piece of tie (Steve (cont.) Sidebottom), Panorama view of Ferrell Gas Co. (James Holton). Large wall photo of downtown from Coal River Insurance (City of St. Albans), 1940 St. Albans Band Photo (Kristi Sutphin), Model jet of Chuck Yeager's plane, first to break sound barrier, and various articles of the Yeager Monument. (Dawson family), Lectern with a speaker system (Zion Hill Church in Charleston).
- June - Sunday Picnic, 2 p.m. at Morgan's Kitchen.
- December 2013 - Christmas Historic Homes Tour. 60 people participated. Dec. 6 2014.
- Printed 200 vintage 2014 calendars.
- Re-roofed Morgan's Kitchen using Bridge Grant. (Back side)
- Printed brochures for Elementary School History Lessons.
- Purchased 2 *Open* signs for Open Houses.
- Re-printed 150 extra Bridge Dedication Books.
- Sold numerous Historical Society books at the *Curiosity Shop*. (Closed in summer 2014 and presently selling items at *Village Sampler*).
- Provided one representation to the *St. Albans Convention and Visitors Bureau* and the *Downtown Landmarks Commission*.
- Created a *Facebook* page with historical information. (see: St. Albans Historical Society)
- Provided representation to the Christmas in St. Albans committee.
- Revised the Historical Section of the St. Albans City Comprehensive Plan.



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Officers for 2013-2014:

Neil Richardson - President 727-5972

Richard Milam - Vice President 539-5280

Pat McClure - Vice President Fund Raising & Special Events 722-0123

Ellen Mills Pauley - Secretary 757-7189

Jane Milam - Treasurer 549-1902

Neil Richardson - Editor

Website: (18 pages with numerous photos and history) www.stalbanshistory.com

St. Albans Historical Society
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St. Albans, WV 25177