

THE "SOCIAL EVENT OF THE YEAR" -- LOOKING BACK AT THE 1950s

Discovering the history of the Highland County Fair is an interesting project. As time goes by, so do many memories. Fortunately, the Highland Recorder published many articles in the early 1950s on the progress of the first fair. The information is found on microfilm at the Highland County Public Library, which is a great resource, however very time consuming and hard on the eyes and back. The minutes of the Fair Association were also found for some of the early years. Both resources were invaluable to reminisce of days gone by.

1951

According to weekly articles published from June to August, 1951, the Chamber of Commerce rallied the entire county including county officials to support a White Elephant Sale and activities set for August 24-25, 1951. Donations of homemade cakes, pies, jellies, jams, preserves, pickles, etc. were accepted under the organization of Mrs. Ethel High. H.H. "Benny" Terry and Andy Gutshall added much to the merriment and success of the auction with their auctioneering skills. The biggest cash prize of the day would go to the person that spent the most money at the sale. Mayor, Woodrow L. Gutshall, also chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, noted that "the purpose of the sale is to raise money to bring into being some of the major projects of the Work Program of the Chamber of Commerce, all of which were recommended by a survey committee, of which R. Turner Jones was chairman." This event also encouraged the revival of the old mountain handicrafts and fund-raising for a proposed memorial service building to be used for community functions. Pleas went out requesting that all Highland householders start gathering up all discarded articles that are worth donating to the sale. Residents were to set aside articles that they wish to sell on a commission basis at the sale. In the August 10, 1951 Highland Recorder, it was noted that the Chamber of Commerce White Elephant Sale had the full support of the Board of County Supervisors, who adopted the following resolution:

"We respectfully commend you for your thoughtful consideration the efforts being made by our Chamber of Commerce to develop a Work Program that has as its principal aim the Widening of Gainful, Pleasant Employment Opportunities here as that more of our young people may remain in Highland County, establish their homes and be happy, and to increase the Social and Recreational Facilities here. You are invited to assist the Chamber of Commerce in its efforts to successfully promote a Community—or White Elephant Sale on Saturday, August 25, 1951, at the Highland County Livestock Market, by donating articles to be sold, and to send to the sale other articles that you wish sold on a commission basis. We are advised that all of the profits from this sale will be used to promote the work of the Chamber of Commerce, including the proposed Memorial Service Building. Why not make Saturday, August 25 a Social and Festive Day by having the entire family attend and patronize the sale? We respectfully suggest that you do just that. Respectfully yours, Board of County Supervisors: H.L. Simmons, Chairman; J.A. Eagle, and B.L. Armstrong. Adopted August 6, 1951."

The Ways and Means Committee voted to set aside \$50 in cash prizes for the event. Kermit Hull and P.L. Mauzy were assigned clerks for the sale; Mrs. Reba Carpenter will be asked to list the donors of articles brought to the sale; Sheriff Glen Hammer will be in charge of traffic; County Clerk Martin L. Folks will organize the entertainment program and music, and W.L. Gutshall has charge of records for the sale. Mrs. Ethel High would organize the food sales and William G. Obaugh will arrange for truck service for items that needed to be brought to the sale. It was decided to charge ten percent commission on amounts up to \$25 and five percent on amounts over \$25.

By August 17, 1951 the Chamber decided to add a dance to the event to take place on Friday, August 24 starting at 8:30 p.m. in the Monterey High School.

Over \$800 was raised at the White Elephant Sale and dance. Cash prize was given out to the oldest attendant, Mr. Andy White, and the youngest attendant, infant of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Echard.

1952

Since the White Elephant Sale and dance were so successful, in January 1952 the Chamber of Commerce announced that it would sponsor a Fall Homecoming Fair in August of 1952. It was decided to include the "Achievement Day" program with the event. This marks the first Fair.

Mr. M.M. Folks and Miss Virginia Beverage decided to include the school band in the entertainment. A Pink Elephant Sale was planned and was organized by Jack Cleek and Marvin L. Eagle. Any items worthy of sale were accepted, to include: harvesters, plows, harrows, harness, kitchen stove, parlor sofa, bedroom furniture, clothing, etc. Criers of the sales were Commissioner of Revenue H.H. "Benny" Terry, Andy Gutshall and County Supervisor Hubert "Pete" Smith. Miss Doreen Ralston would organize an Old Fiddlers Contest held during intermission at the Square Dance. The square dance organizers were M.M. Folks and Virginia Beverage. Doreen Ralston would also head the handicrafts exhibits. Mrs. G. Jesse Hiner handled the hobby entries. Mr. E.B. Jones, Jr., County Agent, was in charge of all exhibits, but directed his attention to farm and stock entries with the assistance of Russell Waggy and others. Mrs. George P. McCoy, president of the local garden club advised that the club took charge of the flower exhibits. Rev. David S. Garland, Emerson Johnson, and Douglas Hebb organized plans for the patriotic athletic events, which would take place at the school. The fair exhibits will be placed and judged during the morning hours on Saturday and the Achievement Day program of the Home Demonstration Clubs and 4-H Clubs will be held. A wild flower picture show was held at the Courthouse. The Achievement Day program was organized by Mrs. Jay Hammer and Mrs. Virginia Rubush, the Home Demonstration/4-H Agent. There would be plenty to eat at all events during the two day event, with H.L. Mackey and Mrs. Ethel High in charge.

It was noted that persons desiring to open their homes to tourists were asked to notify the Chamber of Commerce, stating how many people can be accommodated.

In July 1952 it was noted in the Highland Recorder that the Chamber would "revisit a government housing project to examine a deactivated building that might be secured as a temporary community center building to be used during the time needed to raise funds to provide a permanent building." A committee of H.L. Mackey, Ralph R. Lohr, John W. Coffman, accompanied by Mr. Clarence Malcolm reported on their visit to a federal housing project and noted that a building, which is 24 feet by 96 feet is offered for sale with no takers, would be very acceptable and would serve most of the purposes of the proposed memorial community building, and recommended that the building be secured.

Later in July, 1952, the dates of the fair were moved to September 5-6. There were many reasons for the change: 1. Both E.B. Jones, Jr, County Agent, and Mrs. Virginia Rubush, home demonstration agent, will be back from Blacksburg and will be able to assume a greater leadership part in organizing the exhibits; 2. Winfree Gutshall, instructor in agriculture at the local school, would be in classes at Blacksburg in August; 3. Schools open September 2 and it will be easier to make necessary contacts with the school hands in the fair activities especially with the new band instructor; and 4. Farm and garden products will be farther advanced and will make a better showing. It was decided to have the exhibits on display at the local school.

By August 1, 1952 the fair organizers announced "Knights to ride at Homecoming Fair." Mr. J.E. Arbogast, chairman of the Jousting Tournament Committee received assurances that a number of experienced tournament riders will enter the contest. W.R. Hicklin reported on the rules governing the tournament.

During the August 1952 meeting it was voted to have "handicraft" labels printed; prize ribbons were authorized; paid advertisements, window display cards and other forms of publicity were approved. Publicity included complimentary radio, magazine notices in the Virginia and Virginia County magazine and the Commonwealth magazine, and local and surrounding county newspapers. The monthly bulletin of the Chamber of Commerce of the U.S. also gave notice of the fair. As noted in the Highland Recorder, "With that kind of cooperation from our neighbors from other counties Highlanders can do no less than give their best in this effort to make all proud of the county and the way people do things up here in the Little Switzerland of America." As evidence of their interest in the Fall Homecoming Fair the Board of County Supervisors, at their August 1952 meeting, adopted a resolution proclaiming Friday and Saturday holidays in Highland County in order that the residents of the county might be freer to attend all of the events in the two-day event.

Mr. Winfree Gutshall, chairman of the Pink Elephant Community Sale appointed the following field assistants: Roy Robertson, Big Valley; William G. Obaugh, McDowell; Ernest Townsend, Mill Gap; Luther Hammer, Jr., Blue Grass; Robert Moyers, Mustoe; Houston Smith, Marvin L. Eagle, Monterey; and Frank Zimmerman, Doe Hill. The office personnel consisted of Mr. Garland Dever, Mrs. Janet Gutshall and Mrs. Mamie Eagle. Mr. Jack Cleek and Marvin Eagle were vice-chairmen of the committee. Members of the Boy Scout Troop No. 88 were also aiding in the Pink Elephant Sale efforts as they did in 1951. The committee encouraged everyone in the county to seek out items they could donate or offer on commission and bring to the Monterey Livestock Market. In the event some person cannot deliver the article they wish sold, they were asked to contact the field man nearest them, and arrangements would be made to get the item to the sale. It was strongly suggested that this service be held to a minimum. The rate of commission for items sold on this basis was 10 percent on articles up to \$250 and five percent on articles above this amount. Articles to be sold on a commission basis were tagged and the owner was given a stub receipt. Purchasers were asked to settle promptly at the office in the livestock market building and to remove their purchases as promptly. There was plenty of eats at the market cafeteria, so fairgoers were asked to leave their lunch basket at home and patronize the eats counter.

As was done in 1951, an hourly purchase prize of \$1 was awarded the person spending the most money on sale articles each hour during the entire sale period, and a sweepstakes prize of \$5 went to the person spending the most money on sale articles. In addition, \$1 each was given to the oldest person present at the sale at 11:30 a.m.; and at 3:30 p.m. to the youngest person. Pony rides for a small charge, were added as a last minute activity for the youngsters attending the Pink Elephant Sale and Jousting Tournament. Mr. Paul L. Mauzy made arrangements for the small gentle ponies.

It was decided to request the use of the big tent being used at Mustoe for revival services to stage the livestock and agricultural fair exhibits. Exhibits were displayed at the Monterey High School. Items were brought to the school between the hours of 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. on Saturday morning and judging began as soon as exhibits were in place. The livestock entries were staged in the tent which was erected on the lot across the road from the school with the same entry hours. Livestock was allowed to be moved in the night before.

In mid-August, 1952, final arrangements were made to offer a Jousting Tournament as one of the major features of the Fall Homecoming Fair, on Friday and Saturday, September 5-6. Mr. J. Ed. Arbogast secured a sufficient number of expert riders for the event. Mr. Russell Bird erected scaffolds that would hold the rings that hard riding knights would try to cast on their spears in the Jousting Tournament. Also assisting with the tournament arrangements were Edward N. Pugh and W.R. Hicklin. The high school band led a parade of riders who entered the tournament. The tournament was held in the field adjoining the livestock market lot and a small admission charge of 25 cents per person was collected to witness this

modern example of a historic and age-old test of skill and daring—and the right to name the Queen of Love and Beauty. The knights wore brightly colored jackets or sashes and rode under such titles as Knight of Stonewall, Knight of Blue Grass, Knight of Monterey, or with many skilled riders from Rockingham, Augusta, and Rockbridge Counties. Cash prizes of \$25, \$20, and \$10 were awarded to first, second and third place winners in the tournament and \$5 to the rider chosen as the most graceful horseman. An entry fee of \$2 was charged. Strict traffic and parking regulations were in place as large attendance was expected to meet or exceed that of the Centennial celebration in 1948. Extra State Police were on hand to assist Sheriff Glen Hammer in guiding traffic for all events.

To end the event the Highland School band, directed by Miss Sarah Lee Perkins, gave a second concert on the courthouse lawn. Following the concert, a showing of color slides of wild flowers and scenes of Highland County courtesy of Dr. Mark H. Secrist, retired geologist, was also held at the Courthouse. The slides were a collection of Dr. Secrist and Dr. Joseph K. Roberts both of Monterey. A silver collection was taken to add to the County Memorial Community Building fund. All net proceeds from the events went to this fund.

The Chamber of Commerce made housing arrangements for those coming to the event, and anyone that had an extra room was asked to offer it.

The 1952 Fall Homecoming Fair was deemed a success. The Fair and Achievement Day program were largely attended. Carl Hull, of Blue Grass, rode as the “Knight of Blue Grass” in his first jousting tournament and carried off top honors with a perfect score and named as his queen, Miss Charlotte Beverage of Monterey. Eighteen knights participated in the tournament. The second place rider in the jousting tournament was Maxwell Whipp, of Burlington, who rode as “I-Would-if-I-Could” knight, and won the tie-ride-off over David Hess of Bridgewater who rode as “Atlantic Greyhound” knight. Practically every article brought to the Pink Elephant sale was sold, however the sale was not as big as the 1951 event. Mrs. Thomas Sipe, 84, was awarded a \$1.00 prize for being the oldest person present at the sale, and a like prize went to the two-month-old child of Mr. & Mrs. Arnet White, who was the youngest attendant. The Square Dance and Old Fiddler’s contest was a sell-out. Hubert Hull of Doe Hill won both the fiddling and 4-string banjo contest prizes, and his brother Harvey Hull won second place. Whit Bogan of Mountain Grove took third. Carpenter’s Orchestra of Hot Springs, provided music for the big dance. “Bob” Sterrett, of Radio Station WTON was master of ceremonies for the contest. Due to the inability to clear the grounds of automobiles at the school, the athletic programs scheduled were greatly restricted to only two events, which included shot putt and horseshoe pitching. Shot putt winners were Tom Graham, first; Jack Herold, second; and George Shumate, third. George Hooke took top place in horseshoe pitching, with John Hevener awarded second. The Handicraft Show had over 80 entries of beautiful knit and crocheted goods and included everything from soakers to petitpoint work, and home-spun liners, table cloths, bedspreads, etc. Other items included paintings, wood carvings, hand woven rugs, hammered metal trays, basketry, and a wealth of other articles. Top winners included Mrs. R. L. Aldridge with 45 points, four blues and a red, for her paintings; Miss Katherine Crummett, with 40 points; and Mrs. G. M. Gilkerson, also with 40 points. Mrs. G. Jesse Hiner, chairman of the Hobby Show, recorded 47 entries, including a collection of Confederate paper and a variety of exhibits including money, button collection, vintage dolls, numerous paintings, flowers and numerous other articles. Top winners in the Hobby Show were Mrs. Anna G. Coffman with 51 points; Blanche Hull of Hightown second high with 37½ points, and Mrs. C.R. Sipes, third with 27 ½ points.

1953

In January, 1953, the Fall Homecoming Fair was set to take place on September 10, 11, and 12, which added another day. The County School Board voted to make Friday, September 11, a school holiday in order that school children may more fully participate in the numerous events. Numerous head of committees were named at a special meeting of the Chamber of Commerce executive board. E.B. Jones,

Jr. county agent, Russell Waggy, and Winfree A. Gutshall, school agriculture advisor, served on the farm and livestock exhibits committee. Mrs. Virginia Rubush, home demonstration agent, was in charge of exhibits from her group and 4-H clubs. Mrs. G. Jessee Hiner continued to head the Hobby Show. Miss Doreen Ralston—handicrafts; Miss Betty Hansel made arrangements with the Monterey Garden Club to sponsor a flower show; Mr. M.M. Folks headed the entertainment committee; Mrs. Ethel High and Mr. H.L. Mackey headed refreshments; Douglas Hebb—athletic events; C.P. Gillespie—property; J.E. Arbogast once again headed the jousting tournament, aided by Russell Bird, W.R. Hicklin and I.W. Nicholas; School Superintendent R.W. Buckland—band music; and Mr. Paul L. Mauzy—pony rides.

The second annual Highland County Fair, since an elapse of almost forty years (1914) was held at the Hannah Airport buildings. The 1953 Fair was announced to be bigger and better. It included a tractor tournament and a large carnival, which had a ferris wheel, kiddie ride, swing, the bullet ride, and interesting side shows that promised to provide wholesome entertainment for the whole family at a reasonable price. On Thursday, a talent show was held with cash prizes along with the Health Contest. On Friday, September 11, exhibits were placed and judged along with the livestock and farm exhibits. Bob Strong with WAFC Radio held a show until the dance started. The Old Time Fiddlers Contest was held in conjunction with the Square Dance. On Saturday, September 12 a big horse show was scheduled in addition to the Jousting Tournament and the Crowning of the Queen. The horse show started at 10 a.m. on Saturday with the Jousting Tournament beginning at 2:30 p.m. The band concert was held at 8 p.m. along with the Crowning of the Tournament Queen. The entire program and fair were held at the Hannah Airport. The first fair book was printed in 1953.

The Livestock Show consisted of fat steers, fat lambs, breeding lambs, wethers, registered sheep, breeding herefords, angus, and shorthorns, swine, rabbits, chickens and turkeys.

During the 1953 Fair, a tractor driving contest, which was held on Thursday, September 10, on the fairgrounds at the Hannah Airport, created a lot of interest. William Obaugh, Chairman, Bert Hawkins, Meade Swecker, and E.B. Jones were on the tractor driving committee. The event started at 1:00 p.m. with contestants divided into age groups: the adult group, 18 years old and over; a group from 10 to 18; and those under 18. Men, women, boys and girls were eligible to participate. Contestants were judged on safety in operation of the tractor as well as the operation or driving. International and Ford tractors were available if needed or contestants could bring their own. Two of the first to register in this contest were a girl who had done a bit of tractor driving and a 6 year old boy. The Monterey High School band led the way for the afternoon parade. The parade started at 2:00 p.m. on the lot just east of the Highland Garage and then went west on Main Street to Spruce Street and on to the Fairgrounds at Hannah Airport. The parade featured marching units, the school band, covered wagons, a steam traction engine, fire equipment, automobile units and many other features.

In the September 18, 1953 Highland Recorder, it was reported that the man to thank for the success of the Highland County Fair was the chairman of the Fair Committee, Mr. H.H. "Benny" Terry. When men like Mr. Terry are called on to do a job you can be assured it will be a success. It was through his time and efforts and the men that he guided that everything in the fair was a success. The jousting tournament thrilled the gathering of spectators. The attractive teenage sister of Roy Loy of Augusta, WV, the winning knight, was chosen queen of the day. This event wasn't without incident. A spectator from Minnehaha Springs, West Virginia (near Marlinton), was at the wrong place at the wrong time and was hit by a hyper horse. A suit for damages in the amount of \$25,000 against six Highland County residents was filed in United States District Court in Harrisonburg on August 23, 1954. Moser B. Herold alleged that he was injured by a horse at the 1953 fair. An attorney said that the suit was filed in federal court because of "diversity of citizenship" since Mr. Herold was not a resident of the state of Virginia at the time of the alleged injury. Six men were named in the suit which included the rider and the owner of the horse involved. The others were heads of the four civic groups in Highland County who were sponsoring the event. "Mack" Briscoe of Monterey was listed as the owner of the horse and I.D. Gutshall, Jr. was listed as the rider of the horse. Other defendants were H.H. Terry of Monterey, chairman of the inactive Highland County Chamber of Commerce; William Stephenson, Jr. of Monterey, president of the

Monterey Lions Club; George R. Swecker of Blue Grass, president of the Blue Grass Ruritan Club; and Pat Maloy of McDowell, president of the Stonewall Ruritan Club. It was reported that the horse ridden by Mr. Gutshall reared and bolted and ran toward a crowd of spectators as he was practicing for the jousting tournament. In attempting to turn the animal, Mr. Gutshall threw it and knocked Mr. Herold and another man to the ground as well as Gutshall and his horse. The court stated that Herold rested and then drove to Monterey, and then later to Marlinton where he entered a hospital. According to Mr. Herold's attorney, Julius Hickman of Harrisonburg, his client was in the Marlinton hospital for three weeks following the incident. He was treated for a badly bruised back and leg, a fractured nose, and a neck injury. Mr. Herold was also represented by J. Seybert Hansel of Monterey. The defendants were represented by the law firm of Sharp and Sharp of Marlinton, West Virginia and Forest T. Taylor of Staunton. According to the Highland Recorder, on the 10th of June, 1955 in a civil action of local interest, tried in the district court of Harrisonburg, it was noted that judgment was returned for the plaintiff, Moser B. Herold of West Virginia in the sum of \$3,000 together with the plaintiff's costs against I.D. Gutshall, Jr., H.H. Terry, Pat S. Maloy, George R. Swecker, and W.R. Stephenson, Jr. Judge John Paul further ordered that the plaintiff recover nothing against Andrew McCanny "Mack" Briscoe, another defendant in the case. The judge said he could find nothing for which he could be held liable. The court, in ruling for the plaintiff, pointed out that the committee in charge of the event knew of the tendency of horses to become excited and difficult to control yet did not take proper precautions to prevent such occurrences from taking place. It was noted in The Highland Recorder on March 22, 1955 that the 1955 fair profited \$600-\$700 which was used to help pay off damages awarded in the Moser Herold judgement.

1954

In April 1954, a group of men met to plan for the organizing of a Fall Fair Committee. These men, Pat Maloy, E.C. Devericks, H.H. Terry, H.C. Lunsford, Jr., George R. Swecker, Leslie Moyers, and E.B. Jones, represented the following sponsoring organizations: Stonewall Ruritan Club, Blue Grass Ruritan Club, the Monterey Lions Club, and the Chamber of Commerce. All other organizations in the county were asked to help with this project. The fair dates were set to be held September 2, 3, and 4, 1954. A carnival composed of games and rides were operated mostly by local talent. The 1954 officers were E.C. Devericks, President; H.H. Terry, Vice President; Betty Hansel, Treasurer; Edwin Jones, Secretary; H.C. Lunsford, manager and H.H. Terry, assistant manager. Six members of the board of directors were named: Pat Maloy, E.C. Devericks, Leslie Moyers, Leonard Hammer, H.C. Lunsford, Jr., and H.H. Terry. An advisory group was also composed, which included: Mrs. Virginia Rubush, Ed Jones, Terry Hicks, Winfree Gutshall, Harry Hollandsworth and George Reid Swecker.

At the July 1954 fair committee meeting, it was voted to hold the fair at the Monterey Livestock Market. In addition, Mr. Russell Bird granted permission to rent his property on both sides of Rt. 220 adjacent to the market for the carnival, foods, exhibits, horse show, jousting tournament, and parking. The following committees were appointed: Horse Show—Terry Hicks, chairman; Wayne Schooler, Harper Terry, Dice Armstrong, and Robert Lockridge. Publicity—V. Francis Reynolds, chairman; R.V. Buckland, and Mrs. K.H. Beverage. Dance—M.M. Folks, chairman; Marvin Eagle, A.C. Powers, and Ralph Swecker. Hobby and Handicrafts—Mrs. G. Jesse Hiner, chairman; Mrs. John Forbes, Mrs. W. B. Jenkins, and Ralph Lohr. Agriculture—Bryan Folks and W.A. Gutshall, co-chairmen; Berlin Armstrong, Stanley Eye, Jimmy Varner, Ed Jones, Eddie Folks, George Reid Swecker, and Lewis Shumate. Lighting—Ted Moore, Chairman; M.E. King, Melvin Johnson, Darwin King, Moffet Hull, and John Moyers. Commercial Exhibits—Leslie Moyers, chairman; Pat Maloy, E.C. Devericks, and J.B. Campbell.

The 1954 fair was sponsored by the Blue Grass Ruritans, Stonewall Ruritans and Monterey Lions with the entire proceeds going to the fair. It was noted that any organized group interested in having a concession at the Highland County Fair needed prior approval and would receive 75 percent of the net profit. Daily admission rates were 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children 6 to 14 years old. Season tickets including free parking were \$1.50. Parking was 10 cents. For the second year, the Health contest

was held. A “King and Queen of Health” were crowned and awarded certificates along with tickets for rides. The healthiest boy and the healthiest girl in the age group eight to 12 years were picked from Highland County with the following standards: Teeth – 40 points; Health Habits—33 points; Posture—10 points; Skin—5 points; General Appearance—12 points, which gave a perfect score of 100 points. The Talent Show was held following the crowning of the king and queen of health. Admission to these events was 10 cents per person. The annual Square Dance was planned on Friday night starting at 9:30 p.m. at the Monterey High School. Mack Ratcliffe and his “Happy-Go-Luckies” provided music. Admission was \$1.50 for couples or \$1.00 for stags. Also added to the Fair was a Safety Driving Contest. A car equipped with a recording machine that records a person’s reflexes on instant was used. The car was supplied by an automobile insurance company and was used all over the country for tests. Eight people were invited to take the test: a law enforcement officer, a bus driver or truck driver, an elected county official, one Highland County woman, and one Highland County man. Also each of the three sponsoring clubs elected one of its members to drive. Fireworks were added in 1954.

Results of the 1954 Fair included, “Knight of Old Hampshire,” Oren Wolfe, as the winner of the Jousting Tournament after winning in a four-way tie. There were 21 entries in the tournament. Highland Feeds winners were Mrs. Lacy Moyers of Franklin, West Virginia, whose guess of 5,680 on entry card 195, won first place and received 50 baby chicks and a bag of feed. Sandra Crummett of McDowell tied Mrs. Moyers with a guess of 5,680 but on entry card 701. She received two 25 pound bags of flour and two 10 pounds bags of dog food. There were 5,678 oats in the half-pint jar on display. A highlight of the Livestock Show winners were: Julian Folks receiving first place in the Fat Steer Class as well as in the Pen of Fat Lambs. Purebred Breeding Sheep class winners were: Jimmy Swecker—Hampshire Lambs; Dixie Hook and Julian Folks—Southdown lambs; Isaac Gum and Sandra Hammer—Dorset lambs; Steven Terry—Suffolk lambs; and David Kiser—Cheviot lambs. Other purebred winners included Lunsford Farm—Hampshire Champion Ram and Ewe, H.B. Hook—Southdown Champion Ram and Bryan Folks—Southdown Champion Ewe; E.B. Jones—Dorset Champion Ram and Fred A. Gumm—Dorset Champion Ewe; Steward Bolling—Suffolk Champion Ewe. Breeding cattle included Hereford bulls by J.P. Ruddick and Shorthorn bull and female by Joe Russell. A few of the Horse Show winners included Harper Terry on “Babe” owned by Everett Shultz, Terry Hicks on “Honey Bay” owned by Barbara Bolling, Holmes McGuffin on “Champ”, Joe Hodge with Farm Draft Horses owned by Lunsford Farms, Leonard Bratton on “Spot” in the Open Plantation Class. Under Crops and Poultry winners were: Harlan Gillespie for rabbits, Jimmy Bird, Leonard Hammer and H.H. Terry for hay classes; Jerry Mills, and Charles Hevener for potatoes.

1955

In June of 1955, the Highland County Fair Association along with representatives of the four county civic organizations, Stonewall Ruritan Club, Monterey Lions Club, Blue Grass Ruritan Club, and Bolar Ruritan Club met and unanimously decided to hold the county fair for three days, September 1-3. The officers elected were E.C. Devericks as President, H.H. Terry as Vice President, Leslie Moyers as Secretary, and Miss Betty Hansel as Treasurer. Terry Hicks served general manager with H.C. Lunsford Jr. as assistant manager. Directors were Leonard Bratton, W.H. McGuffin, Dilford Hutchens, Mrs. Virginia Rubush, E.B. Jones Jr., H.C. Lunsford Jr., George R. Swecker, Ralph R. Lohr, Jerry G. Helms, and John Moyers. The directors took into consideration the incorporation of the event and studied plans for insurance. As noted in *The Highland Recorder*, “The fair, instituted in 1952, has become well known in and around the state and has received much favorable publicity in the short span of its being.” The past sheep show winners went on to higher levels at state competitions. Several committees were appointed to include the carnival committee, fireworks, livestock and crops, catalog, flower show, horse show, jousting tournament, handicraft, publicity, food, traffic, ribbons, and dance. The fair location and tent rental were discussed at the summer director’s meetings. The foods committee planned all food needs. No food concessions were considered except for ice cream. The association approved George Allen of VPI as a

livestock judge. A prize of \$15 was given to the club making the highest percentage of exhibits. The parade started at 1p.m. at the Monterey High School, and was routed along Spruce Street to Main Street and on to the Fairgrounds held at the Livestock Market. Featured in the parade will be floats, bands, and majorettes. Winners noted in the local newspaper were the Franklin High School and Monterey High School marching bands receiving first and second respectively; the Monterey Garden Club pulled down first place for their float and Sam's Super market took second.

A Dog Show has been added as a last minute addition to the annual Fair. This event was held a week prior to the other fair events and received numerous entries. The first dog show held the following classes: working dogs, hunting dogs, toy dogs, pet dogs, most unusual dog, and Champion of Show. Barbara Bolling of Monterey and her dog received the Champion of Show award.

Ducks and geese were added to the agriculture classes.

As noted in The Highland Recorder, the 1955 fair was successful despite a downpour on Saturday night, the final day. The jousting tournament was cut short because of the rain and mud. Also as a result of the heavy rains, the fireworks display was cancelled. The horse show, held on Friday afternoon and evening, was a successful event. Pete Jones performed with his trick horse "Frosty Boy." Only one accident was reported. Harper Terry of Monterey suffered an injured ankle when the horse he was riding fell.

1956

At the March meeting of the Board of Directors, it was decided to extend the Fair to four days. The 1956 Fair was kicked off with a Fair Dance on Wednesday, August 29. On Thursday, August 30 all exhibits were in place by 11 a.m. with 4-H exhibits judged. The parade started at 12:30 p.m. At 3:30 and again at 8:00 p.m. the Franklin High School Band performed. The parade started at the Monterey school on Spruce Street, and from there it was to traverse to Main Street to Route 220, and then south to the fairgrounds at the Livestock Market. On Friday, August 31 additional judging took place at 10 a.m. The afternoon Horse Show started at 2 p.m. with the evening program starting at 7:30 p.m. The Blue Grass Song Birds had a program at 6:30 p.m. The judging was completed on Saturday morning. The Dog Show began at 10 a.m. and the Jousting Tournament started at 1:30 p.m. Additional entertainment was held at 3:30 p.m. and again at 8:00 p.m. Admission rates for the 1956 Fair were: Adults-60 cents; children (6-14)-25 cents, Season Tickets (including free parking) were \$1.50. The 1956 Officers were President—Glen Hammer, Vice President-E.C. Devericks; Secretary-E.B. Jones Jr.; Treasurer-Betty Hansel; General Manager-Terry Hicks; Assistant-General manager-W.B. Schooler. Directors were: Alfred Blagg, A. Lee Lockridge, W.C. Snyder, George Swecker, W.B. Schooler, W.H. McGuffin, H.H. Terry, Glen Hammer, Ralph Lohr, Ethel High, Gaye Osborne, and James Testerman. The 4-H, FFA and FHA exhibit classes included: fat steers, fat lambs, breeding lambs, and purebred ram and ewes of the following breeds: Hampshire, Southdown, Dorset, Suffolk, and Cheviot. Other 4-H Project exhibits included: food preservation, frozen foods, food preparation, clothing, good grooming (washed sweater, pressed wool skirt, and hemmed skirt), laundry, best exhibit of keeping Highland clean, best safety exhibit, best homemade first aid kit, and garden products. The exhibit classes were greatly expanded in 1956. Maple syrup and sugar were added as classes. A photography section was added. A farm crop exhibit was also added, which consisted of 1 peck of small grain of two varieties such as wheat, oats, barley, rye, buckwheat; two bundles of hay of different kinds; 2 or more varieties of potatoes (14 potatoes of each variety); 2 bundles of field corn (5 stalks each); and 5 varieties of garden vegetables the same amount as listed in Horticulture exhibits. First place price was \$10. It was decided to leave all exhibits until 5:00 p.m. on the last evening of the fair.

The Miami Valley Amusements of South Shore, Kentucky provided rides and concessions for the fair. The board authorized the purchase of 1000 feet of lumber for the construction of a ticket booth and other uses.

General Manager Terry Hicks reported at the August meeting that the 1956 fair was completely insured, which protected the organizations against any repetition of a suit.

The weather was near-perfect for the 1956 fair. According to The Highland Recorder, “the annual event is well on its way to becoming a county institution and fair officials themselves were amazed at the large turnout on Saturday night.” The Blue Grass School took first place in the parade float category. High’s Restaurant with an old-fashioned surrey placed second, and the FFA Chapter placed third.

1957

The 1957 schedule started off with a Fair Dance on Wednesday, August 28. On Thursday of Fair week, judging of exhibits took place, a parade at 12:30 p.m., and the Franklin High School Band concert at 3:30 and again at 8 p.m. On Friday, a baby show was held at 11 a.m., an afternoon horse show started at 2:30 p.m., the Blue Grass Song Birds performed 6:30 p.m. followed by the horse show at 7:30 p.m. On Saturday, August 31, the FFA Chapter held a greased pig contest at 9 a.m. followed by the dog show at 10 a.m. The Jousting Tournament started at 1:30 p.m. The Monterey Band performed at 3:30 p.m. and Four Star Quartet performed at 7 p.m. Dairy heifers were added to the 4-H, FFA and FHA exhibit classes as well as woodworking and electrical projects. At the April 9, 1957 meeting of the Fair Association the following were elected to officer position: Glen Hammer—President; Leslie Moyers—Vice President; Ed Jones—Secretary; and Betty Hansel—Treasurer. General Manager was Terry Hicks and assistant general manager, Wayne Schooler. The fair dates were set for August 29, 30, and 31, 1957. The following committees were assigned: Catalog committee—A.L. Lingle (Bolar), Melvin Johnston & Tressell Swecker (Blue Grass), Charles Samples & Ernest Sweitzer (McDowell), R.T. Jones & Dick Eagle (Lions), and Joe Pitchard & James Mauzy (Chamber of Commerce); Entertainment Committee—Betty Hansel, Tressell Swecker, George Copenhaver, Robert Cleek, and Glen Hammer; Parade Committee—George Hooke, M.L. Eagle, John Reynolds, Wilma Obaugh, Stewart Bolling, Ethel High, Roy Bussard, Raymond Helms, and Bobby Hiner; Dance Committee—Aubrey Powers, John Hiner, M.M. Folks, Holmes McGuffin, C.R. Sipe, Jr, and Ralph Swecker; Dog Show Committee—Betty Hansel, Jerry Helms, Fred Gumm, Harry Waybright, and Charles Hogshead; Flower Show Committee—Garden Club; Food Committee—H.L. Mackey, Don Sullenberger Jr., Ethel High, R.L. Gallatin, Tressell Swecker, Erwin Gwin, and R.M. Swoope; 4-H Club Projects—Gaye Osborne; Handicraft, Hobby & Antique Committee—Mrs. J.J. Swecker, Mrs. Don Sullenberger Jr., Mrs. Larry DeVenney, Mrs. B.T. Swecker, Mrs. Maude Hoover, and Mrs. E.B. Jones Jr.; Horse Show Committee—Leonard Bratton, Terry Hicks, C.I. Puffenbarger, Elmer Ruckman, Leonard Hammer, Jimmy Varner, Wayne Schooler, Harper Terry, and Dice Armstrong; Jousting Tournament—H.H. Terry, Aubrey Powers, W.R. Hicklin, Dice Armstrong, and Holmes McGuffin; Lighting and Maintenance—M.E. King, M.L. Johnston, A.F. McNulty, Bill Smith, Keith Allen, Lyle Curtis Hull, Darwin King, Zane Page King, Fred Pullin, and Roy Bussard; Ribbon Committee—Betty Hansel, M.M. Folks, and E.B. Jones; Livestock Committee—H.C. Lunsford, George R. Swecker, Luther Hammer Jr., W.B. Folks, Alfred Blagg, A. Lee Lockridge, Elizabeth Frances Hiner, Wayne Schooler, Jimmy Swecker, Julian Folks, Ivan Puffenbarger, Lewis Shumate, J.R. Varner, F.E. Carpenter, Roberta A. Cleek, and E.B. Jones; Crop Committee—Robert Cleek, Hiner Armstrong, John Robert Cleek, Robert Simmons, and Glenn Mullenax; Concession Committee—James Mauzy, Charles Samples, Clem Gutshall, and John Moyers; Traffic Committee—R.L. Gallatin; Bow and Arrow Committee—Harlan Gillespie, Dr. Thaine Billingsley, C.E. Hammer and Curtis Link.

During the 1957 fair planning meeting, it was decided to reduce the number of potatoes on an exhibit plate from 14 to 5. It was discussed to move the fair to McDowell, but was brought up too late for planning. Arrangements were made with Frank Bird, Russell Bird and Mr. Goodbar for the use of the

livestock market and adjoining grounds to hold the fair. Gaylon Carpenter, John Beverage, and Clem McLaughlin were named to be contacted as guards for the fair. The Educational Division of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries erected an exhibit of birds. The Fair Board wrote to each club and organization asking them of their plans to have concessions and giving them a maximum of two. The following concessions were approved:

- Stonewall Ruritan – Huckle Buck and Dart Game
- Bolar Ruritan – Ring the Duck
- Blue Grass Ruritan – Ball Machine
- Bullpasture Women’s Club – Ice Cream and Milk
- Garden Club – Homemade candy in tent with flower show
- Firemen – Cork guns
- V.F.W. – Penny Pitch
- Lions Club – Milk Bottles and Cigarette Board
- Highland County Education Association – Basketball throw
- FFA – Rolling Pin Throwing contest

The following work schedule for the various clubs was made.

	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Lions Club-----		Eats	Gates	Rides
Stonewall Ruritan Club-----		Rides	Eats	blank
Blue Grass Ruritan Club-----	Dance	Gates	blank	Gates
Bolar Ruritan Club-----		blank	Rides	Eats

The board approved Darrell Puffenbarger’s request to have pony rides with 25% commission and he furnish the insurance. C.R. Gutshall noted that the churches around Mustoe own a tent and was interested in selling it to the fair for \$500. After further investigation, it was voted on that the Highland County Fair and the Bath County Fair would each pay \$250 for the tent. In addition to the tent the seat irons were included in the price. Glen Hammer noted that the Mustoe group, who owned the tent, also wanted to sell the seat lumber. Jacob Hevener and Jimmy Varner were paid \$10 for hauling the tents.

The health contest was only held in 1953 and 1954. No similar contest was held in 1955 or 1956. In 1957 a baby show was organized with Dr. W.P. Fletcher acting as Master of Ceremonies. The event was held on Friday, August 30 at 11 a.m. The following classes were made: Healthiest baby under 1 year old, Daintiest Girl between 1-2 years old, Most Robust Boy between 1-2 years old, Cutest Red Head (under 6 years old), Little Miss Highland (prettiest girl between 2 and 5 years old), and Master Highland (most handsome boy between 2 and 5 years old). Terry Christine Colaw was named Little Miss Highland and Dale Hammer named Master Highland. It was noted in the fair guide, “You’re a winner, too, if you’re under twenty and accept your award: FREE POLIO VACCINE.”

1958

Planning for the 1958 fair started January 14, 1958. The following officers were elected—President—Glen Hammer; Vice President—W.B. Folks; Secretary—Leslie Moyers; Treasurer—Betty Hansel; general managers Terry Hicks and Leonard Bratton. Dr. Billingsley said he was uncertain whether or not the Chamber of Commerce would be a co-sponsor of the Fair Association in 1958. They were not an active sponsor in 1957. A motion was made by John Mullenax that each sponsoring club be given \$200 of the 1957 profits. The motion was seconded by Ray Eagle and carried. Also during this planning meeting, it was decided that the fair join the Virginia Association of Fairs. There was quite a bit of discussion in regard to the fair association, The Chamber of Commerce and the County Activities Committee, together owning permanent grounds. No further action was taken during this meeting. Dr. T.E. Billingsley motioned that the organization mimeograph cards for the purpose of announcing the

meetings, which carried. By the February 11, 1958 meeting some constructive criticism was received which included: get fair catalogs out earlier (May); improve Saturday program (day and night); provide better place for the baby show; provide ropes to keep crowds back during judging; and begin judging on time. A committee was set to check on the best location for the 1958 fair, which included: Hiner Armstrong, W.B. Folks, A.L. Lingle, and Glen Hammer. Fair dates were set for August 28, 29, and 30. A wrestling match to be held during the fair was discussed. Mr. George Jones of Stanley, Virginia gave a report as to who the wrestlers would be and the price for the match. The lumber which was used with the seat irons purchased from Victory Chapel Church was discussed. John Mullenax and Glen Hammer were asked to check the lumber and purchase if in good condition and reasonably priced. Glen Hammer and Leslie Moyers contacted Mrs. Bird in regards of renting her land on the east side of the highway near the livestock market for the fair needs. It was decided to allow Mr. D.O. Bird four season tickets for allowing use of his land for parking. A bingo committee was set. A committee visited The Glades Amusement Company in Madison, Virginia the week of May 12, 1958 to discuss their carnival business, and book them for the fair. In 1958 it was also decided to give prize money to each school in the amount of \$6.00 to be used for the three best drawings of pupils from that school for the fair catalog cover with individual prizes to be 1st-\$3.00; 2nd-\$2.00; and 3rd-\$1.00. The catalog committee will then decide if they can use the winner's drawing on the catalog. The winner was Nancy Hammer of Blue Grass. Admission rates for the 1958 fair were the same as 1957: Adults - \$.60/day or \$1.50 for a season ticket; children (6-14) \$.25/day or \$.75 for a season ticket; children under school age were admitted free. Tents were secured for rent from Norfolk Tent Company for \$40 less than the Staunton-Augusta Company. Mr. H.C. Lunsford was asked to use some of the school cafeteria tables for the exhibits. The following concessions were approved:

- Stonewall Ruritan Club – Huckle Buck and Dart Game
- Blue Grass Ruritan Club – Rolling Ball on Colors
- Bullpasture Women's Club – Milk and Ice Cream
- Women of Beulah Church – Donuts and coffee
- V.F.W. – Penny Pitch
- Chamber of Commerce – Ring Toss stand and helium balloons
- Monterey Lions Club – Milk bottles
- Fire Dept. – Pop gun and ring pitch
- FFA – Turtle Derby

The association paid for lumber used by the Stonewall Ruritan Club for making a horse show ring and the ring to be owned jointly by the Ruritan Club and the fair association.

The Archery Contest was held for the first time in 1958. Also a dress revue was added to include FHA girls to model clothes with accessories on Thursday, August 28.

1959

The 1959 officers were: George Hooke, President; Glen Hammer, Vice President; Leslie Moyers, Secretary; Betty Hansel, Treasurer; George Payne, General Manager; and Terry Hicks, Assistant Manager. The dates for the 1959 fair were set for September 3, 4, and 5. Directors included: Russell Waggy, Garland Dever and M.L. Eagle from the Chamber of Commerce; W.C. Rexrode, Ralph Swecker, and Ivan Ritchie from the Blue Grass Ruritan Club; Hiner Armstrong, Fred Pullin, and John Hammer from the Stonewall Ruritan Club; Bill Smith, George Payne and Wayne Schooler from the Bolar Ruritan Club; and Ralph Swecker, Glen Hammer, and George Hooke from the Lions Club. In the January 20, 1959 fair association minutes, it was noted that the 1958 fair had a profit of approximately \$1900, so the board approved to pay \$300 each to the sponsoring clubs: Chamber of Commerce, Blue Grass Ruritans, Stonewall Ruritans, Bolar Ruritans, and Monterey Lions Club. Glen Hammer reported that he heard from only one carnival, Mr. Orville Smith of Smith Funland Shows in New Matamoros, Ohio. The company offered at least six rides including a merry-go-round. The company was contracted during the

March 1959 meeting. The association secretary wrote to several tent companies for rent prices on tents and asked that tents be set up no later than Tuesday, September 1.

During the April 1959 meeting, John Reynolds reported for the parade committee. He noted that the West Virginia bands could not participate in competition. He recommended to offer each band \$50 for expense money hoping to get at least four bands to participate in the parade, which was approved. Also during this meeting, it was approved to include the fair dates on the community birthday calendar. The W.H.F.M. of Victory Chapel Church was paid \$60 for seat lumber. The fair book continued to be printed each year. It was noted in the minutes at the April 1959 meeting that 1200 copies of the fair book would be printed, which was the same as 1958. Advertisement prices were noted: \$6 for ¼ page, \$10 for ½ page, \$15 for ¾ page, and \$18 for a full page ad. A poster contest was held with the winner receiving \$3.00 and placing their drawing on the fair book cover. Contest winners were: Barbara Hevener of Hightown—first; Ralph Simmons of McDowell—second; and Jay Eagle of Doe Hill—third.

By the May meeting, the Norfolk Tent Co., Inc. had the best deal on tent rentals. The secretary contacted Brown's Funeral Home in Franklin for a tent for the baby show. The baby show added a Most Charming Duo class to the show, which included two brothers, two sisters, or sister-brother combination—both pre-school ages. Glen Hammer reported Canning Land and Cattle Company would bring a four-horse team to the fair to participate and put on a show each afternoon and night.

During the June 1959 meeting, it was noted the Sgt. Wetsel of the U.S. Air Force offered to furnish a public speaking system to be used in connection with the fair with no cost to the fair except electricity. It was also discussed to hold a wrestling match. The professional wrestling match was held on Thursday at 8:30 p.m.

At the July meeting, the directors decided to have bingo again and named a committee to organize this event. There was some discussion about getting a group of women to operate the food concession for a certain amount of money per day, possibly up to \$10 per day or wage per hour of \$0.60. The board voted to limit the number of concessions for each organization to two. The Bull Pasture Women's Club was approved to have a concession with coffee, donuts, milk, ice cream, homemade cake, and hats and novelties for children. The program committee reported that Mrs. M.T. White could put on a Puppet Show on Friday night. Glen Hammer, Leslie Moyers and Terry Hicks were named on a committee to sell the hay on the fairgrounds, which was sold at \$100. The fair admission rates were set at: Adults \$0.75; children (ages 6 to 14) \$0.25; adult's season ticket (includes free parking) \$1.50 and children's season ticket \$0.75; children under school age were free. The sponsoring clubs held a drawing of each day's duties for their group with the following results:

	<u>Sept. 3</u>	<u>Sept. 4</u>	<u>Sept. 5</u>
Bolar Ruritans	Gate	Bingo	Food
Stonewall Ruritans	Rides	Gate	Parking
Blue Grass Ruritans	Bingo	Food	Gate
Chamber of Commerce	Parking	Parking	Bingo
Monterey Lions	Food	Rides	Rides

Horse Shoe Pitching Contest was held on Saturday at 11:00 a.m.

In summary of the early years, the Fair was a spin-off from a Chamber of Commerce White Elephant sale fund-raiser held during 1951 at the Monterey Livestock Market with a dance at the Monterey High School. In 1952, the Chamber of Commerce Fall Homecoming Fair was born. A Pink Elephant Sale and Jousting Tournament were held at the Monterey Livestock Market, a dance and athletic events held at the Monterey High School, and ended with a school band concert on the courthouse lawn followed by a wildflower slide show. In 1953, the fair was moved to the Hannah Airport for all events except the dance, which was still held at the high school. Also in 1953, the Stonewall Ruritan Club, the Blue Grass Ruritan Club, and the Monterey Lions Club joined in the sponsorship and work duties. Carnival rides were

added and the first fair booklet was printed. The parade went backwards from today's event. It started at the Monterey Service Station, went west on Main Street to Spruce Street, then on to the airport. From 1954-1959, the fair moved back to the Monterey Livestock Market for all events except the dance. The parade then started at the Monterey High School, marched down Main Street to Rt. 220 South, then onto the Livestock Market.

Since the beginning, the fair has not been possible without volunteers. Some offer great leadership skills while others take the behind-the-scenes projects. Working together, this event has remained a mainstay in the county for 60 years. The fair association has had so many people and organizations that have given their time and effort to make the fair what it is today, and it is impossible to extend our appreciation to each one individually. To all that have participated, we give our sincerest thanks. Whether called a "homecoming", a "social event" or an "achievement day" the event has the entire county from ages 1 to 101 at heart. What a blessing to have a community that works together for the good of everyone.

Written by:

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Monterey, Virginia

May 11, 2011