



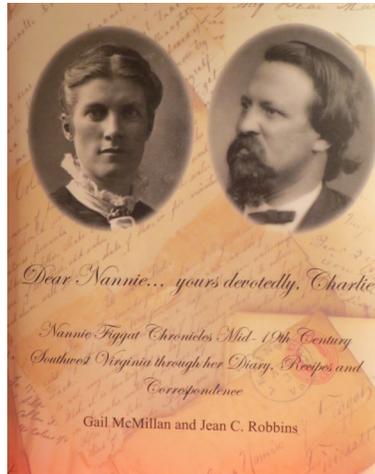
# A Touch of History

Botetourt County Historical Society, Inc  
P.O. Box 468  
Fincastle, Virginia 24090

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## BCHS Announces the Publication of “Dear Nannie. . . . yours devotedly, Charlie”

After three years of eager anticipation, The Botetourt County Historical Society, Inc. is proud to announce the publication of a new book, *Dear Nannie. . . . yours devotedly, Charlie*. Written by Gail McMillan and Jean Robbins, after three years of extensive research, the book is part love story, part history, part genealogy part culinary historical analysis, and part cookbook. It tells the story of the Figgat and Godwin families of Fincastle and chronicles their contributions to the local culture over a period that spans the middle part of the nineteenth century. Using extensive source documents, the authors tell the story of how Charlie Figgat courted, married and then deserted “Nannie” Godwin, taking the readers from the streets of Fincastle, to Lexington and on to Roanoke.



Although in many ways the book is a tragic love story, it also includes very significant historical analysis of the region and concludes by using the cookbooks and diaries of “Nannie” and her mother Mary Martha Godwin to provide a “culinary perspective from her time and place in Virginia history” (from the book’s flyleaf).

The beautifully bound 275 page hardback book includes letters, journals, diaries, newspaper articles, and recipe books, from a variety of different sources including the Virginia Tech Library (where the Godwin-Figgat recipe books are located), the Virginia Historical Society, Inc. and the Washington and Lee Library.

The story of how the book developed is chronicled in an article included in this newsletter by Jean Robbins, one of the authors. Jean was joined by her friend Gail McMillan, who is Professor and University Libraries Director for the Center for Digital Research and Scholarship Services at Virginia Tech. Gail received a masters in American history and a MALS in rare books, manuscripts and archives from the University of Maryland College Park. She joined the faculty at Virginia Tech in 1982, where she met Jean Robbins and also had the opportunity to acquire the Southwest Virginia Counties Collection (which included Nannie’s diary and recipes).

The book is now on sale through The Botetourt County Historical Society, Inc.’s museum bookstore at a special early publication price of \$45.00, plus an additional \$5.00 for mail orders. It can be purchased at the museum bookstore in Fincastle or by mail using the order form in this newsletter.

(See article by co-author Dr. Jean Robbins, beginning on page 4 of this newsletter.)



Co-authors Gail McMillan and Jean Robbins at a Peacock-Harper Culinary Arts Society Meeting talking about their research..

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“William Clark and Julia were married in Fincastle on January 5, 1808. The Clarks traveled from Virginia to St. Louis on many different occasions. Records show that Clark was in Fincastle in November 1809, February 1810, and January 1813. “

## Message From the President

Dear Fellow Members and Friends,

The end of 2013 is upon us as we look forward to the New Year. It has been awhile since we have sent out a newsletter. Regardless, things have been busy with the Botetourt County Historical Society and Museum. One of our biggest projects is the publishing of the book, Dear Nannie...yours devotedly, Charlie. Gail McMillan and Jean Robbins have put a lot of research and thought into this book and it would make a wonderful Christmas gift. I would like to thank Historic Fincastle Inc. for making this book the focus of their recent Fincastle Home Tour.



I am sad to report that we have lost two board members to death in the past year. Patricia C. Ellis passed away in June. Patti was a long term board member and through recent years of declining health always made an effort to attend events. In October Ronald L. Lucas died unexpectedly. In fact, he was in the museum the day before looking at some maintenance issues. Although Ron was a recent board member he had been a long term supporter and friend of the Society. Both of these individuals are sorely missed.

I am happy to report that we have elected a new board member, George W. Sydnor, Jr. George brings a wealth of business expertise and historical interest to the board. Please join me in welcoming him.

As the holidays approach, please keep in mind our museum store when purchasing gifts. We have several new publications, including the Dear Nannie book, a new Christmas ornament featuring the historic museum building and the 2014 calendar with photos of historic houses in Botetourt. The calendar has become a favorite.

While the children are out of school for the holidays plan a trip to the museum to see our new display of antique toys. No electronics are among them but it makes for an interesting trip.

I would like to thank our Executive Director, Weldon Martin, and all our docents and volunteers for all of the hard work they put in. Finally, I would like to thank all of our members, and Botetourt County, for your financial support. It is needed now more than ever as we continue to expand and maintain our collection and in supporting our ongoing mission of protecting and presenting the history of Botetourt County.

I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a healthy, prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,

John W. Rader, Jr.  
President

**Botetourt County Historical  
Society, Inc.**  
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Botetourt County Historical Society, Inc. is a charitable 501 C3 nonprofit organization. Dues and donations are tax-deductible.

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Botetourt County Historical Museum

3 West Main Street

Fincastle, Virginia 24090

Open Monday thru Saturday, 10 AM-2PM

Sunday, 2 PM-4PM

Website: [bothistsoc.org](http://bothistsoc.org)

## The Fincastle Connection

By Susan Martin

The Lewis and Clark Eastern Legacy Project committee is exploring which sites should be included in the eastern portion of the National Park Service's proposed Historic Legacy Trail. As a part of the Botetourt County Committee, the Botetourt County Historical Society's Education and Tours Committee has been busy. Patty King and Susan Martin have developed several lesson plans to be used with students to inform them about the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the connection the explorers had to Fincastle and Botetourt County. These plans for both primary and middle school students support the Virginia Standards of Learning expanding upon the essential information students are required to know.

Primary students will gain knowledge about the Lewis and Clark expedition and the connection to the town of Fincastle. Middle school students are given the chance to explore the possible routes that the explorers took from Washington to St. Louis and back to Washington after the expedition. Very specific information is known about the route to the Pacific because of the extensive journals that were kept. After returning to St. Louis the journal entries become less numerous, so the exact routes taken are hard to determine. How did geography influence the route? Did the explorers get any assistance from American Indians? Could weather be a factor in the journey? Students will use maps to construct possible routes and will be encouraged to write journals and construct timelines for the eastern journey.

It is documented that both Meriwether Lewis and William Clark visited Fincastle. William Clark made more frequent visits to the area since he married a Fincastle girl, Julia Hancock. Prior to the expedition to the Pacific, Clark visited Fincastle and met Julia. After returning to Fincastle from St. Louis after the expedition, Clark was honored at a public reception on January 8, 1807. William Clark and Julia were married in Fincastle on January 5, 1808. The Clarks traveled from Virginia to St. Louis on many different occasions. Records show that Clark was in Fincastle in November 1809, February 1810, and January 1813.

Knowing the local connection to this historic event is the goal of the Education and Tours Committee. As the students learn more about the importance of the Fincastle community to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, more lesson plans may be developed.



Ready to greet visitors to the museum at the HFI Holiday Home Tour on December 14 was (left to right) BCHS board member Alice Crowder, volunteer docent Susan Martin and Executive Director Weldon Martin



The annual Holiday After Hours with the Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce was held at the museum on November 19. A large crowd assembled to enjoy the food, drink and fellowship.

## A Volunteer's Journey (Late in Life)

By Dr. Jean C. Robbins

As a newcomer to Botetourt County in 2008, I had no idea that an interesting journey was in my future. Little did I know that I would be involved in an exciting research project for almost four years!

In 2009 I became a weekly volunteer for the Botetourt County Historical Society Museum. My interest in history began in my youth, and after my retirement from Virginia Tech Extension, I volunteered as a Docent at Jefferson's Poplar Forest. So when I came to Botetourt, I was ready to learn everything about the county and Fincastle.

With the assistance of one of the staff docents Loretta Wolfe, Executive Director Weldon Martin and another staff docent, Patti King, I began my orientation to the programs and resources available at the museum. The treasure book I read at first was Robert Stoner's book *The Seedbed of the Republic—Early Botetourt*. And then I bought and read a number of other wonderful resources.

As I read, I realized that there were two family names, Figgat and Godwin, familiar to me. I knew these names from being involved with the Peacock-Harper Culinary History Advisory Committee—connected to Virginia Tech University Library Special Collections. In 2000 I served as Chair of this committee and knew Director, Special Collections, Gail McMillan. She had purchased a Southwest VA Family Paper Collection. Our committee was interested as Gail told us the Papers included two manuscript recipe books. We knew that the names Ann G. Figgat and Martha Mary Godwin were on the books, however, we had no idea who the authors were or where they lived. Little was done with the papers until later.

As I studied the Stoner book, I began to tab the pages with the two names, ending with markers on 17 pages. My discovery piqued Gail's interest when I contacted her. Gail is now Director, Center for Digital Archives and Student Research. We decided to write a paper not realizing that we would find enough information for a book.

This journey became an active one and a great learning experience. My first opportunity for securing outside information was a meeting with Loretta Caldwell, genealogist, at the Botetourt County Clerk of the Court Office. Here we found primary documents, including marriage licenses, deeds, wills and other documents. This proved to be the answer for identifying the authors. Also at the beginning, Rena Worthen, Fincastle Librarian, directed me to the Godwin Cemetery, which had most of the Godwin family and some of the Figgat family markers. Then Gail and I had a walking tour of Fincastle with Sally Eads, historian, learning to identify the historical homes.

Soon Gail was searching the internet and found a William and Mary Student Thesis. She also searched family papers and found information for our use. At this time I made an appointment with the Archives Librarian at Washington & Lee. Sally Eads drove with me to Lexington. Upon our arrival at the Leyburn Library, the Archives Librarian had arranged a long table of boxes with Figgat material. Another treasure! We were able to copy the material which included letters, pictures, newspaper articles and deeds.

Our next move was to make a trip to Richmond to visit the Virginia Historical Society and the Library of Virginia. We were able to find valuable primary documents at both places. On the spot Gail began to put the information on the computer and we copied materials as well.

After this trip we were ready to delve into the treasures we had acquired. Gail began transcribing the script information while I researched 1800s facsimile copies of cookbooks and read papers by culinary historians in order to establish a standard for our research. A discovery at this point was learning that Nannie (Ann G. Figgat) had access to *The Virginia House-wife, 1824*. She had copied many of Mary Randolph's recipes. We also referenced diaries of two of Nannie's contemporaries, Lucy Breckinridge and Letitia Burwell.

Locally, I talked about the project everywhere—bridge club, DAR, Peacock-Harper, and with individuals in Fincastle. One thing I learned is that Fincastle and Botetourt residents love their community history. I had several tours of Godwin and the Presbyterian cemeteries. I was surprised when the newspaper photographer wanted to take my picture with the Godwin markers. Gail and I found that there was much interest in this story; we were invited to present programs and Lindsey Nair, Feature Editor, Roanoke Times, wrote a wonderful story about the research, as did the Botetourt View. Later, Lindsey edited our research writing.

I recruited my family to take some pictures and my daughter drew equipment sketches for us. We continue to work on this project. And both of us appreciate the assistance we have received from individuals, groups, the local, state and university libraries, the Clerk of the Court Offices in Botetourt and in Roanoke City, and all the resources Gail found on the Internet. After we thought we had everything, Gail found on the internet a picture of a memorial stained glass window in St. John's Episcopal Church in Roanoke; this was in memory of Nannie and an adult son. We appreciate the church historian's help there. And to the Board of Directors and Staff of The Botetourt County Historical Society, we are grateful for the privilege of this opportunity to discover and preserve some of the history of wonderful Botetourt County.



**Dr. Jean C. Robbins**, a native of Rock Hill, South Carolina, currently resides in Botetourt County. She is the widow of Malcolm Robbins, a Roanoke pharmacist. Her family is Cathy and husband Bill Ray and Leslie and husband David Spigle. She is the proud grandmother to Carter Spigle, Camden Spigle, Sydney Spigle, Tyler Ray and his wife Monica, and Hunter Ray. She received the B.S. Degree at Winthrop College, the Master of Public Health Nutrition at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, a Dietetic Internship at the Medical College of Virginia, and a Ph. D. in Human Nutrition and Foods from Virginia Tech. Her lifetime of service in the field of nutrition included service as a

Hospital Dietitian, a Clinic Nutritionist, and at Virginia Tech Extension as Extension Agent, Extension Specialist at Virginia Tech and Unit Chairman in Roanoke. While working in Roanoke, she served on a number of Boards and Committees, including VA affiliate American Heart Association, March of Dimes, TAP, Governor's Committee for Neonatal Programs, Mayor's Self-Sufficient committee, Girl Scouts, Dial-A-Dietitian Committee, Chair, Roanoke Valley Nutrition Committee, AARP/American Heart Association Curriculum Committee, Chair, Alumni Organization, College of Human Resources and Education at Virginia Tech. She served on the Board of the Virginia Dietetic Association for 28 years and was awarded the John G. Kolbe Award for Distinguished Service in Dietetics. She was presented a Distinguished Service Award by the National Association of Extension Home Economists. Jean presented papers at four national professional meetings on her Extension work in Nutrition. Also she has published in peer-reviewed journals, newspaper columns, and co-authored two cookbooks.

## Thank You, Margaret Fluke!

By Patty King

Recently, several of us at the BCHS had the pleasure of visiting with a very interesting lady from the Blue Ridge area of Botetourt County. Ms. Margaret Fluke has generously donated some valuable artifacts to our museum, along with many interesting facts about her life in a Botetourt community once called Flukes.

Ms. Fluke was born on June 12, 1918, and lived with her family in the original tavern/home built by Peter Fluke her great, great grandfather. Later childhood years were spent in her present home on the property which her parents, Peter and Mamie Fluke built when the tavern was torn down around 1928. Her life growing up was filled with interesting interchanges with community members, neighbors, church folk and family and she remembers most of them. Margaret and her two sisters, Mary and Kathryn, played creatively together with many of the old toys she has donated to our collection. The stories surrounding them paint a picture of three imaginative young girls who learned extensively through play.

Margaret was educated in the county at Blue Ridge Elementary, graduated from Troutville High School and later attended National Business College in Roanoke which led her to her long standing position at Shenandoah Life Insurance Company. She is a long time member of the Glade Creek Lutheran Church and still lives and gardens in her childhood home.



*BCCHS Executive Director Weldon Martin during a visit this fall with Ms. Margaret Fluke.*

In addition to her childhood toys, which will be on display at the Botetourt County Historical Museum in the months of November and December, Mrs. Fluke has offered as gifts several rare, old pieces from the Tavern and Stage Stop at Flukes. We are so grateful that she is willing to share her rich family history with Botetourt County and beyond.

*"Yesterday's Playthings—Timeless Toys and Games" is a new special exhibit now on display at the Botetourt County Historical Museum. Toys donated to the museum by Ms. Fluke are a part of the exhibit, which will be on display during the winter season.*

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Patricia Borden Ellis**

**February 6, 1935—June 11, 2013**

**Board of Directors Member  
Of  
The Botetourt County Historical  
Society, Inc.**

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Ronald Lee Lucas**

**January 10, 1949—October 6, 2013**

**Board of Directors Member  
Of  
The Botetourt County Historical  
Society, Inc.**

**New BCHS Ornament Now Available**

*The Botetourt County Historical Society has produced its first ever ornament just in time for Christmas. The brass ornament features the historical museum in full color and is available at the museum store or by mail order for \$16.00 (plus shipping for mail orders).*



**Old Homes of Botetourt**



Photographs, by Patty King  
December by Claire Ferguson

**2014 Calendar**

Godwin Cottage  
Fincastle, Virginia  
Circa 1840

**2014 Historical Calendar Now  
on Sale**

The BCHS annual historical calendar for 2014 is now available at the museum bookstore or by mail order. (use the enclosed order form for mail orders). The full color calendar features historic homes from all around Botetourt County. The cost is \$12.00 (plus shipping and handling for mail orders.)

# Please Check Your Membership Status

Please help support your historical society and the Botetourt County Historical Museum by renewing your membership at the highest possible level. We depend on your generous support!

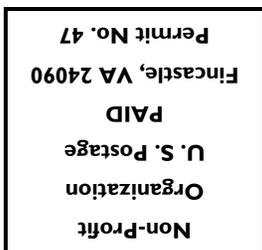
We are showing you your most recent membership renewal date on your newsletter mailing label. In addition, some of you are on our mailing list because you have requested to be placed there, or because you have purchased items from our museum store. **If the date on your mailing label (which shows when you last renewed or made a purchase) is December 31, 2012, or earlier, please consider renewing your membership at the highest possible level at this time.** Please don't hesitate to contact the museum office at (540) 473-8394 or our executive director at [wmartin@botetourtva.us](mailto:wmartin@botetourtva.us) for additional information on your membership status or for any other questions. Due to space constraints for this newsletter, we are not publishing names in this edition of membership renewals since the last newsletter. We will "catch up" on this in our next edition. Mailing label information should be up to date through December 1, 2013.

Please use the enclosed Membership/Order Form with your dues, contribution and/or order. We have been blessed by your faithful and generous support and are dependent upon it to help us operate the Botetourt County Historical Museum and to promote the preservation of Botetourt County's historical heritage in other ways. These include assisting with genealogy research, publishing this quarterly newsletter, and operating a museum store and mail order business (we ship books all over the country). In addition, a contribution to our growing **Endowment Fund** will help to ensure the continuing operation of the museum and the historical society on a permanent basis.

**PLEASE LET US HEAR FROM YOU!!!**

**Don't forget to visit our website at [www.bothistsoc.org](http://www.bothistsoc.org).**

Return Service Requested



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