

## Memories of the Highland County Fair during the 1960s

The Highland County Fair Association held successful fairs during the 1950s which led to the need to expand and have more permanent structures. The early 1960s presented an opportunity that became the fair association's greatest achievement...purchasing land. The success of the Highland County Fair greatly depended upon the hard work and true dedication of many, and still does today. Members of the four Ruritan clubs (Bolar, Stonewall, Blue Grass, Mill Gap), the Monterey Lions Club, and the Highland Chamber of Commerce were committed to making the fair a community event for the people, by the people. The Home Demonstration Club members were also very instrumental in serving on committees and the behind-the-scenes work. The information obtained for this history was mainly from the association's minutes.

### 1960

Officers for the ninth annual Fair were: George Hooke, President; Glen Hammer, Vice President; Leslie Moyers, Secretary; and Betty Hansel, Treasurer. The general manager was George Payne assisted by M.L. Eagle. Directors were Luther Hammer, Marshall Simmons, Joe Mullenax, M.L. Eagle, Russell Waggy, Garland Dever, Alfred Blagg, John Sponaugle, Fred Pullin, Hiner Armstrong, Dale Bussard, George Payne, Robert A. Cleek, J.C. Pitchard, Glen Hammer, George Hooke, Lawrence Blagg, and Fred Gumm.

In 1960, the Fair Association paperwork was approved that the Highland County Fair Association be incorporated. Leslie Moyers was appointed as the registered agent.

During the January 21, 1960 board of directors meeting, it was noted that H.C. Lunsford, School Superintendent, came to the meeting and announced the school board was looking for land to be purchased for a new high school site, and wondered if the fair association would be interested in purchasing adjoining land to be used for the fair in accordance with an agreement to be worked out with the school and fair association. The school board reserved the right to hold an option on the acreage selected. The board decided to take this matter back to the club membership to help make a decision. During the April, 1960 board of directors meeting, after much discussion, George Payne made a motion that the fair buy three acres of the property owned by Mrs. Meade Stephenson, which adjoined 13 acres that the school would purchase. Alfred Blagg seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

George Hooke signed a contract with Smith's Fun Lands for their carnival. Fair dates were set for September 1, 2, and 3, 1960. Leslie Moyers and Glen Hammer were appointed to secure the Bird property at the livestock market for the 1960 fair. It was noted that the Thelma Bird property could be rented for the sum of \$125. Mrs. Bird will dispose of the hay and would reserve the right for the Fair if someone were to rent the land.

The following committees were named: Entertainment—M.M. Folks, chairman, Charles Samples, Bob Cleek, Betty Hansel, and Olin Sponaugle. Catalog—Fred Pullin, chairman, E.C. Cox, Jr., Ernest Sweitzer, R.E. Mauzy, Harry Webb, Ryland Swoope, Carl Armstrong, Ivan Ritchie, and Joe Pritchard. Parade—John Reynolds, chairman, Ivan Ritchie, Garland Dever, Leonard Bratton, John Hammer, Dale Bussard, Harry Hollandsworth, John Mullenax, Ethel High, and James Mauzy. Arts and Crafts—Mrs. George Payne, chairman, Mrs. Charles Hooke, Mrs. J.J. Swecker, Mrs. B.T. Swecker, Mrs. Ivan Ritchie, Mrs. Don Sullenberger, Mrs. Maude Hoover, Mrs. E.B. Jones, Jr., Mrs. Roscoe Gutshall, Mrs. Leonard Bratton, Miss Doreen Ralston, Miss Elizabeth McCoy, and Mrs. George Hooke. Crops—Robert Cleek, chairman, David

Smith, E.B. Jones, Carlton Hull, Hiner Armstrong, John Robert Cleek, Paul Colaw, Frank Smith, and Ray Eagle. Horse Show—Leonard Bratton, chairman, C.I. Puffenbarger, Elmer Ruckman, Leonard Hammer, Jimmy Varner, Wayne Schooler, Dice Armstrong, Lawrence Reynolds, Mack Ratcliffe, Harper Terry, and Holmes McGuffin. Livestock—Wayne Schooler, chairman, H.C. Lunsford, Aubrey Powers, Stewart Bolling, George R. Swecker, Luther Hammer, W.B. Folks, Alfred Blagg, A. Lee Lockridge, Julian Folks, Elizabeth H. Swecker, Ivan Puffenbarger, Lewis Shumate, J.R. Varner, F.E. Carpenter, E.B. Jones, and Russell Waggy. Archery—Dr. T.E. Billingsley, chairman, Everett Marshall, Harlan Gillespie, C.E. Hammer, Curtis Link, Roy Grant, Bob Cleek, and Leonard Bratton. Ribbons and Tickets—Betty Hansel, chairman, M.M. Folks and E.B. Jones. Dance—Aubrey Powers, chairman, Louie Smith, Benny Terry, John Hiner, M.M. Folks, Holmes McGuffin, C.R. Sipe, Jr., Ralph Swecker, and Marshall Simmons. Dog Show—George Payne, chairman, Sidney Hogshead, Leo McCray, Fred A. Gumm, and John Mullenax. Commercial Concessions—James Mauzy, chairman, Charles Samples, John Moyers, C.E. Hammer, and Joe Mullenax. Flower Show—Mrs. Joe Sullenbarger, chairman, Mrs. E.B. Jones, Mrs. Leslie Moyers, Mrs. Luther Hammer, Mrs. Leonard Bratton, Mrs. Ralph Lohr, Mrs. H.C. Lunsford, Mrs. H.L. Mackey, Miss Betty Hansel, Mrs. Charles Samples, Mrs. Charles Hooke, and Mrs. Henry Marshall. Baby Show—Mrs. Ralph Lohr, chairman, Mrs. T.E. Billingsley, Mrs. Ivan Ritchie, Mrs. Buddy Swecker, Mrs. Bill Obaugh, Mrs. James Thompson, Mrs. Jim Moon, Mrs. Dale Bussard, and Mrs. Betty Graham. Publicity—Joe Pritchard, chairman, M.M. Folks, Caskie Norvell, Mrs. Buddy Swecker, Mrs. Ralph Beverage, and Mrs. Henry Marshall. Food—H.L. Mackey, chairman, Donnie Sullenberger, and Mrs. Ethel High. Bingo—C.E. Hammer, chairman, Roy Robertson, Aubrey Powers, Bus Marshall, Arnold Ruckman, Andrew Gutshall, Donnie Sullenberger, Dale Bussard, Lou Smith, Everett Shultz, James V. Carroll, and Ryland Swoope. Lighting—M.E. King, chairman, Ed Meeks, Fred Pullin, Melvin Johnston, Frank McNulty, Bill Smith, Darwin King, Roy Bussard, Harry Hollansworth, John Moyers, and Moffett Hull.

Admission to the 1960 fair was set for adults at \$0.75, children ages 6-14 at \$0.25, and children under school age were free. Adult season tickets which include parking were \$1.50 and the children's season tickets were \$0.75.

The board of directors gave the food committee permission to hire three cooks to assist the clubs with the food concessions.

The parade prize money was budgeted at \$400 and had judges from the three TV stations serving Highland County. The parade started at 5:45 pm on Thursday of fair week. The baby show reported an entry fee of \$0.25 per child. The committee requested maple syrup for their judges and master of ceremonies. Leslie Moyers contacted the Franklin Fire Department about fireworks.

During the July 26, 1960 association meeting, Fred Pullin made a motion, seconded by Joe Mullenax, that the newly organized Mill Gap Ruritan Club be accepted into the Fair Association as a sponsoring member. The motion also said that they not have any part in the past proceeds in the fair treasury and that they assume one-sixth of the cost of the land.

It was decided to allow soft drink companies to offer sodas for sale on the grounds as long as they paid their commissions to the fair association. It was also decided that the livestock market restaurant pay \$75 to the fair association or the restaurant was to remain closed during the fair.

The Fair commenced with a fair dance at the high school on Wednesday night of fair week. Exhibits were in place by 11 a.m. on Thursday with judging starting at 11:30 a.m. and continued on Friday morning. The dog show was held on Friday at 10:30 followed by the baby show at 4 p.m. Friday evening

held entertainment featuring country music by Bill Curry and the Blue Melody Boys with fireworks at 9:30 p.m. The archery contest started the Saturday morning activities at 10:30 a.m. Horse shoe pitching contest started at 11 a.m. followed by the horse show at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Games offered by the civic clubs included: ball game by Blue Grass Ruritan Club; the dart Board game by the Chamber of Commerce; roll the ball by Bolar Ruritan Club; coin board with squares by Mill Gap Ruritans; milk bottle game by the Lions Club; throw balls at cats game by Stonewall Ruritan Club; and a Kool-aid stand and novelty table by the Garden Club.

A class of canned tomatoes awarded prizes of: first--\$0.75; second--\$0.50; and third--\$0.25. A class of salt rising loaf bread awarded prizes of: first--\$1; second--\$0.50; and third—ribbon. Potted plants must be grown by the exhibitor or have been in possession of exhibitor at least 90 days. One horticulture arrangements class consisted of the theme, "And asters by the brookside, make asters in the brook"—an arrangement of asters in a low container using a mirror as a base. In 1960, open livestock exhibits included classes for chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese. Several varieties of potatoes could be entered including Kennebec, Irish Cobblers, Katahdin, Bliss, and Green Mountain.

Baby show winners were: Healthiest—Douglas Puffenbarger, Andrew Corbett; Most Appealing—Marilyn Reynolds, Teresa Herold; Daintiest Girl—Julie Mullenax, Kimberly Swecker; Most Vivacious Boy—Michael Meeks, Paul Simmons; Most Charming Duo—Donna & Brent Obaugh, Mary Anita & Lynn Billingsley; Most Winsome—Ellen Swecker, Allen Thompson; Little Miss Highland—Betty Sue Hiner; Master Highland—Bobby Ralston.

## **1961**

Officers elected to serve on the fair board during 1961 were: George Hooke Jr. as president, Russell Waggy as vice president, Ethel High as secretary, and Betty Hansel as treasurer. The general manager was George Payne assisted by Leslie Moyers. Meetings were held in the courthouse. Directors included: M.L. Eagle, Russell Wagger, and Ethel High representing the Chamber of Commerce; Olin Sponaugle, Marshall Simmons, and Joe Mullenax representing the Blue Grass Ruritan Club; Fred Pullin, John Sponaugle, and Alfred Blagg representing the Stonewall Ruritan Club; Kenneth Robertson, George Payne, and Wayne Schooler representing the Bolar Ruritans; Garland Dever, Lawrence Blagg, and Fred Gumm representing the Mill Gap Ruritan Club; and Joe Pritchard, Glen Hammer, and George Hooke, Jr. representing the Lions Club.

During the January 11, 1961 meeting, it was decided to contact Mrs. Thelma Bird about renting her grounds again in case the newly acquired acreage cannot be ready in time for the fair. The board voted to have President Hooke and Treasurer Hansel complete negotiations on the purchase of land from Mrs. Meade Stephenson. During the March 2, 1961 meeting, it was noted that Mrs. Stephenson agreed to a payment of \$1,295 for the 4.18 acre tract of land with the balance of \$1,000 to be paid after the 1961 fair.

The 1961 fair was held Thursday-Saturday, August 31 through September 2. Funds raised during the fair would offset the purchase of the land and improvements on the grounds. No funds were returned to the sponsoring clubs.

It was noted that the fair catalog needed to be published as early as possible before farmers and gardeners plant their crops, so they could plan their exhibits.

A contract with Smith's Fun Land Carnival was signed by the president. The selection of color of the back on the fair catalog was left to Joe Pritchard.

It was voted to allow \$25 each to two visiting bands to perform in evening concerts on the fairgrounds for a Thursday night program.

Two entertainment options were discussed during the April 6 meeting. The entertainment committee reported the King Brother's I.X.L. Wild West Rodeo could be booked at \$1,350 for one performance or \$1,750 for two performances. Also, the Wilson's Circus could perform for three days at \$1,000. During the May 4, 1961 meeting, Mr. King from the Rodeo stated their price was \$1900 instead of the \$1750 quote plus \$300 for advertising, extra for special lights and tickets and \$319.50 for insurance for the two days, brought the total to \$2519.50. The rodeo was booked for two performances. The rodeo boasted of entertainment including beautiful saddle horses, the wild west herd outlaw bucking broncos, Brahma bulls, bulldogging steers, roping calves, bucking mules and donkeys, clowns, colorful cowboys, beautiful cowgirls, exciting hippodrome acts, and the spectacular finale—burning of the covered wagon. Admission to the rodeo was \$1.25 per adult and \$0.75 per child. Board members tried to secure extra bleachers for this event and were unsuccessful, so temporary seating was constructed from low grade lumber provided by Hooke Brothers Lumber and were covered with plastic to seat 1400.

Glen Hammer was to secure tents for the fair. Bookings were made with Norfolk Tent Company for nine tents for the sum of \$580 to be erected August 29 and taken down September 3, 1961.

Mrs. Thelma Bird agreed to rent her grounds for the fair not to exceed \$150. It was agreed to pay \$150 and add the lot above the road for parking.

During the June 2, 1961 meeting, the Arts and Crafts committee dispensed with the photography display entries due to space.

During the July 6, 1961 association meeting, a discussion was held on food concessions. After much discussion it was decided that all food be served by the Fair Association Inc. with one exception to allow the Bullpasture Women's Club permission to sell milk, ice cream and donuts because they had in previous years. Also during this meeting, the membership discussed assigning work detail. It was agreed that the ticket sellers were assigned to gates for the entire fair. Extra workers were added for Thursday during and after the parade at 2 p.m. and each evening at 6 p.m. Extra ticket sellers were at gates for each Rodeo performance.

Soft drink representatives from Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, and Dr. Pepper presented proposals to sell soda during the fair. It was decided to pay the company \$0.80 per case on regular 6½ oz. size and \$1 on king size drinks with each company to pay \$25 for the privilege to sell on the grounds.

A letter was read during the August meeting from Mr. Ownby who secured two tents for the fair and the same bleachers used the year before. This equipment is stored ten miles west of Richmond. Wayne Schooler volunteered to haul the equipment to the fairgrounds. Kenneth Robertson traveled to Bridgewater for a tent and 40' bleachers. Johnny Hooke along with other volunteers worked at the school shop and made horses for tables needed at the fair.

All hiring and setting of wages for cooks at the fair cook houses was left to H.L. Mackey, chairman of the food committee.

The Highland County Volunteer Fire Department was asked to be on stand-by during the fair and was given space on the grounds rent-free for this service.

The parade continued on Thursday afternoon starting at 2 p.m. The fireworks display moved to Saturday night. The insurance for fireworks amounted to \$25.

Livestock classes included fat steers, fat lambs, breeding lambs (Hampshire, Southdown, Dorset, Suffolk, and Cheviot), market lambs, dairy heifers, registered cattle (Herefords, Angus, and Shorthorns), rabbits, and poultry (cockerel and pullets—New Hampshire Red, White leghorn, Bantam), turkeys, ducks, and geese. One section under 4-H Project Exhibits included frozen foods (frozen vegetables, fruits, chicken, and a frozen plate), which were taken home after judging to prevent spoilage. The Dog Show had a class for the ugliest mutt, a junior showmanship class, and a drag race.

## 1962

The 1962 fair dates were set for August 30 through September 1. At the January 4, 1962 meeting it was reported that the members hoped the fair would be on their new grounds for the 1962 fair. Each club president was put on a committee to meet with the school board to work out light, water and sewage problems for the fairgrounds. However, the old fair grounds at the livestock market were secured just in case. By the July meeting, tents were again secured from the Norfolk Tent Company.

In February, 1962 it was discussed to trade land with the school system. The fair owned land was to the north of the school site, which placed the fair in front of the proposed school. It was felt that the fair would be better situated behind the school to the south. In March, the school board met with several directors and president of the Highland County Fair Association and decided to change the location of the fair property. The fair property moved to the back of the school location instead of being at the front. This only involved an exchange of deeds between the school system and the Fair Association.

The president, George Hooke, Jr. signed a contract with Smith's Fun Land Shows for the carnival rides. It was noted that the carnival asked to hold a milk bottle game. Since the Lion's already organized this game, the carnival was denied, as they allowed five concessions per contract.

The 1962 officers were: George Hooke, Jr.—President; Fred Pullin—Vice President; Ethel High—Secretary; Betty Hansel—Treasurer; George Payne—General Manager; and Richard Crummett, Jr.—Assistant Manager. By the June 7, 1962 meeting, it was reported that due to the deaths of George Payne and Roy Gutshall Sr., Fred Gum was named chairman of the dog show with Betty Hansel and Shorty Shultz added to this committee. Glen Hammer was named as the new general manager. However, at the July 5 meeting a letter was read from Glen Hammer who was resigning from all offices and committees due to lack of time and poor health which necessitates his slowing down on such work. So, Russell Waggy was voted in as the general manager.

It was noted in the March 1, 1962 minutes that a discussion was held on what constitutes a quorum of the fair board. It was decided that if a meeting is called, the attending members can carry on regular business.

Thursday night's entertainment included a band concert. The fair was to pay \$50 for any band performing.

Leonard Bratton, chairman of the horse show committee reported that his committee had made a program for 27 classes with prizes totaling \$451. They have secured judges and announcer; the total prize money and fees amounted to \$696. The Horse Show program was mimeographed by Mr. and Mrs. James Varner.

The Baby Show committee received approval to change their name to the Kiddie Show. The committee announced that the last Little Miss and Master Highland needed a civic organization to sponsor them for the fair parade. Judges were secured from the Franklin, West Virginia and Harrisonburg, Virginia newspapers.

William Snyder suggested that the fair could run into trouble on some concessions that may not be legal as they are purely a game of chance, such as Bingo, etc. Mr. Hooke advised that each club president present this to their club and give it thoughtful consideration to see if or what could remedy this situation. The FFA sponsored "drop-the-ball into a milk can" and "ring-the bottle" games.

The Shenandoah Valley Broadcasting, Inc. brought their WSVB mobile unit to the fair.

Each club had two men to volunteer to night watch or to hire night watchmen for the grounds during the fair. In order to widen the midway, it was approved to fill holes on the grounds with sawdust. Flood lights were added to the parking area. A loud speaker was borrowed for announcements.

## 1963

The fair dates for 1963, the twelfth annual, were set for August 29-31 (Labor Day Weekend).

The 1963 officers were President—George Hooke; Vice President—Robert A. Cleek; Secretary—Leslie Moyers; Treasurer—Betty Hansel; Manager—Russell Waggy and Assistant Manager—Richard Crummett, Jr. Directors included: Burley Black, Bobby Joe Armstrong, Aubrey Powers, Richard Crummett Jr., T.F. Swecker, Robert D. Swecker, Lawrence Blagg, Fred Gumm, Grant Woods, Robert A. Cleek, William Smith, Kenneth Robertson, Edwin Crigler, William Smick, Russell Waggy, Robert Hammer, George Hooke, and William Stephenson.

The price of ads for the catalog were set at \$6 for one-quarter page, \$10 for one-half page, \$15 for three-quarters page, and \$18 for a full page. The inside front and back cover at \$20; outside of back cover \$25.

Tents were again ordered as in the past. Arrangements were made with the livestock market and Mrs. Russell Bird for the land again with the price \$150 for Mrs. Bird and \$100 for the stock market.

Leslie Moyers requested permission for him and Russell Varner to run a sewer line across the corner of the Fair property beside the school. George Hooke worked with the school board on grading of the grounds.

Miss Betty Hansel suggested adding a Hunters Trophy Exhibit to the fair, which was approved. Bruce Richardson Jr. took leadership of this committee. This new department featured mounted game and fish trophies as well as old and antique hunting and fishing gear. An education exhibit of live reptiles was also on display.

The events for the 1963 fair were very similar to 1960. Friday night's entertainment consisted of Tsugani Indian Dancers. These dancers were a group of performers from Stuarts Draft. The youngsters are renowned for their skill in interpreting intricate dances of the American Indian tribes.

The fireworks display was held again on Friday night. The insurance for the fireworks increased to \$51. The association discussed the possibility of getting a helicopter to offer rides, but this didn't get worked out.

The Garden Club agreed to take leadership of the flower show. As new county agent, Austin Shepherd took leadership of the livestock show. Miss Elizabeth Bourne was in charge of the 4-H club projects.

The Mill Gap Ruritans were granted permission to sell french fries during the 1963 fair.

During the August 1, 1963 board meeting, a motion was made and approved that if the fair association has to hire additional help to fill the duties for any club, that club will be penalized for the amount needed to pay such help.

Each club president was instructed to furnish four men each day for two days, Tuesday and Wednesday, to help set up tents and get the grounds ready.

Season tickets were distributed to each club to sell.

Homemade soap, consisting of 3 cakes, was added to the food exhibits miscellaneous section. The Sewing section offered a classes to include a dress made from a feed bag and other articles made from a feed bag.

Special showings of Tol'able David, the silent movie made in Highland in 1921, was held each night at 9:15 pm.

Shen-Valley Skydivers performed on Friday jumping from their Cessna 172 airplane at 10,500 feet, some three quarters of a mile from the fairgrounds which allowed them to land in a small target area behind the horse show ring. The event was announced by Kyle Hannah of Mustoe, who joined the skydivers club as a beginner.

## **1964**

The officers for the thirteenth annual Highland County Fair were Robert Cleek-president, Glen Hammer-vice president; Betty Hansel-treasurer; and Kenneth Robertson-secretary. Russell Waggy was manager with Richard Crummett as assistant manager. At the August 27 board meeting, Russell Waggy asked that Richard Crummett serve as the general manager during fair week because he was tied up with opening the Farm Bureau.

The 1964 fair dates were September 3, 4, and 5. Smith's Fun Land Shows provided the carnival.

During the April 23, 1964 board meeting, it was noted that the grounds committee reported on the preliminary plans for developing the new fairgrounds with a rough drawing of how the committee feels the ground should be laid out. Concerns for the grading of the grounds near the neighboring property of Mr. Boyd were noted. Ralph Lohr reported that the school board had planned for the fair to use the Quonset huts for fair week. A motion was made and carried that a committee approach Mr. Boyd and try to negotiate the purchase of some additional land which joins the fair property. If a purchase could not be made, then the committee would pursue leasing the land. Keith Simmons was hired to move the benches and tables, etc. from the grounds at the stockyards and put them on the new site. Later, during the May 28 meeting, Russell Waggy reported that he thought it would be impossible to hold the fair at the new grounds since grading had not been completed or seeded. A motion was made to give up on the idea of having the 1964 fair at the new site. It was also reported that Mr. Boyd's property was not for sale. The following men were appointed by Mr. Waggy to serve on the grounds committee: Glen Hammer, Bill Smith, H.C. Lunsford, Richard Crummett, George Hooke, Frank Davis, James Varner and Benny Armstrong. Glen Hammer stated that the big tent needed some repair. It was decided to contact Virginia Hot Springs Company for the repairs. During the June 25 board meeting, it was reported that some grass seed has been bought for the new fairgrounds. The stockyard was secured and asked for \$150 for its use in addition to \$150 to Mrs. Bird for the use of her property. D.O. Bird was also contacted on using his grounds for parking.

The fair board decided to employ three watchmen for Thursday and Friday nights and one watchman for Saturday night.

The parade was scheduled for Thursday evening at 6:30 p.m., which was followed by a band concert and a fashion show. The kiddie show started at 11 a.m. on Friday with the Hoxie Brothers Circus performing at 2:30 p.m. and again at 8 p.m. The dog show kicked off the Saturday morning activities, with horseshow pitching contest at 11 a.m. The afternoon horse show began at 1:30 p.m. with their evening show starting at 7:30 p.m. It was decided to hold the fireworks display on Saturday night only.

The Girl Scout troop asked permission to put up an exhibit at the 1964 fair. Green Hill Methodist Church was granted permission to sell barbecue sandwiches and Dr. Pepper during the 1964 fair, however it was voted at a later meeting that only a sponsoring club would provide food concessions. The Mill Gap Ruritans will again sell French fries and coffee. Robert G. Hammer, chairman of the parade committee, received \$250 expense money for five bands participation in the parade; and extra money for additional classes scheduled for the fire departments and rescue squads.

The FFA chapter was paid \$50 for their part in selling drinks for three days during the fair. This group had charge of the sale of the Pepsi and Dr. Pepper products.

## **1965**

At the January board meeting, Ralph Lohr made a motion that the 1965 fair be held on the new grounds this year and the motion carried. The Fair was set for September 2, 3, and 4.



The 1965 officers were, Robert Cleek-president; Glen Hammer-vice president; Kenneth Robertson-secretary, Betty Hansel-treasurer; Richard Crummett-manager; and Russell Waggy-assistant manager. Ralph Lohr and Russell Waggy were co-chairmen of the Grounds Committee.

During the May 27 board meeting, Ralph Lohr reported that the school board was about complete as far as the grading was concerned on the school property. A group of the fair members planned to look over the fairgrounds and get the work started. Ralph also secured used poles from the power company for use in lighting the fairgrounds. By the June 23 meeting, H.C. Lunsford reported that a lot of work was done on the grounds at the school house and fairgrounds and was ready to seed. It was decided to pay boys a dollar an hour to pick rocks off the fair property as well as paying for the hauling of chicken litter to spread on the grounds. Mr. Lunsford told the group that he had been working on getting material to place over the gym floor. The fair association paid for the cost of constructing exhibit tables for the different sections needed in the gym. It was decided that the following departments would use the gym and other rooms in the school for the exhibits: food exhibits, arts and crafts, crops, flower show, and Hunter trophies. The Baby Show would be held in the auditorium. During the July 29 board meeting, it was reported that the board pay \$864 to Farrier Paving Company for 72 hours of use on the motor grader with operator at \$12. It was explained to the group that this was for grading all of the grounds with the school board paying for seeding and rough grading the property. Two 20x30 tents were rented. Two performances were scheduled for 3:30 pm and 8 pm on Friday in the cafeteria with admission charges for each.

Ann Hammer, representing the Highland Home Demonstration Council remarked that the council requested permission to serve ice cream and cake the first day of the fair in lieu of the Softee ice cream concession, which was granted.

The King Family from Channel 10, WSLs-TV gave two stage shows on Friday.

Jimmy Varner shared comments on the horse show. He noted that a new fence was needed for the show. The new committee was: James Varner, Chair; Mack Ratcliffe, Lawrence Reynolds, Leonard Hammer, Leonard Bratton, Wayne Schooler, Everett Marshall, Steward Chestnut, Iris Hooke, and Jane Beverage. Horse show classes consisted of pony class, open three-gaited saddle horses, working western, pony roadster, open pair class, open pleasure, hunter rack, plantation class, pony under saddle, knock down and out, and others to equal 32 classes.

The kiddie show was re-scheduled to 2 p.m. on Friday. The parade was moved back to 2 p.m. on Thursday. The parade was kicked off with a color guard from Post 4989, Highland VFW, consisting of Matlin Hull, Guy Bussard, Laymon Chestnut, and Frank Smith.

In September, after the first fair was held at the new location, the board met and discussed improvement for the next fair, which included constructing a permanent building to house livestock, food, etc. The clubs were to discuss these improvements and report back.

Due to changes with leadership of the fair catalog, it was decided to place Joe Pritchard as chairman of the fair catalog. He hired an office girl to take care of securing ads and getting the catalog printed as usual. The fair association paid for the expense of the office girl, postage, and phone bills concerning the catalog.

Comments shared in the September 9, 1965 edition of The Highland Recorder were, "Attendance at this year's fair, the first to be held on the new grounds adjacent to Highland High School, was probably as good as any previous year. Estimates put total attendance at 9,000 or more for the three days. A check on ticket sales at carnival rides showed that some 7,000 persons patronized the carnival rides. At the food stands, chairman J.R. Varner figured more than 400 persons ate plate lunches in two days and the midway food stand sold about 6,000 hamburgers and around 2,000 hot dogs in three days."

## 1966

The following treasury transactions were paid: invoice from Virginia Trout Company for lumber-\$15; invoice from school board for use of electricity in school buildings-\$55; and State Corporation Commission license-\$5. It was decided to pay dividends of \$150 to all participating clubs.

The same officers as in 1965 were re-elected. Directors included: Frank Ritchie, Julian Folks, Omer Judy, Ben Alred, A.C. Powers, Tom Malcolm, Kenneth Robertson, Arnold Ruckman, Bill Smith, Bob Cleek, Bob Hooke, Albert Shultz, Darwin King, James Thompson, Glen Hammer, Joe Pritchard, Ralph Lohr, Russell Waggy, and Bill Smick.

It was discussed to build a food concession building in a way that could be used for a community building. It was decided to put the Quonset huts on a permanent foundation and location in time for the fair. Local labor was hired to put up the huts. A motion was made during the May 5, 1966 board meeting to arrange buying the interest in the big stock tent from the Bath County Fair Association and have repair work done on the tents. A discussion was held during the June 23 board meeting on the possibility of installing asphalt on the fairgrounds since a paving contractor will be in the area in July. The fair would work with the school board on multiple use areas for the asphalt slab for tennis, dance surface, etc. Glen Hammer was appointed to contact Rex Speice in Staunton about renting one or two tents again from the Staunton Fair Association. The rental fee was \$0.10 per square foot.

By the August 25, 1966 board meeting, it was reported that the two Quonset huts were moved and set upon the fairgrounds by Halterman Brothers. The big tent would be used as a food tent. Darwin King was hired to put permanent lighting in the huts. Homer Helmick was contracted to enclose one end of the huts. Labor was paid at \$1.25 per hour.

Also during the August board meeting, it was discussed that sales tax would need to be collected on the plate lunches, hamburgers and hot dogs. It was decided to raise the price to absorb the tax in the gross. It was also decided that Coca Cola be the only drink company since they would send someone to man the booth.

The radio station WABH of Deerfield was granted permission to trade out advertisement in the fair catalog for radio ad spots.

It was decided to keep exhibits in place until 9 p.m. on Saturday.

The fair week program consisted of a fair dance on Wednesday night at the Monterey Elementary School from 8:30-11:30 p.m. Exhibits were to be in place by 11 a.m. Thursday with judging starting at 11:30 a.m. The parade started at 6:30 p.m. followed by entertainment. On Friday the 4-H and FFA show and livestock show started at 9 a.m., the kiddie show at 2 p.m., and entertainment at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday held the same schedule as the last few years with the dog show at 10:30 a.m., horseshoe pitching contest at 2 p.m., the afternoon horse show at 1:30 p.m. and evening show at 7:30 p.m., ending with fireworks at 10:30 p.m.

During the October board meeting, it was discussed to build some bleachers and rearrange the carnival away from the horse show area so that all the rides could be in operation during the horse show.

An interesting note: The 1966 fair catalog contained an advertisement by the Blue Grass Valley Bank promoting interest on savings accounts at 4%. (Forty-five years later on the same account: 0.25%.)

## **1967**

During the June 1967 meeting, it was discussed to build a pole-type building for livestock.

During the July 1967 board meeting, Russell Waggy reported on the proposed permanent kitchen with unfinished walls 29'x40' with cement floor 4" thick estimated to cost \$3500-4000. After a discussion was held, it was decided to have Melvin Johnson build a 24'x24' building with a sawdust floor. A committee composed of Glen Hammer, Jim Thompson, Ralph Lohr, and Russell Waggy handled the details. The school bus shelters were used as ticket booths. Mill Gap Ruritan Club planned to build new ticket booths.

Smith's Fun Land Shows were secured for the 1967 Fair.

Elizabeth Hull asked for consent to have demonstrations and sale of corn stalk dolls during the fair, which was granted.

Pete Jones and his trick horse show was added to the Horse Show afternoon and evening program.

## **1968**

Officers for the seventeenth annual fair were: president—Ralph Lohr; vice president and assistant manager—Glen Hammer; treasurer—Betty Hansel; secretary—Kenneth Robertson; and general manager—Russell Waggy.

At the June 14, 1968 meeting it was reported that no carnival had been secured for the fair. After discussion of holding a fair without a carnival, it was decided by those present at the board meeting to go ahead with the fair even though it may not have a carnival. It was decided that not holding the fair would do more harm than to have one without a carnival.

It was decided to move the fair dance to the fairgrounds to be held outside. The gospel show with the Singing Ross family was planned as an outdoor show.

During the 1968 fair, Wednesday became a fourth day of the fair. All exhibits were in place by 11 a.m. with judging starting at 1 p.m. The horseshoe pitching contest began at 1 p.m. as well as the Light Horse & Pony Show. At 2 p.m. a bicycle safety rodeo was held. Exhibits were opened to the public at 3 p.m. The fair dance was held at 8:30 p.m. on the fairgrounds. On Thursday, the horseshoe pitching contest continued at 1 p.m. followed at 2 p.m. with a tractor driving contest. The parade started at 6:30 p.m. and an Antique Auto Show at 7:30 p.m. The Stonewall Brigade Band performed at 8:30 p.m. On Friday,

August 30, the 4-H and FFA livestock show started at 9 a.m. The open livestock show began at 10:30 a.m. horseshoe pitching contest continued at 1 p.m. The kiddie show was held at 2 p.m. and the nightly entertainment started at 7:30 p.m. The last day of the fair was Saturday, August 31. The dog show kicked off at 10:30 a.m. The horseshoe pitching contest held the final rounds at 12:30 p.m. The horse show continued the 1:30 p.m. show and 7:30 p.m. show ending with a fireworks display at 10:30 p.m.

## 1969

The 18<sup>th</sup> annual Highland County Fair was held August 28-30, 1969. The admission rates remain the same since the early 1950s.

Officers for the 1969 fair were: Ralph Lohr—president; Glen Hammer—vice president; Kenneth Robertson—Secretary; Betty Hansel—treasurer; Russell Waggy—general manager; and Glen Hammer as assistant manager.

Committee and chairmen were: Arts and Crafts—Helen Cleek; Catalog—J.C. Pritchard; Commercial Concessions—Fred Frye; Dance—W.R. Stephenson, Jr. ; Dog Show—Fred Gumm; Entertainment and Program—M.M. Folks; Field Crops—John Robert Cleek; Flower Show—Monterey Garden Club; Foods—J.R. Varner; Grounds—Russell Waggy; Ham Show and Auction—Austin Shepherd; 4-H Club Projects and Food Exhibits—Elizabeth Hull, Horseshoe Pitching—Garland Carpenter; Horse Shows—Mack Racliffe; Hunter-fishermen trophies—Bruce Richardson; Kiddie Show—Janet Marshall; Lighting—M.E. King; Livestock—W.B. Folks and Roy Waggoner; Parade—Ralph Lohr; Publicity—J.C. Pritchard; Ribbons and tickets—Betty Hansel; Traffic—local police officers.

The Wednesday program was reduced to a fair dance only during the evening hours. Other activities included a Light Horse and Pony Show, Bicycle Safety Rodeo, Parade, 4-H and FFA Livestock Show and Open Show, Kiddie Show, Tractor Operator Contest, Ham Show and Auction, evening entertainment, Dog Show, Horseshoe Pitching Contest, and Horse Shows. The new Country Cured Hams consisted of classes in smoked and sugar cured – 12 pounds and under; 12-20 pounds; and over 20 pounds. Prizes were \$3 for first, \$2 for second, and \$1 for third. Grand champion received \$5 with reserve champion receiving \$4. All hams shown were sold with a 5% selling commission.

Maple products were added as a separate section in the foods department. Puffed and padded picture frames were added to the handicrafts section. The floriculture department used the theme “A journey through the seasons” for the adult artistic arrangements.

Written by:  
Kathy S. Beverage  
Monterey, Virginia

## HISTORY OF VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION STAFF IN HIGHLAND COUNTY

Virginia Cooperative Extension staff has worked on various committees and offered advice for the progress of the fair since the fair's beginning. Many programs offered by the Extension staff led to exhibits in the fair through improved livestock management, home improvements, food preparation, gardening practices, and learning by doing. This participation gave the youth hands-on, fun learning opportunities with their peers; and built on their achievements to become 4-H All-stars.

Extension work in Highland County began in 1930. Miss Mary Bell (she later became Mrs. Mary Bell Blagg) was the first Extension Agent. Miss Belle Burke, District Home Demonstration Agent, and Miss Bell, Agent for Highland, arrived at McDowell about noon, March 3, 1930, on one of the most disagreeable days of the winter, but a warm welcome was accorded them in the home of Mr. and Mrs. E.A. McNulty, when representatives of the Stonewall Woman's Club gathered to assure Miss Bell of their hearty cooperation in getting Home Demonstration work under way in Highland, and to learn the nature of the work and what is required of those taking part.

(...information from the Highland Recorder)

The following have served the local Extension Office.

### 4-H and Home Economics:

Name	Title	Date
Mrs. Mary Bell Blagg	Home Demonstration Agent	Feb. 1930 – Dec. 1931
Mrs. Mattie Pucket Harris	Home Demonstration Agent	Jan. 1932 - Feb. 1934
Miss Catherine Peery	Home Demonstration Agent	Mar. 1934 – May, 1936
Mrs. Hazel Propst Lowe	Home Demonstration Agent	June 1, 1936 – June 30, 1939
Mrs. Ettie Henry Ellis	Home Demonstration Agent	July, 1939 – Mar. 1941
Mrs. Virginia Rubush	Home Demonstration Agent	April 1, 1941 – July 1, 1956
Mrs. Gailya Osborne Herold	Home Demonstration Agent	June 15, 1956 – Feb. 1, 1961
Mrs. Elizabeth Bourne Hull	Home Demonstration Agent	Feb. 1, 1961 – Dec. 31, 1969
Miss Elizabeth Ellett	Home Demonstration Agent	Apr. 1, 1970 – Apr. 29, 1972
Mrs. Millicent Rundgren	Home Demonstration Agent	July 16, 1972 – June 30, 1974
Mrs. Carolyn Rastle Bass	Home Demonstration Agent	July 15, 1974 – Sept. 20, 1974
Mrs. Ardis Riegsecker Stephenson	Extension Agent, 4-H/HE	Oct. 14, 1974 – July 1, 2002
W. Paxton Grant	Part-time 4-H Agent (Bath/Highland)	August 1, 2002 – January 1, 2005
Mrs. Christine Lamb Hodges	Extension Agent, 4-H	Nov. 25, 2004 – Sept. 3, 2011
Miss Molly Parker	Extension Agent, 4-H	August 25, 2011 - Present

### Agriculture:

Name	Title	Date
Frederick Holsinger	County Agent	July 1, 1936 – July 6, 1942
Willard Miller	Temporary County Agent	July 6, 1942 – Sept. 1, 1942
Edwin Jones	County Agent	Sept. 1, 1942 – Nov. 5, 1962
Austin L. Shepherd	County Agent	Jan. 1, 1963 – June 30, 1985
Rodney P. Leech	Extension Agent	July 23, 1985 - Present

**Clerical:**

Name	Title	Date
Mrs. Sarah Sullenberger Bobbitt	Secretary	1936 – 1941
(unknown)	Secretary	1942 – May, 1943
Mrs. Thelma Colaw Moyers	Secretary	May 1943 – 1947
Mrs. Reba Carpenter Weeks	Secretary	1947 – 1955
Mrs. Thelma Colaw Moyers	Clerk Stenographer C	July 1, 1955 – June 30, 1983
Mrs. Kathy Whitecotton Beverage	Unit Administrative Assistant	July 1, 1983 – Present

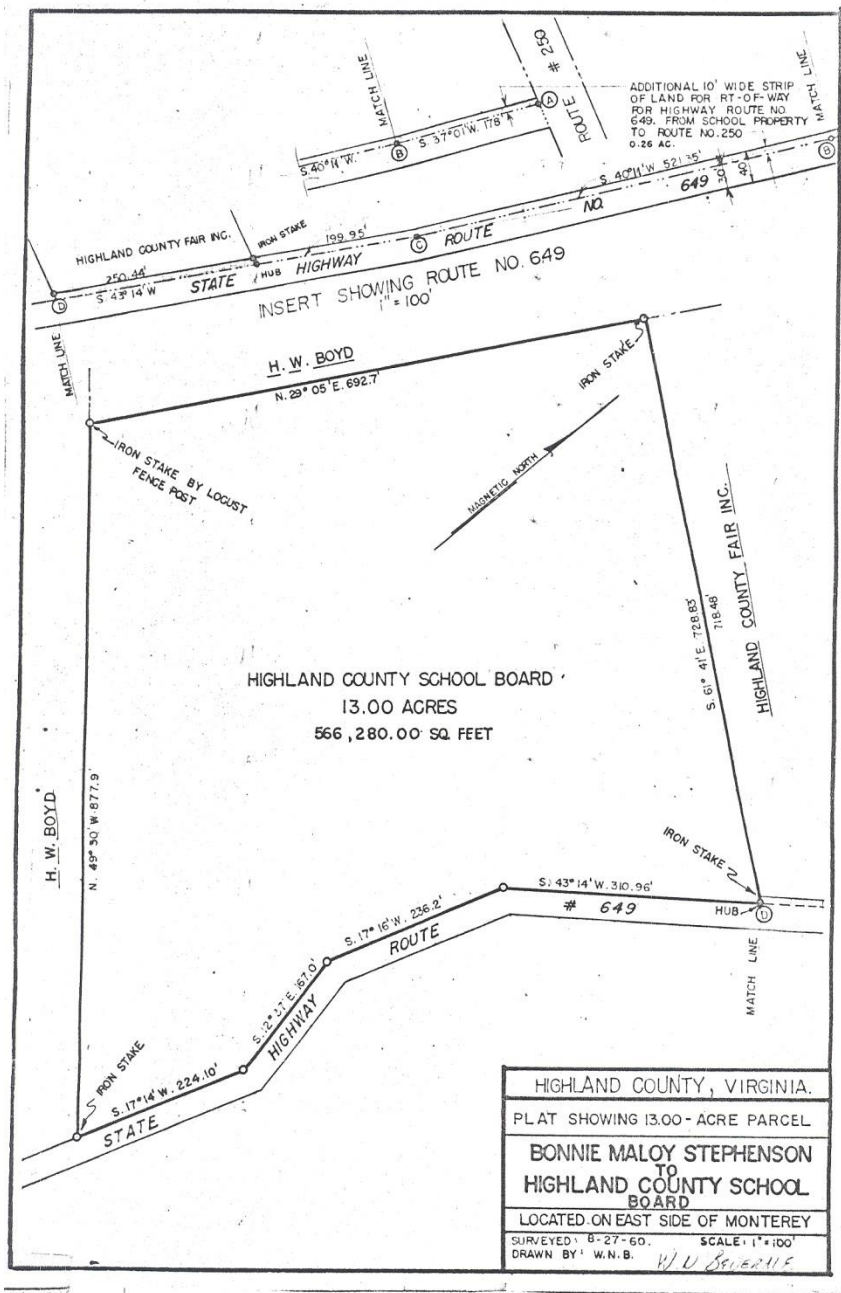
In September 1992, Extension went through restructuring. Bath and Highland County were combined as one unit with two offices. The following staff served the combined unit. Note: The Extension Homemaker Clubs in Highland County disbanded in 1993. Since July 1, 1996, area programming was established. Agents from Planning District 6 (PD6 – Augusta, Rockingham, Rockbridge, Bath, and Highland) served in specialty areas across the county lines.

**Extension Agents housed in other counties that served Highland since 1992):**

Name	Title	Date
Mrs. Jane R. Lyle	Extension Agent, Family & Consumer Science(FCS)	Sept. 1, 1992 – Sept. 30, 1995
Miss Sarah Ann Whitmore	PD6 Extension Agent, FCS (Nutrition & Wellness)	July 1, 1996 – August, 2001
Mrs. Stephanie Diehl	PD6 Extension Agent, FCS (Nutrition & Wellness)	Sept. 2001 – January 2011
Mrs. Brenda Mosby	PD6 Extension Agent, FCS (Family & Human Dev)	1996 – December 2001
Mrs. Helen W. Smith	PD6 Extension Agent, FCS (Family & Human Dev)	Jan. 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003
Mrs. Cristen Sprenger	PD6 Extension Agent, FCS (Housing & Consumer)	Dec. 10, 1998 – Present
Phil Schroeder	PD6 Extension Agent, Environmental Science	March 1997 – August 1999
Eric Bendfeldt	PD6 Extension Agent, Environmental Science	1999 – 2005
Tom Stanley	PD6 Extension Agent, Row Crops	May 10, 1996 – March 2002
Tom Stanley	PD6 Farm Management Agent	March 2002 – Present
Chris Lawrence	PD6 Extension Agent Row Crops	June 25, 2002 – 2004
Brian Jones	PD6 Extension Agent Row Crops	2004 – 2010
John “Jack” Dunford	PD6 Extension Farm Management Agent	July 1, 1996 – Jan. 1, 2002
Jonathan Repair	PD6 Extension Agent, Forages	July 1, 1996 – June 30, 2010
Mrs. Maria Ignosh	PD6 Extension Agent, Horticulture/SARE	January 2006 – June 2008
Miss Amber Vallotton	PD6 Extension Agent, Horticulture	January 2007 - Present
Matthew Yancey	PD6 Extension Agent, Row Crops	October 2010 – Present

**Council Funded Extension Technicians:**

Name	Title	Date
Marion “Hope” Pugh	Highland Technician	Sept. 9, 1992 – Feb. 25, 1994
Sharon W. Sponaugle	Highland Technician	May 1994 – Jan. 31, 1998
Carey “Kate” Wilke	Highland Technician	Aug. 16, 1998 – July 18, 1999
W. Paxton Grant	Highland Technician	July 1, 1999 – Present



Caption:

This plat was recorded November 1, 1960 before land was swapped with the Fair Association in 1962.