

Fulton County Historical Society News

Summer 2002

Mason-Dixon Crown Stone Replica to be Set

Chas Langelan, organizing chairman of "Surveyor's Rendezvous '02" and a member of the Mason-Dixon Line Preservation Partnership will be the speaker for the summer meeting of the Fulton County Historical Society on Thursday, August 1, at 7:30 p.m. in the Fulton Theater on North Second Street in McConnellsburg. He will bring with him "The Rock," a 525-pound full size granite replica of a 1765 Crown Stone which will be set on the line south of Gettysburg in an October ceremony.

Many of our members have a copy of Brian Tucker's painting "Running the Line" showing a Crown Stone being swung into position using a wooden A-frame with block and tackle. Langelan's group will follow this original technique in setting the replica, and asked your Society for permission to use Tucker's painting as the logo for their brochure. This speaks well for Brian's research and the authenticity of the Society's historic prints. Please invite friends who aren't members to attend our summer meeting. The Mason-Dixon line is a fascinating part of our local history. Fulton County has an original Crown Stone just off the Timber Ridge Road set at Mile 125 on April 19, 1766; this stone is the scene for Tucker's painting. Mason and Dixon had brought from England enough mile stones and crown stones to set along the line, but when they reached Fulton County found that the rough mountains made it too difficult to continue hauling the heavy stones westward. They dumped the remainder along the Fulton County line where they were "discovered" in 1908 and used to replace broken and missing markers.

New Life Member

We extend a warm welcome to Dr. John P. Ranck of Elizabethtown, and appreciate his interest in our Society and his support by becoming a life member. Life membership funds are invested as an endowment and earn interest for the Society.

Dr. Ranck indicated his Fulton County roots are in the Ranck, Wink, Snyder, Peck, Hart and Gregory families. These family names are prominent in Harry Holman's History of Tonoloway Church reprinted as our 2002 membership book. Dr. Ranck's membership application was downloaded from the Historical Society's web page at www.fultonhistory.org

Folk Tales of Fulton County

As a college assignment some years ago, Lisa Garland interviewed some "old-timers" in Fulton County for strange and unusual stories they had heard in their lifetime. She talked

with people no longer living, such as Al Larsen, Floyd Truax, Mary Waltz, and searched old newspaper accounts for interesting happenings. While not in manuscript form, she has offered her stories to the Society to be included in a book of folk tales. Folk tales are not necessarily true, and a good many are based on superstition, but they had enough interest that people repeated them for several generations.

Some are unusual happenings. From the Mercersburg Journal of October 17, 1902 - "It is reported that Andrew Hemphill's barn containing 50 bushels of popcorn, in the northwestern part of Fulton County, was burned recently and that the corn all popped, making a white mass almost as large as the barn. The roof was bursted open by the popping corn."

Some cannot be documented - "Once while the Sideling Hill Baptist church was conducting services, it was said that Confederate soldiers came to look for men to take to fight in the war. So they would not be found, the young men hid under the hooped skirts that the ladies wore at that time."

Some are a bit risque - "When two maiden sisters operated the Fulton House about 1900, the bathroom facility was an outhouse built over the town stream. Some teenage boys would wait in the stream under the building with a tin can of cold water to 'surprise' and get a scream from one of the ladies using the facility."

You are invited to add your stories to this collection, with the possibility this could become our 2003 membership book. The stories should only be one paragraph long, just a few sentences as they were told to you. If you include the name of the person, it gives a feeling of local authenticity, but if the incident could be embarrassing or illegal, it is not necessary to have a name. For instance - "During Prohibition, 'a man near Cito' had a dug-out cellar under his woodshed where he bottled moonshine. After he entered, his wife would rake wood chips over the trap door to hide the entrance. Once they had a spat, she refused to conceal the door, and he was caught."

Grant Money to Preserve Fulton House Exterior

The Fulton County Historical Society has received a Transportation Enhancement Program grant of \$129,539 through the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission and our local PennDOT. The money is intended primarily for repointing missing mortar joints in the exterior walls of the large limestone Fulton House. The building was deemed worthy because of its construction in 1793 to serve as an inn and tavern for pioneers traveling west, and its expansion in 1820 to serve as the stagecoach stop on the new Chambersburg-Bedford Turnpike. When the review committee saw Brian Tucker's painting "The Relay", they felt the scene justified its connection with transportation history.

In addition to stone repointing, the proposal calls for exterior woodwork repair of door and window frames, chimney caps, gutter drainage, and the building of front and rear porches on the stone structure, plus major rethinking and a new roof on the log cabin. The needs assessment was prepared in April 2001 by Preservation Associates. Because the Fulton House is a National Register property, the mortar must match the original in composition and appearance. Qualified contractors must pay prevailing wage to use federal funds, and the Society must follow correct bidding procedures. The Society is to pay an architect to design appropriate porches. A 60-foot boom lift will be supplied by JLG for up to two months, and Clem Malot will serve as the professional project manager. The Borough of McConnellsburg is the owner of the building and will be responsible for future maintenance. Thanks to everyone who helped with this proposal, especially Julie Elvey and Dan Swain who are knowledgeable with grant procedures. John Nelson's books on The Fulton House and Down the Pike helped with historical data. This building was the highest assessed structure in the Fulton County area on the 1798 US Direct Tax list, and the exterior work made possible by this grant may help preserve this landmark for another 200 years.

Upcoming Events

The 29th annual Fulton Fall Folk Festival will be held October 18, 19, and 20. The Historical Society will again sponsor some good activities, including an evening program, a museum display, and a house tour. To be successful, these events require volunteer help. Sandy Richards started working in February with a house tour committee which would be glad to have another private home or two for the tour; please give her your suggestions or offer your help. Our Historical Society library needs volunteers. While we appreciate the financial support of our members outside the county, we'd really like more active local support to help with various projects.

By Glenn Cordell, Administrator

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