

Odd Fellows Hall



Courtesy of Phyllis Birch

Academy Hill School



“FINDING WHAT HAS BEEN LOST”

*FAMILIES, CHURCHES, SCHOOLS,
ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES*

AN INITIAL EXHIBIT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY
OF BOTETOURT COUNTY, VIRGINIA
MAY 1, 2004



Academy Hill Students 1936

Courtesy Malanie P. Jones



Buchanan School and Students around 1900

Courtesy Harry Gleason

A PROJECT OF
THE BOTETOURT COUNTY-WIDE LEAGUE

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vfh Virginia Foundation
for the Humanities and
Public Policy

The purpose of the Botetourt County African American Heritage Festival is to showcase the African American history and heritage of Botetourt County thru collected artifacts, photographs, memorabilia, etc. for each community in the county.

The exhibits highlight families, schools, churches, businesses.

Grant and Melissa Chambers, Jack and Georgia Lee, Arthur and Martha Davenport, Henry and Emma Brown, Joe and Annie Wright, Phillip and Elizabeth Cooper, Frank and Della Cooper, Delilah and William Merchant, Sam and Jennie Garrison. Rising Mt. Zion Baptist Church was erected in 1928 by Rev. M.D. Anthony of Glasgow, Virginia. Teachers in the Gala community included: Mayme Cooper, Dorothy McCoy, Pearl N. Lee, Alease Johnson. (Courtesy Sylvester Brown)

Jackson Baptist Church was organized in 1869 in the community of **Springwood**. It was a log church located just over the hill from the present church. After the log building could no longer be used for a church, William Rose gave land to build the present church. The town's name was Old Hickory and changed to Jackson and now is Springwood. The members of the church would prepare baskets and take them over the river onto a lot belonging to Mack Crouch where a Rally was held. The meeting place was near the railroad station so people traveling here by train would not have far to walk to attend the Rally. Ministers who have served included: Rev. Girty, Norman Smith, Mose Johnson, M.D. Anthony, Craig, P.P. Hollins, Byrd, Allen and Charlie Patterson, J.D. Woodfolk, A.A. Spencer, O.W. Nowlin, T.H. Washington, F. Byrd, R.E. Dawson, R. P. Allen, C.W. Campbell, John Davis. Families living in Springwood included: Haskins, Davis, Tucker, Washington, Dawson, Garland, Minnieweathers. School teachers were: Gazara Terry, Miss Kathleen Fairfax, Mrs. Edna Craighead, Ms. Adams, Ms. Choice, Ms. Lipscomb. The school was located next to the church. James Washington ran a store in the community of Springwood. (Courtesy Diane Washington Waldron, John Washington)

M. L. Fairfax served the First Baptist Church of **Lick Run** from 1909-1920. Families living in Lick Run included: Smith, Pierce, Mack, Beale, Rose, Toles, Burkes, Ray, Early, Willis. The teachers were: Ianther Leftwich, Odephine Leftwich, Lottie Wells, Lawrence McFarlin.

The First Baptist Church of **Iron Gate** was formed in 1891. M. L. Fairfax served as minister from 1910-1920. Mary V. Smith was one of the early teachers in the school at Iron Gate. Families included: Leftwich, Chambers, Anthony, Allen, Valentine, Green Harriston, Carter, Webb, Branch, Nott, Scott, Morris, Lipscomb, Anderson, Loving, Hughes, Tramel.

In 1868 with the assistance of a sympathetic minister, Captain Charles Schaeffer, **Lapsley Run Baptist Church/Hughes Hill** was organized, meeting in an unused tobacco barn located on a small creek known locally as Lapsley Run about six and one-half miles north of Fincastle. The congregation moved from the tobacco barn to a log structure on Charles Fairfax's property. In the early 1890's, a tract of land on which the present structure stands, was deeded to the church by Martin McFerran. The first church building was razed in the early 1920's. The first church built on this site was built by Rev. Kent Smith during his pastorate. In the early 1920's, the building was replaced by a larger one to accommodate the congregation. Rev. S.A. Terry was the pastor and builder. In 1928, that building was destroyed by fire. The construction of the present building was started by Rev. Terry and completed by Rev. S. J. Jones. Ministers who served during the early years include: Revs. Jack Jones, Kent Smith, Samuel Poague, Lewis Girdy, Matthew Fairfax, Jack Bowling, S.A. Terry, A.W. White, H.M. Stevens, Manuel Matthews, S.J. Jones, C.H. Gill, J.L. Pinkard. (Courtesy Lillian B. Brown)

Hughes Hill School
Courtesy Viola Merchant



The **Fincastle** congregation was organized in 1831, while the nation was deeply divided concerning the morality of holding a great portion of the Black population as slaves. When organized, the church had three Black members, one of whom was a slave. Father Dempsey gathered them and they were allowed to sit in the balcony of the white church and listen to the service, but not fully participate. However, the Black membership quickly grew and Benjamin Ammen suggested on July 22, 1848 that an African Church be formed in Fincastle. On June 23, 1849 the Fincastle African Church was admitted to the Valley Baptist Association under the watchcare of the white church. Rev. John Jones, William F. Bannister, Edmund Gilliam, Jefferson Gilmore, Samuel Poague, Anderson Miller and John Foster Freeman

Academy Hill Students
1936



purchased land upon which to build its meetinghouse. This was purchased in 1866 from John and Lucy Linkenauger at a cost of \$50.00 cash. Out of the African Baptist Church have gone six churches: Lapsley Run, Springwood, Amsterdam, Gravel Hill, Midway and Lily of the Valley. (Courtesy Malanie P. Jones)

From the 1930 census, the families living in Oriskany were Dawson, Johnson, Hood, Hickenbotham, Hall, Mansom, Cunningham, Wofford. Teachers included F. Stevens and G. Anderson. James E. Hickenbotham drove a taxi and he also used it as a school bus taking children to the Eagle Rock school from Oriskany and New Hope. James Hickenbotham married Anna Johnson of Oriskany. Herman E. Scott came to Oriskany from Oklahoma to work in the ore mines. He married Mamie Johnson from Oriskany. (Courtesy James E. Hickenbotham and Joe L. Scott)

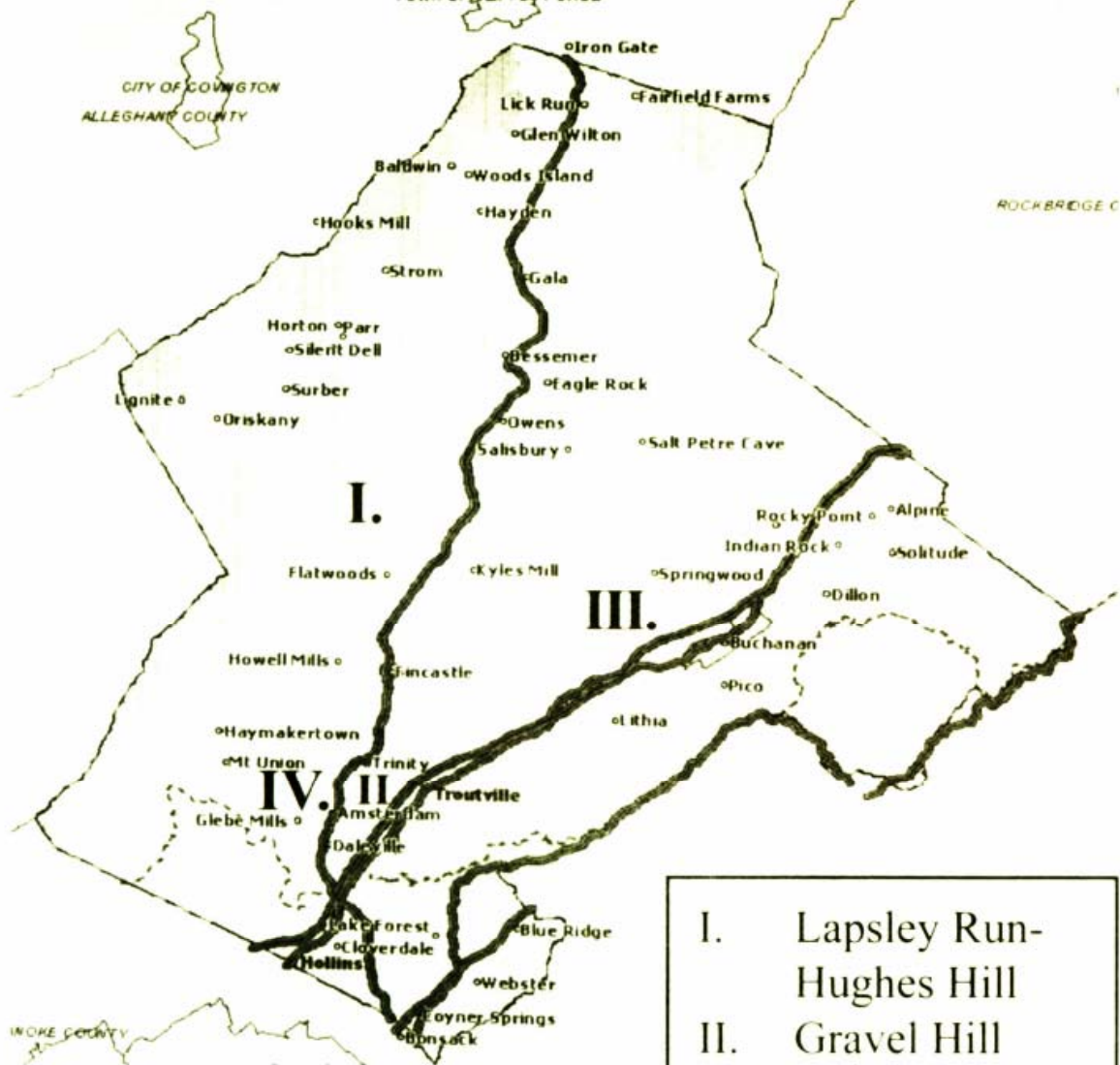
The **Lily of the Valley Baptist Church** was organized the second Sunday in October 1892. Consul was called from Springwood, Buchanan, Fincastle and Hughes Hill Baptist. Samuel Poague was made chairman. Members of Consul were Samuel Poague, Lewis Girty, D.C. Hunter, A.A. Spencer. The congregation first began to worship in the old Lutheran Chapel about one half mile from the Valley. They had their worship service on Sunday morning and the Blacks had their service afterward. The school house stood on the ground where the present church stands. In 1916 or 1917, a new church foundation was laid. The old church was still used for services and school was held in the old church also. Rev. L.W. Lawson was the new pastor. After Rev. Lawson left, Rev. O. W. Nowlin became our pastor. The membership increased with so many young people. In the early 1920's, a Girl's Chorus was organized with Edith Waldron Martin, Jennie Barnett Dean, Dematrice Waldron Journiette, Mable Barnett Davis, Nina Waldron Paige as members. They sang at revivals and different churches in the community. They traveled around on a school bus from Springwood. Ice Cream suppers, etc. were held to raise funds for the group. (Courtesy of Gertrude and Jesse Barnett and Mable Barnett Davis)

Glen Wilton is a small community off of Route 220 to Route 633 at the northern end of Botetourt County. Mount Beulah Baptist Church was organized in 1889. Many years ago there were approximately thirty some black families living here. Mr. P. Thomas ran a small store – sold some food and homemade ice cream. Mrs. Mattie Brown was the seamstress. Ms. Bessie Randolph was a school teacher. Some of the families included: Randolph, Ellis, Lipsom, Roach, Burrell, Anderson, Thomas, Richards, Pendleton, Leftwich, Hamm, Carly, Rogers, Fleming, Garrison, Johnson, Lacey, Jefferson, Lee, Jackson, Panyon, Morris, Black, Jennings, Turner, Barnett, Reid, Brown. The old powder plant furnace was one source of work at that time. Other occupations were: farmers, laborers, hair dressers, teacher, housekeepers, maids, railroad workers, seamstress. (Courtesy Peggy Goode Hamm)

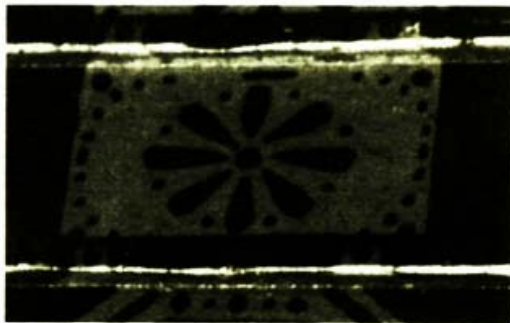
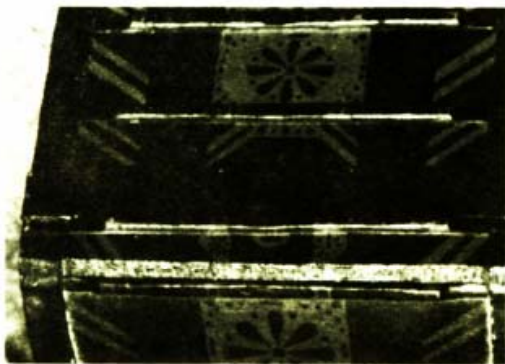
Families and members of the **Gravel Hill Church** were the Thomases, Walter Wright, Uriah Coleman, Carrie T. Corbett and the Girty family. The Gravel Hill Church was organized in 1876 and dedicated in 1946. Most of the people living in the Gravel Hill area were farmers who worked for shares. The names of the teachers in Gravel Hill were: Claude Paige, Mr. Colston, Juanita Fairfax, Alease Johnson, Elnora Choice Wade. (Courtesy Lucille Girty Craighead)

According to the records left in the files of Charles L. Cocke, founder of **Hollins College**, the first church in Hollins was organized on July 15, 1866 with one hundred thirty three members and it was named the Enon Colored African Church. The meetings were held in the Enon Meeting House in Roanoke County. On August 18, 1866 the church was admitted to the Roanoke Valley Association and on August 16, 1869 was dismissed to the Colored Association which is now the Valley Baptist Association. The church name was changed to the Green Ridge Baptist and was located on Plantation Road near the ITT plant. In 1822 a group of members left Green Ridge and on June 27, 1883 the trustees purchased a five acre parcel of land for forty dollars. This area also included land for a cemetery. The first church was built and named the Lovely Zion Baptist Church. In 1905 Lovely Zion was destroyed by fire, and the church was rebuilt in 1906. Ms. L. McFarland (Gibbs) came to Hollins from North Carolina through connections with Hollins College and First Baptist Church of Hollins. She was a community leader teaching the children and organizing groups for different activities. (Courtesy Emma Bruce and Napoleon Jones)

THE BOTETOURT COUNTY AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL (May 1, 2004) highlighted the information, documents, pictures gathered from each community in oral interviews and donations made by Botetourt County citizens. While not densely populated, there is a rich African American history in Botetourt County, Virginia. The Black communities have forged identities for themselves. Specifically in the realm of education, Black parents worked tirelessly to ensure that their children received adequate educational opportunities. The County-Wide League, an organization initially formed by teachers and parents in the early 20th century, raised money for school supplies, furniture (items not supplied by the school board), and gave scholarships to graduating seniors going to college. Since the accomplishments and ordeals of Black Botetourt have not been documented in any collective form, The County-Wide League is beginning to document and interpret the African American Heritage in Botetourt County.



- I. Lapsley Run-
Hughes Hill
- II. Gravel Hill
- III. Lily of the
Valley
- IV. Amsterdam -
Midway



Miniature trunks made by Mr. M. Lawson, a resident of Fincastle (Courtesy Phyllis Burch)

THE COUNTY-WIDE LEAGUE

The County-Wide League was organized in the early 20th Century - serving the African American schools of Botetourt County. Members included teachers, parents and other citizens who wanted to support the schools and the children by raising funds for books, furnishings for the schools and scholarships. With integration in 1966, The County-Wide League was disbanded. Today, after reorganization in 1996, The County-Wide League continues to support the schools and education of the children in Botetourt County with scholarships and funds to help needy students.

The officers of The County-Wide League are:

President	Ronald Pierce
Vice President	Napoleon Jones
Secretary	Clarice T. Toliver
Assistant Secretary	Judith C. Barnett
Treasurer	Edward W. Barnett
Chaplain	Viola J. Merchant
Assistant Chaplain	Lillian B. Brown
Membership	Betty B. Smith

Lucy Jane Bannister Pogue

Wife of Rev. Samuel Pogue, an early Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Fincastle, the oldest African American Church in Botetourt County. Rev. Pogue helped organize several African American churches in the county.

Courtesy of Waltye Johnson Rasulala

