

# Rockbridge Historical Society

Est. 1939  
HEADQUARTERS • CAMPBELL HOUSE  
EAST WASHINGTON STREET AT RANDOLPH STREET

*The Past Educating the Present.*



Dear Friend of the Rockbridge Historical Society:

March 2017

What attracts you to the tradition – and the vision – that we share at RHS?

A sense of place? Or the reach of family ties?

Memories well stoked? Or curiosities newly excited?

The fellowship and spirit of our communal events?

The chance to shape an educational legacy for your community, and generations to come?

Our Society, one of the oldest of its type in Virginia, is fortunate to build on the tradition and resources that allow us to continue providing those rewards, extending our longstanding mission “to preserve and promote the histories of the Rockbridge area.” And we’re all the more fortunate to serve and spur the historical interests of an audience – ranging all across and well beyond our County – that invests in our efforts with confidence and care. Thank you for all the financial support and feedback that drives us forward.

We need your help to continue that service, as we advance into the contemporary organizational, financial, digital and educational landscapes that shape public history today. In a community with many needs and opportunities, we provide a unique social service: one that shapes your present perspectives by framing them through the lens of local traditions and trials, while also preserving that heritage for future appreciation.

In 2016, the RHS Board developed a Strategic Plan identifying key priorities in how we will deliver this to you. They include a thorough review of our Collections for more accessible display and research; new communications networks, marketing plans, and development opportunities to diversify our community reach and long-term financial stability; a comprehensive assessment of our three historic properties, that can also help maximize the use of our public space for our Campbell House museum. We’ve begun to implement those plans, building on the foundations of another year of growing audiences, quality projects, and creative innovation.

## **In 2016 Your Support Helped Us Achieve:**

- **RHS Proceedings XIV**: We’ve just sent to the printers our capstone volume of a dozen essays and program overviews that now stretch nearly 80 years since our 1939 founding. The collection will provide you a diverse survey of the topics, themes, places and people distinguishing this County and its evolving habits of everyday life.
- **Righteous and Rascals of Rockbridge**: We have taken over one of the area’s most visible enterprises in public history: the historic street pavers and website chronicling the iconic, lesser-known and colorful characters of our area. Already, this asset has become a foundation for walking tours, and genealogical and scholarly attention.
- **Rockbridge History Bee**: Our local history competition for high school students not only grounded their studies in VA & US History in more local terrain, but captured enthusiastic support from our adult audiences too.
- **Digital Communications**: Our new Facebook page, re-designed websites, and e-mail notices allow more frequent, flexible connections with our Members, Supporters & Partners, even as we explore new media resources.

## **In 2017 We Need Your Support To:**

- **Diversify our Programs:** We want to build on our growing attentions to less-chronicled parts of the County, along with broad and relevant thematic trends. Opportunities to partner with other organizations on programs, or interactive outings like area tours, will help us to attract authentic community engagement and new audiences.
- **Enrich our Collections & Displays:** A growing team of committed Volunteers, and the expert support of our stewards at W&L Archives, are enabling RHS to establish more creative, thorough, mobile ways to efficiently organize, exhibit, and interpret the artifacts entrusted to us, in and beyond Campbell House. The hidden costs of conservation, storage, and secure displays all require continued funding for the attention our artifacts deserve.
- **Revitalize our Museum:** With our County-wide reach, we believe we're most broadly and best positioned to illuminate the full reach of Rockbridge, Lexington, and Buena Vista's histories. New interpretive plans, showcases, displays and media in our historic headquarters museum can more vividly show visitors our distinctive heritage.

Thanks to a new policy recently adopted by the RHS Board, your contributions now make you a Member of the Society. To signal this commitment to Member development and engagement, every member of the Board has pledged their individual support for this year's Campaign.

For 2017, **pledged contributions from the RHS Board have increased by 25%.**

So we hope you will consider matching that effort and **increase your own contributions by 25%, in turn.**

And if you haven't contributed to our Annual Fund before, please **join the effort to grow our Donor Base by 25%.**

Our status as a 501c3 non-profit RHS recognizes your contributions as fully tax-deductible, as are matching gifts that might be given by your employer. Please fill out the pledge card and mail it back no later than April 30 to help our planning for the year ahead.

Many of our supporters show their passion for Rockbridge by volunteering, or by extending their enthusiasm and advocacy. Many share particular talents that uniquely assist our operations and audiences, and charitably provide the funds we need to do what we do best, and find out where next we can grow.

However you have connected with us: know that we are grateful for your past support. Know that we count on you to jointly invest your time and treasure in our historic endeavors. And know that we will rely on you in the future to best serve the legacies of Rockbridge area: working with the range of communities, families, and institutions that so personally preserve our local histories.

**Eric Wilson, Executive Director**

**Neely Young, Development Chair**