



Highlands Historical Society

Summer 2026

To preserve and promote the rich heritage of Highlands

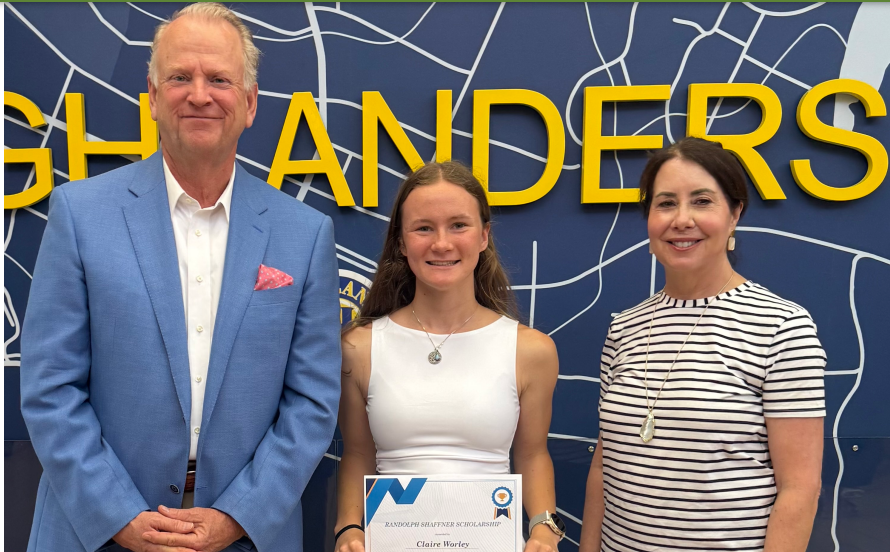
Highlands, N.C.

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Jack Wotton joins the Highlands Historical Society board with a profound personal tie to the area's history. In 1892, his great-great-grandmother, Jessie Wotton Lamb, and her husband, Dr. Theodore Lamb, built Chestnut Lodge—the second home ever constructed on Satulah Mountain. This Queen Anne Victorian was built entirely from American Chestnut harvested on-site. Today, Jack and his wife, Ethel, meticulously maintain and cherish the estate, which has remained in the family for 134 years. A retired Atlanta attorney, Jack loves hosting their two children and six grandchildren at the historic property.



HHS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



Congratulations to Highlands High School graduate, Claire Worley, recipient of our Ran Shaffner Scholarship. Claire will be attending UNC Chapel Hill in the School of Nursing. Dr. Price Kloess, President of HHS, and Karen Price, Scholarship Committee member, presented Claire with this \$5,000 scholarship.

Calendar of Events - 2026

August 16 - Roaring 20's Gala
October 3 & 4 - Walk in the Park

May - October is the opening season of the Historical Society. The museum and Prince House will be open Thursdays - Saturdays from 10 a - 4 p and Sundays from 1 - 4 p.

Visit Our Website for More Details!
<https://www.highlandshistory.com/events>

SUNDAY

16

AUGUST

5:00-7:00

HIGHLANDS INN
420 MAIN STREET

*Dress in your best
1920's Gatsby style!*

•• Jazz Band, Heavy
Appetizers and Desserts ••
•• Bubbly, Wine, Beer and
a Signature Cocktail ••

President's Letter - Summer 2026

Greetings from beautiful Highlands. By now both full-time and part-time residents are back and enjoying our magical weather and landscape. Please make a visit to the Highlands Historical Village part of your summer activities. Our town has such a rich history and each visitor is greeted by a knowledgeable docent who will give you a tour of our Museum, Prince House and Bug Hill Tent Cottage. You will leave with a working knowledge of the founding of Highlands 150 years ago as well as the many significant historical events from then to present. All tours are free and we are open Thursday – Saturday from 10:00 – 4:00 and Sunday from 1:00 – 4:00. We have found that guests love these tours as well so make us part of your plans.

We just completed a major landscape renovation project. Many thanks to Board Member Dollie Swanson for spearheading this effort. We are appreciative of the following partners for their generous contributions to this effort: Chattooga Nursery, Main Street Nursery, Highlands Lawn & Garden, Cattails of WNC Landscape Services and The Summer House by Reeves. Also a big THANK YOU to the Laurel Garden Club for their generous support!

We hope you were part of our Season Opening Party held May 23rd. Many thanks to Tracy Foor and our other volunteers who made this our grandest opening season event to date. Despite the severe weather, the food, drink, music and tours were great inside of the Historical Society Museum.

Speaking of events, we have two that you will not want to miss. On Sunday evening, August 16th, join us as we step back in time for our Roaring 20's Party. Board Members Patty Jones and Annette Waldon have worked hard to make this a fabulous event. It will sell out quickly so get your tickets on our website. Also, make plans to join us for Walk in the Park on Oct 3rd and 4th. You'll hear from ghosts of Highlands past and as they share their roles in our history. Many thanks to Board Members Lee Lyons

and Joan Worthy for planning this wonderful event. Visit highlandshistory.com for ticket purchases.

Congratulations to Highlands School graduate Claire Worley for receiving our second Randolph Shaffner Scholarship. Claire had an outstanding high school record and we wish her all the best as she pursues a nursing degree at UNC Chapel Hill. Yeah Claire!!

In closing, thanks to all of you who have generously supported HHS in the past. Our mission of preserving and promoting Highlands history would not be possible without you. Please consider continuing that support or for first timers, making HHS part of your regular giving.

Looking forward to seeing many of our HHS friends this summer.

Historically yours,
Price Kloess, MD, President

Board and Staff

Price Kloess, President

Patty Jones, Vice-President

Carlton Cole, Treasurer

Mike Thompson, Secretary

Directors: Dollie Swanson, Lee Lyons, Annette Waldon, Jerry Wilson, James Yaskiewicz, Joan Worthy, Jack Wotton, Karen Price

Ex Officio: Tracy Foor, Harry McDonald, Obie Oakley

Staff: Lance Hardin, Archivist

Ran Shaffner, Archivist Emeritus

Mary Jane McCall, Docent/Bookkeeper

Cora Bauman, Archivist, Executive Assistant

From Highlands Improvement Society to Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust

The Town of Highlands has been served from its earliest days by an institution that evolved over the years while consistently maintaining a long-range purpose. The Highlands Improvement Society, first known as The Highlands Improvement Association, was in existence at least as early as 1883, only eight years after the founding of the town. Its stated objective was "to protect, preserve, and promote the natural beauty of Highlands." In 1905, the association was incorporated and given the name of The Highlands Improvement Society.

The first acquisition of land by the Society came four years later. The summit of Satulah Mountain had been enjoyed by locals and visitors since the origin of the town. When development plans threatened to ruin this Highlands destination, the Society determined to buy the Satulah summit and preserve public access. Fundraising for the purchase began at a meeting of the Society on September 1, 1909 with the following mission statement:

We the undersigned, realizing the advantages to the inhabitants and summer visitors of Highlands of securing in perpetuity access to the Point on the Summit of Satulah Mtn., and whereas land comprising the Summit is now offered for sale, we desire to subscribe to the purchase of the same to be secured to the Highlands Improvement Society for the use of the public.

Over \$250 was raised at the meeting and additional contributions bringing the total to \$500 were in hand by October 6. On October 9, 1909, the Society bought 32 acres at the mountain summit and another 28 acres below the southern cliffs. Title to the property was placed in a trust with seven trustees. The terms of the sale, written into the deed, required that the 32 acres at the summit be held "forever for the purpose of making and maintaining a public park." The Society then improved the existing carriage trail and cleared paths to other areas of the mountain. 76 Highlanders and summer residents subscribed to this cause. The two largest donors were Margaretta Ravenel and Charles Albert Hill who contributed \$50 each, a handsome sum in those days. Other donations were as small as five cents. Twenty of the contributing families have descendants with residences in the Highlands area today.

Professor Thomas Harbinson, principal of Highlands Academy, wrote about this acquisition with pride and passion, "The top of Satulah is OURS to keep forever. No money grubbing skinflint without any soul can ever acquire this top and then put up a toll gate to charge admission to what he the same as stole from God. I mean just what I say. No man has a right or can acquire a right to charge a man a toll to visit the tops of God's mountains."

Over the next few years, the Society made many other contributions to the community within town limits and to the natural preserves surrounding the town. Then the activities of the Society slowed and the membership declined until 1934. In that year the Society merged with the Highlands Community Club, and the combined organization was given the name of Satulah Club. The Satulah Club picked up the banner of preserving natural beauty and would carry it in this name for another 51 years until another merger occurred.

The Prioleau Ravenel family had generously donated land for use as a public park in 1914. This was the ten acres known today as Ravenel Park which includes Sunset Rock and Sunrise Rock. Like the Satulah summit, this land had also been placed in trust, and it was held in this state for the next 71 years. (article continued on next page)



Check Out the New Exhibit Unveiled at Historical Society Museum!



Thanks to local Highlands High School student Nathan Wright, the Highlands Historical Society is debuting a new exhibit on local Vietnam veterans. The exhibit focuses on the story of private first class Lawton Arville Keener. It goes on to list all of the local veterans who were killed in the Vietnam war. Nathan Wright conducted extensive research through local newspapers, online resources, and local archives to support his work.



One of the most interesting buildings in Highlands is the Old Town Jail. The historic Old Jail, located at 96 Maple Street, was built in 1918 and served until 1959. It replaced an earlier jail that was burned down by inmates celebrating Christmas in 1915; some of those same inmates were later recruited to help build the current structure. The City leases the Jail to the Highlands Historical Society for \$1.00/year. The Mountain Garden Club maintains the grounds and provides all of the wonderful seasonal decorations. The jail currently has one occupant, Jail Bird (aka JB) who dons festive seasonal outfits and is a constant presence in season.



Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust cont'd.

Then, in 1987, this recently formed organization was incorporated with the name of Satulah Summit and Ravenel Park Association, Inc., and titles to both parks were placed in the new corporation. Two years later in 1989, the name of the young association was changed to Highlands Land Trust, Inc., and the pace of its activities quickened. It began to acquire additional properties for the preservation of the natural environment. The first conservation easement received by the trust was given by Lydia Macauley and Hugh Sargent in memory of their mother and father, Ralph Sargent, who had owned the property and served as president of the Highlands Biological Station. In 2003, leaders in the Cashiers community invited the Highlands Land Trust to provide land trust service to that area. The trust then expanded its activities to include the Cashiers Valley, and its name was changed to Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, Inc., as it is known today.

The Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust continues the role established by its predecessor organization over one hundred years ago. It now holds title and easements to over 4,000 acres protecting the biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and historic and cultural heritage of the community.

Major Donors 2025-2026

Thank you to all of our contributors who have supported HHS in the past year. These generous donors/Grantors have each contributed \$250 or more to help promote and preserve the rich heritage of Highlands. Please forgive any omissions!

BHHS Meadows Mtn Realty
Terrance Adamson
Greg & Laura Alby
Harry & Marie Baker
Griffin & Glenda Bell
Jenny Lynn Bradley
Bryson's Food Store
Mr and Mrs. Frank Burke
Andrew Chmar
Terrell & Joe Clark
Greg & Susan Clarkson
Gina Cogswell
Franklin Cohen
Carlton & Andrea Cole
Richard & Laura Cole
Wade Coleman
Hillary Cone
Thomas Connaughton
Neil Crawford, Jr.
Ed & Denise Crenshaw
Cullasaja Women's Outreach
Susan Day
Lynn & Glo Ghegan
Devault
Melinda Ethier
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Bob Fisher
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Glo Ghegan
Thomas Ghegan

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Kathryn Johnson
Jones Family Fund
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Kloess Fund
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Terry & Judith Tindel
Bob & Sandie Trevathan
Mr. and Mrs. James Trotter
P. J. & Liz View
Jane Webb
Art & Angela Williams
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wingfield
Lynn Winship
James & Lu Worrell
Peter & Joan Worthy

Membership

Thank you for your past gifts to HHS! We hope you will continue your support and renew your membership by returning the enclosed donation envelope with your contribution. You may also renew online via credit card at highlandshistory.com and use the Donate tab. You may choose to designate all, or part, of your contribution to two special funds - the Ran Shaffner Scholarship Fund or the "Raise the Roof" Capital Fund. Any amount not designated will be placed in our General Fund.

Membership Levels:

Individual \$35	Family \$50
Sustainer \$100	Major Donor \$250
Promoter \$500	Preserver \$1,000
Protector \$2,500	Highlander \$5,000



HHS STARTS THE CELEBRATION

Highlands Historical Society hosted our season opening celebration on Saturday, May 23. Despite the rain, we heard great acoustic bluegrass from Laney & Bishop with Charles Wood. We also enjoyed wonderful hot dogs, cotton candy, popcorn, and ice cream. We want to say a special thank you to all who volunteered throughout the week to prepare for this event, our local organization sponsorship, and for those of you who braved the weather to join us. Our work would not be possible without your continued support.

