



The Pike Packet

News from The Snickersville Turnpike Association

March 2010

“WHEN THE WAR CAME TO SNICKERSVILLE”

Over the years the Snickersville Turnpike Association has held annual events that emphasized the beauty of the Turnpike area and its history. This year, on Saturday 25 September, there will be a Civil War reenactment in Bluemont of a clash between Union and Confederate cavalry troopers that took place in the village on March 6, 1864.

The morning program begins at 10 AM in the Bluemont Community Center where a narrated slide show tells the story of how twenty- three 1st New York cavalymen were surprised by fourteen 6th Virginia cavalymen, and all but two were either killed or captured. Then, a walking tour of the village will allow everyone to talk to Union pickets, re-enactors emulating the women serving Sunday dinner to the Yankees, and the 15- year- old boy attending the dead in the church. A cavalry charge in an open field will demonstrate how real encounters occurred.

Following lunchtime, the afternoon program will begin at 2 PM and end around 5 PM after the second cavalry clash. That evening, those that wish can visit the re-enactors' campfire and listen to them tell stories about fighting a war on horseback. Remember, this event relates to the upcoming celebration of the Civil War Sesquicentennial.

SNICKERSVILLE TURNPIKE TOUR BROCHURE

The Snickersville Turnpike Association is planning a driving brochure with a map tied to points of interest along our beautiful Virginia Byway. The 1st Massachusetts Cavalry Civil War monument, historic Hibbs Bridge, and the E. E. Lake General Store are just three of the many historic and scenic places that will be featured. The brochure will include original art and vintage photographs of people and places along the "Pike". Look for this handy and informative publication, coming this fall, at our country stores and at brochure display locations.



Artist renderings by D. Allan

THE TURNPIKE AS A NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY?

Steps are being taken to ultimately get the Federal Highway Administration to designate the Snickersville Turnpike a National Scenic Byway under the Federal Scenic Byway Program. Currently, it is a Virginia Byway, but the Loudoun County Historic Preservation Plan states that “the County will pursue the designation of Route 15, Route 50, Route 734, and other significant roadway corridors as National Scenic Byways through the FSBP.”

In 1994, “Scenic America” named Route 734 one of America’s 10 Most Endangered Scenic Byways, which, together with a list of America’s 10 Most Outstanding Scenic Byways, comprise America’s 20 Most Important Scenic Byways.

In addition to and really more important than the County’s support is an endorsement by the Commonwealth of Virginia. This, unfortunately, involves a lot of paperwork.



HIBBS BRIDGE, A NATIONAL HISTORIC PLACE

Hibbs Bridge is one of a relatively few stone arch bridges built by turnpike companies in Virginia and one of three in Loudoun County. Given its historical and engineering significance, The Snickersville Turnpike Association is seeking to have Hibbs Bridge, built in 1829, registered with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and with the National Register of Historic Places. Once the application process is complete, the nomination will move to the State level for approval. Upon approval from the State, we will submit our request to the U S. Department of the Interior for national recognition. We will keep you posted on our progress.

Learn more about the Snickersville Turnpike Association’s monthly meetings times and days and events at: www.snickersvilleturnpike.org

“Preserving the Historic Road”

The nationwide Historic Roads organization, dedicated to the identification, preservation, and management of historic roads, is holding its biennial conference in Washington, DC on 9 through 12 September. This "Preserving the Historic Road 2010" conference is sponsored by the National Park Service, the Federal Highway Administration, the USDA Forest Service, and the US International Council on Monuments and Sites. Under consideration is a tour of Snickersville Turnpike, the Beaverdam Creek Historic Roadway District, and those portions of Route 50 associated with traffic calming and the Mosby Heritage Trail.

Below is the abstract of the paper to be presented by Marvin Watts, a Board Member of the Snickersville Turnpike Association.

HISTORIC ROADS—THE STAKES

(The View from Snickersville Turnpike)

What kind of people have we been and shall we be?

Historic roads reveal the answer. They are commonly blessed with the riches of American heritage. They tell the story of the American experience--from frontier exploration to settled villages, agriculture, commerce and government.

The narrative is often equally punctuated by battles, whether Colonial or Civil War or the occasional insurrection.

And since old roads generally took the path of least resistance, they are beautiful for their intimacy with the environmental landscape of hills, forests, open meadows, stone outcrops, streams and vintage bridges.

Even today, some of these roads, such as the Snickersville Turnpike (1786), remain largely unblighted by subdivisions or other forms of modern mugging. Indeed, the Snickersville Turnpike is regularly graced by period housing as old as 1730, and its fifteen-mile length from Aldie to Bluemont is today celebrated as a Virginia Byway.

The Virginia General Assembly in 1785 passed a law arranging for a toll road from Snickers Gap on the Blue Ridge to the town of Alexandria, and the Snickersville Turnpike is said to be the "first recorded turnpike in operation" in the colonies. It is known that Thomas Jefferson, who encouraged the enterprise, thought it a success; and George Washington repeatedly traveled the road.

When we preserve such historic roads, it is imperative they remain an everyday, functioning part of the American experience, its very fabric, and not merely a museum piece. It matters that we know we daily follow in the footsteps of Washington or Jefferson. Such history informs, nourishes.

We obliterate or relinquish our history at our peril, for we cut ourselves off from who we are as a people.

This paper will examine the intimate historical, commercial, and natural features of Snickersville Turnpike that has led citizens to defend its integrity from highway planners and developers, and, further, show how citizens who travel the road or live near it continue to profit from its preservation.

The Snickersville Turnpike Association
P.O. Box 452
Philomont, VA 20131

ROADSIDE SPRING CLEANUP
April 2010

The Snickersville Turnpike Association will be assisting Keep Loudoun Beautiful by picking up trash alongside historic Snickersville Turnpike. Your help is greatly needed. You are probably aware of our Adopt-a-Highway signs. Together with the help of Bluemont Citizens Association (west of Yellow Schoolhouse Road) and Mountville Farms (around Mountville) the entire 14 miles of the Turnpike is covered. Once again, we are in need of volunteers to help make this year's effort outstanding. Let your section leader know your selected area.

Orange trash bags can be picked up at the Philomont Community Center. Once filled, please call your section leader to notify them as to where you have left the bags. They will notify VDOT for pick up. You can also get the orange bags directly from VDOT.

SECTION LEADERS

- Rt. 50 to Rt. 690.....Glenn Raiden 540-338-4157**
- Rt. 690 to Yellow Schoolhouse Rd.....Henry Plaster 540-554-8591**