



# VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*The Story of Virginia*

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Jennifer Guild, Senior Officer for Public Relations and Marketing  
(804) 342-9665, [jguild@vahistorical.org](mailto:jguild@vahistorical.org)

## Photographs are “Windows to the Blue Ridge and Beyond” Images and Stories Tell State’s Appalachian History

Richmond, VA—On February 20, the Virginia Historical Society (VHS) opened a new exhibition featuring twenty-three silver sulfide prints by award-winning naturalist photographer and Farmville, Va., native Jack Jeffers. The images depicted in *End of an Era: The Photography of Jack Jeffers* feature Virginia’s rugged mountain people, weather-beaten structures, and well-hidden Appalachia landscapes. With the prints presented, visitors can read excerpts of stories Jeffers shares about what he saw in Virginia’s Blue Ridge region in the late 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s.

“Like many of life’s adventures, my documentation of the Appalachian mountain people was not planned, but evolved through a series of unexpected discoveries,” the 78-year-old Jeffers said. “I realized half way through my journey that I was documenting a way of life that was rapidly disappearing from the rural byways. I might be the only person to have ever photographed some of those people. In fact, I know that to be true about at least a few of them.”

“Jeffers presents environments that sometimes startle us with a sense of isolation that is unknown in today’s world of cable television, internet, and smart phones,” VHS lead curator Dr. William Rasmussen said. “When organizing this exhibition, I wanted Jeffers’s words to paint the picture and be the ‘windows to the Blue Ridge and beyond’ as he said in one of his books.”

The exhibition displays large-format silver sulfide prints—images made on paper coated with light-sensitive silver salts. All were hand processed by Jeffers.

“No one else has ever touched my negatives,” Jeffers said. “I don’t think anyone could print my images like I did. I still feel that way.”

In 1996, Jeffers donated 119 prints featuring Virginia scenes to the society. In addition to the VHS, four venues in Virginia own a collection of Jeffers’s prints: Longwood University, Radford University, Ferrum College, and the Reedville Fishermen’s Museum.

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Post Office Box 7311  
Richmond, Virginia 23221  
[www.vahistorical.org](http://www.vahistorical.org)





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Jeffers still owns all 2,500+ negatives. He says photography is a “serious hobby” for him today. Recently he has explored the digital photography world and has been capturing images of the American West, including the mountains of Colorado where he currently lives.

*End of an Era: The Photography of Jack Jeffers* is on display at the VHS until August 26, 2012. Admission to the society is free. The VHS Museum Shop is selling signed copies of a catalog featuring Jeffers’s work.

“It was always my intention to have my work displayed in a historical context,” Jeffers said. “I wanted my prints in a museum devoted to the history of Virginia, and the VHS is the ideal place for that.”

“I preserved for future generations a viable record of this intriguing segment of Virginia’s—and America’s—past. Virtually everything in the images is gone—or dotted with power lines, giant new houses, and modern roads—and so too is a way of life.”

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For more than 182 years, the **Virginia Historical Society** (VHS) has been connecting people to America’s past through the unparalleled story of Virginia. The VHS—a history museum and research library—features award-winning exhibitions that are entertaining and educational for visitors of all ages. The Society is the only museum with all of Virginia’s history under one roof—all centuries, all regions, and all topics are covered. Although designated the Official State Historical Society, the VHS is a privately funded non-profit organization that relies on contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations to sustain its operations. The VHS is located at 428 North Boulevard in Richmond’s Museum District. Admission is free. Museum hours are Monday–Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m.–5 p.m. Library hours are Monday–Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m. For more information, call (804) 358-4901, visit [www.vahistorical.org](http://www.vahistorical.org), or find the VHS on Facebook and Twitter.

