



THE GUARDIAN

Newsletter of the Jefferson County WV Historical Society
April 2011 Volume IX Issue 2

Historic Speaker Series Continues

Continuing the successful series of presentations by local historians sponsored by the Society and several other Jefferson County historical organizations, the Charles Town Historic Landmarks Commission will host a presentation by Dr. Evelyn Taylor, based on her book *Historical Digest of Jefferson County, West Virginia's African American Congregations, 1859-1999* (Washington, D.C., Middle Atlantic Regional Press, 1999). The event will take place in Charles Town at Fisherman's Hall, located at the corner of Academy and S. West Streets, on Tuesday, May 24, 2011. It is free and open to the public and will begin with a reception at 6 p.m. followed by Dr. Taylor's presentation beginning at 7 p.m.



Dr. Taylor will not only delve into the historical context of the church's influence in African American life, but also illustrate how the church remains at the center of that life today. Many of the local churches in Jefferson County were built by their members with their own funds, stone by stone and board by board. In some congregations, the church history is also an account of family members who grew up in the church. In others, where

records and deeds fall short because of fire and flood, griots have augmented the written accounts. The history covers a period of 135 years divided into active, special-occasion use, and defunct congregations.

Jefferson County History Events Calendar Established

You may recall that in order to enhance public awareness of the events which celebrate the county's history, a Jefferson County History Events Schedule calendar has been posted on the Historical Society's web site at:

<http://jeffersonhistoricalwv.org/events.html>

The web page contains a Google web calendar populated with descriptions of historically-related events occurring in and around Jefferson County. If you are interested in providing information to this calendar or in linking it with your own Google calendar, please contact Curt Mason at cmasonwhf@aol.com. Upcoming events you might wish to attend include the following:

- May 14 —Peter Burr House hosts Bread Bakers Guild.
- May 15—**“The Civil War in Jefferson County,”** The First Beallair Historical Presentation, 2:00 to 4:00 pm at the historic Beallair mansion. The event will feature talks by noted historians Dennis Frye and Roger Kaplan, a living history portrayal of Confederate spy Belle Boyd by Tricia Strader, and tours of the Manor House. For additional information visit www.BeallairEstate.info/
- June 4, 4-7 pm—A fundraising reception for the Potomac Valley Audubon Society will be held at Harewood, the historic Washington family home just west of Charles Town on Route 51. The first floor of the house will be open for viewing as well as guided nature walks of the property. Food and beverages will be served and musical entertainment will provide background. Dress is casual. Tickets to the event will be required. Space is limited so reserve soon. Basic tickets



are \$45 per person. Those who pay \$150 for two people will be recognized as Donors, those who pay \$250 for two will be recognized as Patrons, and those who pay \$500 or more for two will be recognized as Supporters. Ticket costs are fully tax-deductible. To receive an invitation, please contact Kristin Alexander at 304-676-3397 or e-mail pvasmail@aol.com and provide your name, address, phone number and number of tickets at the level desired.

- July 4—Historic Shepherdstown 4th of July parade and picnic.

talks sponsored by the Historic Shepherdstown Commission between 2002 and 2007. The recordings were made on tapes but have been archived on cd's by the university to facilitate use by future researchers.

Preservation Alliance of West Virginia Visits Shepherdstown

On Monday, April 18, the historic Shepherdstown riverfront was the focus of a visit by a regional expert on historic preservation. Lynn Stasick, field representative for the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia (PAWV), accompanied by PAWV Eastern Panhandle representative Curt Mason, examined historic resources along the riverfront with Shepherdstown Mayor Jim Auxer; the President of Friends of the Shepherdstown Riverfront, Dale Walter; and Shepherd University professor Keith Alexander. The group visited the tobacco warehouse, a large stone structure dating to the late 1700's which could support various types of adaptive reuse. The group also visited the site of the original Thomas Shepherd mill on Town Run

The Preservation Alliance of West Virginia is the statewide grassroots organization devoted to preserving West Virginia's history and culture through education, advocacy, heritage tourism development and the revitalization of special places. Mr. Stasick works to deliver services supporting preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties on PAWV's Endangered Properties List. Such services include on-site assistance with needs assessment, redevelopment and sustainability planning, identifying funding sources, and assisting with grant writing for preservation projects.

For those wishing more information about the Friends of the Shepherdstown Riverfront please contact its President, Dale Walter, at dwalter@citlink.net. For further information about the PAWV, please visit pawv.org or phone 304-345-6005 or send an e-mail to info@pawv.org.

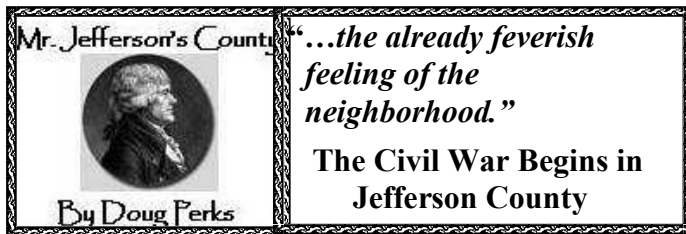
Shepherdstown Oral Histories Open House



On Tuesday, April 26, Shepherdstown University Professor Keith Alexander and eight students from his historic preservation class conducted an open house presenting several oral histories completed by the students. Hosted by the Historic Shepherdstown Commission at the Entler Hotel in Shepherdstown, over 50 guests were encouraged listened to recordings of student interviews with a cross-section of individuals who grew up in Shepherdstown and could recall what life was like back then. Shown above are Professor Alexander and some of the students who participated in the project.

The project was conducted as part of Shepherd University's "Service Learning" program conducted by Ms. Holly Fry. Since the ages of the persons interviewed ranged from 20 to 84, the histories painted a rich picture of what life was like in the town as well as recollections of the impact of national events on local activities.

The students also transcribed several hours of recordings made at the "Listen at Lunch" series of



After John Brown's attempt in the fall of 1859 to capture the musket factory at Harper's Ferry, armory officials were determined to be better prepared in the event of a repeat performance. When federal property was seized in states that seceded, the installation at Harper's Ferry went on heightened alert. Would Virginia remain in the Union? If she left, what would happen to the federal property at Harper's Ferry?

To that end Armory Superintendent Alfred Madison Barbour put a plan in motion. His first line of defense would be two companies of militia comprised of armory workers. Barbour also requested and received assistance in the form of "60 picked men of the mounted rifles from Carlisle barracks" who arrived at Harper's Ferry in early January under the command of Major Henry Jackson Hunt. Major Hunt's orders were specific:

"...repair to Harper's Ferry and assume the military command of the armory; that without making a display of your force you so dispose it as to prevent the success of an attack upon the United States property there should one be attempted."

Upon his arrival, Major Hunt assessed the situation and reported to his superiors:

"From the nature of my instructions, I have not considered it proper to make any of the usual military preparations for defence [sic] except to keep my command on the alert. Any measures to be at all effectual would be of such character as to excite the already feverish feeling of the neighborhood, and perhaps induce an attempt on the armory. I have, therefore, abstained from all such labors or acts as would serve to increase the present excitement."

Major Hunt recognized that he and his 60 troopers had landed right smack dab in the middle

maelstrom.

Around the first of April Major Hunt was relieved of command and sent to Fort Pickens in Florida. First Lieutenant Roger Jones was placed in charge of the remaining force of about 49 men. The mundane activity at Harper's Ferry was about to be superseded by national events.

The first event occurred at 4:30 A.M. on April 12, 1861. Guns opened fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, which forced the surrender of Union troops posted there.

On April 15, in response to the action taken in Charleston, President Lincoln answered:

"Now therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, in virtue of the power in me vested by the Constitution, and the laws, have thought fit to call forth, and hereby do call forth, the militia of the several States of the Union, to the aggregate number of seventy-five thousand, in order to suppress said combinations, and to cause the laws to be duly executed. The details, for this object, will be immediately."

The nation would now have its answer. On April 4, 1861 Virginia had steadfastly voted to remain in the Union. But the call for troops, almost 3,000 of them to come from the Commonwealth, reversed the tide. On April 17, the Virginia Convention would once again vote, and this time the vote was to affirm that "...said Constitution of the United States of America is no longer binding on any of the citizens of this State." In addition, residents were urged to "rise and protect their honor, their property, and their rights by seizing the national arsenals at Harpers Ferry." Virginia, the birthplace of presidents, had left the Union.

On April 18, Alfred Madison Barbour, one of Jefferson County's delegates to the Virginia Secession Convention and the former superintendent of the armory, returned to Harper's Ferry and "spilled the beans." Barbour told the crowd which gathered that Virginia had seceded from the Union. His next words sent a chill down every spine. Barbour revealed that as he was speaking, Virginia militia troops were on the move to take possession of the armory and arsenal at Harper's Ferry.



Barbour's words triggered a flurry of activity. Earlier that day Lieutenant Roger Jones had received a telegram which advised him that troops were on the move to Harper's Ferry by train. In late afternoon Jones received word that several hundred men had gathered at Halltown, just four miles to the west of Harper's Ferry. Jones immediately sent a man on horseback to reconnoiter – within the hour scout returned and confirmed the report. But Jones had not been idle:

"In the meantime, having become satisfied that an attempt would be made to seize the arsenal and workshops during the night, I made preparations for the destruction of the place...I detailed twelve men of my company, and ordered six of them to get their bed-sacks, which were filled with straw, and put a keg of powder in each one of them. I proceeded in person with this party from the armory to the arsenal buildings. The arsenal buildings were detached from the main armory workshop, not in the same enclosure, but on the other side of the street, and in no way connected with it. I distributed these sacks, with powder in them, in the two arsenal buildings, which contained the arms, and with the aid of shavings and bituminous coal, I prepared things so that a fire could be kindled in an instant...at about one or two o'clock in the afternoon of the 18th, being satisfied that an attack would be made, I destroyed the bridge over the canal which supplies the water-power, so as to make it as difficult as possible for an assaulting party, and Captain Kingsbury removed the powder from the magazine building, which was a quarter or half a mile away, into the armory, and later in the evening, about sundown, I think, made preparations to destroy the workshops of the armory proper."

Most of the militia who gathered and waited at Halltown was comprised of men from Jefferson County and the surrounding area. Today we can't be sure exactly what was running through their minds, but there certainly must have been some concern

over the news of Virginia's secession. Just ten weeks earlier they had gone to the polls and overwhelmingly voted to stay in the Union. Jefferson County had sent two men to represent them at the Virginia Secession Convention with strict orders to vote pro-Union. And now Virginia had seceded?

These men were also keenly aware of what had happened to John Brown when he attempted to take possession of the armory and arsenal. Many of them had been members of the militia that had captured Brown and several of his men. A number of them had been on guard duty in Charlestown while Brown and his men stood trial. Some of the men had been on duty in December 1859 and again in March 1861 and had witnessed the execution of John Brown and his men. You can bet that those memories were on their minds.

Colonel James Walkinson Allen was in command of the men gathered at Halltown. He could vividly recall the entire John Brown affair. Whether he voted "yea" or "nay" on the matter of secession was irrelevant – he knew full well that the electorate of his county had voted to stay in the Union. Allen conferred with Captain John Rowan, in charge of the "Jefferson Guards," and Captain Lawson Botts, in command of "Botts Grays," and they decided to wait until they received direct orders from Richmond to seize the armory and arsenal. At about 8 o'clock in the evening the orders came and Allen and his men began to move toward Harper's Ferry.

Colonel Allen and the Virginia militia were challenged several times by a contingent of the men assembled by Captain Jones. Among them was Mr. George Koonce, "a man of great activity and personal courage" and also a "Mr. Wilson, an Englishman by birth, but long a resident of the place." But the armory men offered little resistance to the well-trained Jefferson militia. The "Jefferson Guards" led by Captain Rowan were soon on their way over Bolivar Heights and into Harper's Ferry on the way to the armory.

At the armory, Lieutenant Jones was told that his pickets had been repulsed. Outmanned, Jones knew that his fate was sealed and put his plan into motion:

"I decided that if anything was to be done to save the arms from falling into the enemy's hands it was to be done then. I then gave orders to fire the



buildings, and it was done. Having taken this step ... I immediately commenced a retreat to Hagerstown on the way to Carlisle, Pennsylvania. We started from the ferry at about half-past ten o'clock in the evening. I feared that by attempting too much I should fail in everything, and therefore confined myself to what I was certain could be accomplished.'

Lieutenant Jones and his men were in retreat across the Potomac Captain Rowan and his men were advancing on the armory. All of a sudden the night erupted:

"A thunderous roar soon followed, reverberating from mountain to mountain. The flames grew increasingly brighter until 'each rock and tree on Loudoun and Maryland Heights were distinctly visible.'"

The arsenal and the thousands of guns stored within were aflame and would be lost. War had come to Jefferson County, Virginia!

**The Museum Corner
Confederate Bible Flag
By Jim Glymph**

There were many flags used in the early days of the Confederate States of America. The Bonnie Blue flag, a white star on a blue background; South Carolina secession flags displaying a white crescent and palmetto on a red background; re-births of colonial "Don't Tread on Me" flags and others were flown across the south.

On March 4, 1861 a flag known as the Stars and Bars, became the first national flag of the Confederacy. The Jefferson County Museum has a Bible flag based on this flag. A Bible flag was used as a bookmark in a Bible. Since it has 11 stars, it was probably made in the July 2 to November 28, 1861 time-frame when there were 11 states in the Confederacy.



The Stars and Bars was carried by southern troops at the first battle of Manassas. Because it resembled the United

States flag when it hung limp on the flagstaff and created troop identity confusion, a new flag was needed for use in battle. Thus appeared the Saint Andrews cross-based battle flag of the Army of Northern Virginia, which is still more than apparent across the United States today. The first national flag continued to be used, but mostly in non-battle situations until May 26, 1863 when a new national flag was adopted.

Frank Woodruff Buckles

Frank Woodruff Buckles, the last surviving American veteran of WWI and an emeritus officer of the Society for many years, passed away on February 27, 2011, at the age of 110. Born Feb. 1, 1901 on a farm near Bethany, MO, he enlisted in the US Army at age 16 to do his part for America. During WWI he drove an ambulance in France and at war's end escorted German prisoners of war to their homeland.

At the start of WWII, while working as a civilian for a steamship company in Manila, he was taken prisoner by the Japanese and spent 3-1/2 years in concentration camps. After the war, Mr. Buckles moved to Jefferson County, purchased Gap View Farm, and worked it until he turned 102. In the last years of his life he remained active, receiving many visitors at the farm and often attending the annual Society picnic. In 2009 he appeared before a Senate subcommittee to encourage Congress to bestow federal status to a World War I memorial built in the 1930's on the Washington Mall.

On March 15 he was buried with full military honors on a hillside in Arlington National Cemetery, only a few feet from WWI General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, another native of Missouri, born less than 100 miles from Bethany. Mr. Buckles is survived by his daughter, Susannah Buckles Flanagan, a Society board member, and her husband Mike Flanagan, who together continue operating Gap View Farm.





**White House Farm in about 1933
(photo courtesy Historic American
Buildings Survey)**

WHITE HOUSE FARM—THEN AND NOW



White House Farm in 2008

White House Farm, also known as White House Tavern and the Dr. John McCormick House, is located on the outskirts of Summit Point, WV and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as well as being a Jefferson County Landmark. The farm consists of a ca. 1742 farmhouse, a stone barn (the oldest standing in West Virginia), a springhouse of about the same age, a wooden curing shed, and 60+ acres of pasture and woods. The farm is one of the oldest in the county and has a rich history.

In May 1740, Dr. John McCormick, a Scots-Irish immigrant, purchased 395 acres from Jost Hite, a German land developer who had obtained 30,000 acres from John and Isaac Van Metre. By 1742, Dr. McCormick had built a three-story stone farmhouse. He was a prosperous and prominent country doctor. He and his wife Ann had six sons (James, Francis, John Jr., William, George, and Andrew) and two daughters (Mary, wife of Magnus Tate, and Jean, wife of James Byrn). George Washington completed a survey of McCormick's land in 1752 and James McCormick served as the chain carrier and John Jr. as the pilot on several of George Washington's early surveys. White House Farm was noted for the horses bred there during Dr. McCormick's lifetime.

Upon Dr. McCormick's death in 1768, the farm was left to his youngest son, Andrew. During the Revolutionary War, Andrew and his wife Nancy provided food, lodging, and horses to the Continental Army. After the war, Andrew apparently operated an inn on the farm and paid for an "ordinary" license on February 18, 1794. For such an endeavor the site benefited from being on a direct route between Frederick, MD and Winchester, WV.

On September 9, 1807, Andrew sold the farm to John Locke and John's brother George managed the ordinary, which had become known as White House Tavern. By 1845, Eleanor Locke, John's daughter, was living in the house with her husband, Joseph Morrow, a farmer who also operated a blacksmith shop across the road near the springhouse. During the Civil War, Confederate Major Harry Gilmor and his troops were attacked by a group of Union soldiers led by Captain George Somers as the Confederates were resting in front of the house. Major Gilmor shot and killed Captain Somers as his men took cover behind "the ruins of a stone stable." The house was renovated in the late 1800's by the Morrrows and subsequent owners added a few more rooms.

Between 1929 and 1940 the farm was owned by Luther and Lelia Naylor, who converted the stone stable into a milking barn and constructed a silo. This dairy operation continued until about 1950 when Col. and Mrs. Edward Blake purchased the property, which was inherited by John and Alice Blake Van Tol in 1974. The farm is currently owned by Society members Curt and Suzette Mason.

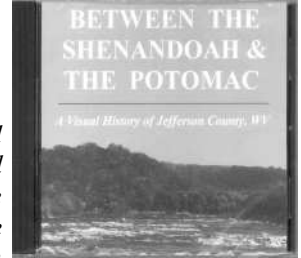


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- ***Between the Shenandoah and the Potomac***, a DVD presenting a comprehensive illustrated history of Jefferson County, West Virginia. (\$14). In an online review, Susan Scouras of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History states:

"The Jefferson County Historical Society has produced a wonderful history of their homeland through the combined use of beautifully scenic videotape photography, interesting still photos and artists' representations of the natural landscape and resources, the man-made structures and the people themselves that comprise the past and present of Jefferson County. As the title indicates, the influence of the county's location between the Shenandoah and the Potomac Rivers is woven through both the narrative and the visual images from beginning to end. Strategically placed commentary by local experts and representatives of various agencies and organizations add support to the factual history of Jefferson County as drawn from Historic Jefferson County, by Millard Kessler Bushong. Excellent narration by Charlie Glaize and well-chosen background music round out the presentation of Writer/Producer Melissa Wallace."



- ***Between the Shenandoah and Potomac: Historic Homes of Jefferson County, WV. Color pictures and descriptions of over 100 of Jefferson County's most historic homes, 178pp, hardbound book. \$49.95***
- ***The Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society*** is mailed annually to each member and contains articles about local historical places, people, and events. Prices for purchase and shipping of back issues of the magazines are as follows:

1935-1964:	\$20/copy
1965-1994:	\$15/copy
1995-Current:	\$10/copy
- ***The Washington Homes of Jefferson County. \$10.***
- ***Prominent Men of Shepherdstown.*** A.D. Kenamond, 1962 **\$10**
- ***Calendar & Index to Recorded Plats in Jefferson County, WV (VA) Courthouse, 1801-1901.*** Michael. D. Thompson **\$25**
- ***Tombstone Inscriptions, Jefferson County, W. Va 1687-1980.*** Compiled by Bee Line Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), 1981. **\$22**
- ***Burials in Jefferson County, West Virginia, 1978-97.*** Compiled by Hugh E. Voress, 1998, **\$18**

GUEST PUBLICATIONS

- ***West Virginia Encyclopedia,*** A new "must have" reference book loaded with information. **\$45**
- ***Military Operations in Jefferson County-***A guide to the Sons of Confederate Veterans network of Civil War Markers **\$15**
- ***The Perfect Steel Trap, Harpers Ferry, 1859*** This historical novel, written by Bob O'Connor, JCHS Board member, provides eye-witness accounts of the John Brown insurrection. Read about the preparations, the raid, the trials, the executions and the aftermath and then decide: was John Brown a hero or a scoundrel? **\$23**
- ***The Virginian Who Might Have Saved Lincoln*** President Lincoln's trusted friend, former law partner and heavily armed body-guard, Ward Hill Lamon, a Summit Point, VA native, was not at Ford's Theater the night of April 14, 1865. Learn of his whereabouts that fateful evening by reading this historical novel by Bob O'Connor. **\$16**
- ***The Night I Freed John Brown.*** This exciting new young adult novel for ages 12 and up, written by Harper's Ferry native John Cummings, centers on 13-year-old Josh Connors who, to free himself from his shy, sheltered life in the historic town, idolizes the fierce spirit of the controversial figure of John Brown. **\$15**
- **1852 Maps of Jefferson County** by Howell Brown reconstructed using multiple plates from the Library of Congress. 35"x 46" and printed on 36" 20 mil paper using archival ink. Color-\$50; B&W-\$28
- **1883 Maps of Jefferson County** by Howell Brown reconstructed using multiple plates from the Library of Congress. 35"x 48.5" and printed on 36" 20 mil paper using archival ink. Color-\$50; B&W-\$28

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