

THE GUARDIAN

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July 2006
Jefferson County History for All

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PRESERVATIONISTS STRIVE TO PROTECT HISTORIC SITES

Two major efforts are underway by non-profit groups established specifically to preserve and protect portions of Jefferson County's rich heritage. The Shepherdstown Battlefield Preservation Association (SBPA) is working to prevent the development and preserve the historic fabric of a 300 acre site near Trough Road. Across the county, Friends of Happy Retreat (FOHR), Inc., is leading a similar effort to establish the historic home of Charles Washington, founder of Charles Town, as a National Center for History and Culture.

Shepherdstown
Battlefield Preservation,
by Ed Dunleavy,
President, SBPA.

The site of one of the most important Civil War battles fought in West Virginia is once again under siege. A significant part of the site of the September 1862 Battle of Shepherdstown is threatened by a proposed 152 home

development on 122 acres of the original site. The battle is not well-known simply because it began one day after the Battle of Antietam, the single bloodiest day in U.S. military history. The Battle of Shepherdstown occurred over 600 acres near Boteler's Ford, involved almost 9000 troops, and resulted in 640 casualties. It was the last battle of the Maryland Campaign, which is generally regarded as the turning point of the Civil War. It is also significant because it resulted in a change in direction for the Army of Northern Virginia and a change in leadership of the Army of the Potomac.

In October 2004, neighbors in a rural section of Jefferson County, West Virginia, about 1 mile east of Shepherdstown, were shocked by a sign announcing the application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to build a dense residential development at Faraway Farm. Long term residents of the area remembered that a similar proposal was denied more than ten years earlier. The neighbors met to discuss the situation and begin a process that hopefully would preserve the core of the

battlefield. Shortly after, the Shepherdstown Battlefield Preservation Association LLC was formed and eventually mounted a two pronged attack: 1) Stop the proposed real estate development and 2) Protect the battlefield site from future incursions.. SBPA opposed the proposed development based solely on its size before the County's Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) and in Circuit Court. In August, 2005, the BZA denied the developer's request for a Conditional Use Permit because the development greatly exceeded the density of the rural neighborhood. However, the developer filed a petition with the Circuit Court asking for a reversal of the BZA decision. SBPA has filed a petition opposing that petition.

Concurrently, SBPA focused on preserving the site and the historic nature of the farm. E-mails and letters expressing support for SBPA were submitted by the Civil War Preservation Trust, the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program, the Superintendent of Antietam National Park and James McPherson, historian and Pulitzer Prize winning
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From the President's Desk
By Bill Drennen

The debate has been engaged in the JCHS Board Meetings: is the Arts and Humanities Alliance a suitable partner for collaboration? We adopted a resolution at the strategic retreat that identified collaborations with other groups as an important component of our mission,, but how do we go about it. Ask the membership? It is your society, after all. What would you like to see us do besides have a picnic and two speakers and publish a book and four newsletters every year or so? Our largest crowd since I have been a member attended John Cuthbert's November talk about early art and artists in West Virginia. Two additional lectures on the subject drew even larger audiences in the spring. AHA shared the expense of the reception and the promotion of the events. It worked for both of us. Why not keep it going?

At the retreat last October we decided that our mission was to present Jefferson County history to as large an audience as possible. We have established this newsletter, created a web site, have begun to collaborate with the elementary and middle schools, and will publish two books this year. We have been working with the Charles Town Library and Museum to provide resources for their patrons and link them to our web site. Board members have

been active in the development of Friends of Happy Retreat in its effort to acquire the manse and grounds, developing a County-wide Cultural Resources Survey, supporting the George Washington Heritage Trail, and initiating an effort to gain wider recognition for the "Washington Family Cultural Landscape."

All of this is a lot of work, and so far we have done it all with volunteers. By working with other groups and sharing our information and promotional capabilities, by combining our resources to deliver Jefferson County's history *and culture*, and by scheduling events more effectively, maybe the JCHS can help Jefferson County and West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle become the attractive Gateway and Economic Force it obviously should be. Join In!

Upcoming Events

Summer Picnic August 9th
by Betsy Wells

This year's picnic will begin at 5:30 pm on **August 9th**, the **second Wednesday** in August, rather than on the first Wednesday, due to a scheduling conflict with the Jefferson County Farm Bureau/Chamber of Commerce Picnic. It will be held at Millbrook, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Morrow, Jr and located at 1517 Billmyer Mill Road, west of Shepherdstown. Members should bring a covered dish with serving utensils and their own

special beverages. If you would like to bring guests or prospective members, please bring an extra food contribution and perhaps a completed membership application. Magnolia Tree Catering will again provide fried chicken, barbeque, lemonade, plates and tableware.

Charles Town Heritage Festival, By Bob O'Connor

This year's Charles Town Heritage Festival, from 21 to 24 September, promises to provide much more actual heritage than it has in the past. A strong committee has been formed to provide experiences to all that tap the rich history of Charles Town, including:

- The recreation of "The Anvil", a two act play based on the trial of John Brown. This presentation, written in the 1960s, will be performed in the Jefferson County Courthouse, the actual site of the trial.
 - Breakfast with General Washington. This Saturday morning event will feature pancakes from a 1700s recipe General Washington said was his favorite meal. The George Washington re-enactor is the only one allowed to portray George Washington at Mt. Vernon.
 - A Taste of West Virginia, held at Happy Retreat, and featuring the best chefs of West
- (Continued on Page 3)

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Virginia offering tastings of their finest culinary offerings. This event, held on Friday night, will include a silent auction and will be a fund raiser for Friends of Happy Retreat's efforts to purchase the historic property.

- Reenactment of the meeting between Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Phil Sheridan at the Rutherford House (now the Carriage Inn) in 1864 prior to Sheridan's Shenandoah Campaign.
- Revolutionary War and Civil War period games for the children.
- Revolutionary and Civil War musical entertainment
- Farmers Market on Saturday downtown
- Heritage tours of Happy Retreat, the old jail, Jefferson County Courthouse and other historic buildings.
- Antique Appraisal Fair at Old Charles Town Library and Jefferson County Museum

Applications are now available for artists and craft person to participate in a two-day arts and crafts fair in the streets downtown on Saturday and Sunday. Business contributions are especially important to insure a variety of events at the festival. Historical Society members are encouraged to volunteer as tour guides and in other support roles.

The event is being held the very same weekend as

the 31st Annual Mountain Heritage Arts and Crafts Festival at Sam Michael's Park, with the blessings of the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce. When people leave their event, the question is always asked whether there is anything else worth going to before they head back home. This year the answer is "yes—go directly to the Charles Town Heritage Festival!"

For more information please call Bob O'Connor: days at 304.535.2627; evenings at 304.725.6211.

(SBPA....continued from Page 1)

author. The West Virginia Division of Culture and History visited the site twice and found that with all the landscape factors taken into consideration, the site has retained sufficient physical integrity necessary to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

A resolution supporting the preservation of the battlefield site has been signed by the Eastern Panhandle(WV) Legislative Caucus, the 18th Quad State (MD,PA,VA,WV) Legislative Conference, the Historic Shepherdstown Commission, the Jefferson County Historical Society, the Town Council of Shepherdstown, Kanawha Valley Civil War Roundtable, the Jefferson County Commission and the Historic Landmarks Commission.

SBPA has focused on preserving the location of the heaviest fighting, about 300

acres near the Potomac River and west of Trough Road. So far, Conservation Easements have been obtained on about 87 acres and SBPA is working with the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, which is attempting to purchase 13 acres of the battlefield site. An additional 18 acres cannot be developed due to size restrictions.

SBPA has also been working with the offices of Senator Robert C. Byrd and Congresswoman Shelley Moore- Capito to establish a National Civil War Battlefield Park. SBPA has about 100 members and has expended more than \$40,000 to date on our preservation efforts. More details are available on the SBPA website, www.battleofshepherdstown.org.



Since the April 06 *Guardian* article on the formation of Friends of Happy Retreat Inc, the organization has established a Board of Directors and working committees, elected officers, and conducted a strategic planning workshop which generated vision and mission statements and initiated efforts to develop organizational and programmatic goals and objectives. The mission **(Continued on Page 4)**

statement summarizes these as: FOHR's mission is to acquire, preserve and promote Happy Retreat as a National Resource For Public Enjoyment and Education.

A web site was developed, <http://www.happyretreat.org>, which provides detailed information about FOHR's efforts and the ways in which it is seeking support from individuals, corporations, foundations, and granting agencies.

FOHR recently received a \$10,000 donation from Charles Town Races and Slots and City National Bank initiated a bank challenge to other local financial institutions with a donation of \$1000. FOHR also enacted a purchase option with the owners of Happy Retreat, Mr. and Mrs. William Gavin, which gives the organization until February 28th, 2007 to raise the \$2.5M purchase price. The Compass Group Inc, from Aldie Virginia, has been hired to direct the capital campaign to raise funds needed to acquire and operate the property.

Historic Shepherdstown
by Mary C. Lehman

Historic Shepherdstown is an active non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Shepherdstown's architectural character and educating the public about Shepherdstown's distinctive history.

Its focus in the 1970s was restoration of the Entler

Hotel. Its focus since then has broadened. In 1986 the expansion and updating of the National Register for Historic Places listing for the Shepherdstown Historic District was completed.

A Shepherdstown walking tour brochure contains a history of the Town and area and gives a brief history of each of the 51 stops on the tour.

For the past several years *Historic Shepherdstown* has presented a series of oral history programs to the public. Each of the programs has been recorded and *Historic Shepherdstown* is having these recordings transcribed.

The oral history programs that involved African Americans such as Clifford Branson, Myrtle Stubbs, Dorothy Grantham, Genevieve Monroe and Newton Washington are unique and extremely valuable, since much of that community's history has never been recorded.

Historic Shepherdstown has nominated three individuals to the West Virginia's History Hero Award which is presented to those individuals who have worked by volunteering their time to preserve the history of their area. Dr. James C. Price, Jo Ann Knode and Betty Snyder Lowe have all been recognized by the Governor with this prestigious award.

In recent years, *Historic Shepherdstown* has offered several educational programs to the community, including: national standards for historic preservation;

restoration and care of textiles and historic papers; and lectures by experts on Rickard Locks and Sheetz rifles.

In 2006 *Historic Shepherdstown* strives to educate the public about the unique history of Shepherdstown and to continue to preserve the historic nature of the town.

Complementing these efforts, the historic Shepherdstown Museum was founded in 1983 to preserve and display local artifacts, furniture, and historic documents. The first floor of the museum contains old Entler guest registers, two spectacular Jacob Craft clocks made in Shepherdstown, examples of Weis pottery made on the northwest corner of Duke and German Streets, and an exhibit about the history of the Shepherdstown riverfront. The upper floors contain local artifacts such as Sheetz rifles, a Conrad Shindler kettle, a 1905 mail wagon from the first rural mail delivery in the County, American Indian tools, and Civil War artifacts and exhibits. Anyone interested in doing research in the museum archives may make an appointment with the curator. The museum is open April through October on Saturdays from 11-5 and Sundays from 1-4.

Admission is free but donations are gratefully accepted. Contact the museum at 304.876.0910 and visit the web site at <http://www.historicshepherdstown.com/museum.html>

The Museum Corner
Ruffin's Pike
By Jim Glymph



On December 2, 1859, Edmund Ruffin, one of Virginia's leading agricultural reformers, stood in the ranks with the Virginia Military Institute cadets on Rebecca Hunter's farm outside Charles Town, Virginia. He had borrowed a cadet's overcoat, so that he could be a first-hand witness to John Brown's execution. At age 65, Ruffin was one of the leading pro-slavery, pro-secession men in the United States. Less than two years later, legend has it that he fired one of the first shots on Fort Sumter propelling the Nation into four years of war. Earlier, the abolitionist John Brown, a catalyst for war himself, had acquired 1000 pikes from Charles Blair of Canton, Connecticut. His purpose

was to arm the slaves who would flock to him at Harpers Ferry. Of course, as we know, it never happened. After the execution, Ruffin had a pike sent to each governor of the slave holding states. Attached to each pike was a note stating: "Sample of the favor designed for the Southern people by their Northern brethren." The pike in the picture is one of those sent. As you can see, Ruffin's note is still attached to the staff, although the name of the state to which it was sent has been lost. The pike is one of three in the Jefferson County Museum, 200 East Washington Street, Charles Town, WV 25414, <http://jeffctywvmuseum.org>

JCHS Education Programs
by Doug Perks

For the 5th year in a row, the Society provided financial support for two programs that help Jefferson County students learn more about the county's rich history.

"Burr Farm Heritage Days" provides 4th grade students

with a valuable perspective on the origins of Jefferson County and on the themes that would later produce the state of West Virginia. The Peter Burr Living History Farm seeks to restore the site to its late-18th century condition and to use it as a vehicle for heritage education. Students take part in activities that are designed to give young people a realistic view of farm life in early Jefferson County.

"Prepared for Success" introduces 8th grade students enrolled in West Virginia Studies classes to the history of Storer College. Founded in 1867, Storer College, an integrated school designed primarily to educate former slaves but open to students of all races and both genders, provided an education to generations of African American students until it closed in 1955. The program is held on the grounds of Storer College and students participate in activities that provide insights into Storer student life.

Join the Jefferson County Historical Society Today!!

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail Address _____

_____ Annual Membership (\$15)

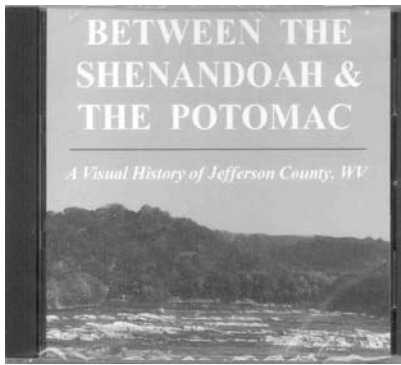
_____ Life Membership (\$150)

Mail checks to: Membership Secretary

Jefferson County Historical Society

P. O. Box 485, Charles Town, WV 25414

Already a member? Mail next year's dues after January 1st



The Society produced the VHS videotape, "**Between the Shenandoah and the Potomac**," a number of years ago. It is a visual history of Jefferson County. The same production is now available in DVD. It can be purchased at area locations for \$9.95. See below for mail ordering



Publications of the Society

Annual Report: One copy of the Society's "Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society," which typically contains several articles about local historical places, people, and events, is mailed to each member household. Original volumes or facsimile reproductions of current and past magazines are available to all persons for \$7 a copy. Until the publication of next year's magazine, members may purchase additional copies for \$6 each. Other publications include:

The Washington Homes of Jefferson County. \$10 mailed.

Calendar and Index to Recorded Plats in Jefferson County, WV (VA) Courthouse, 1801-1901. by Michael D. Thompson, \$25 mailed.

Between the Shenandoah and Potomac: Historic Homes of Jefferson County, WV. Hard-bound book: \$49.95 plus shipping and handling; VHS Video Tape: \$25 mailed; DVD: \$14 Mailed

Burials in Jefferson County, West Virginia, 1978-97. \$18 mailed.

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