



# THE GUARDIAN

Newsletter of the Jefferson County WV Historical Society    Volume VI Issue 2    April 08

## Spring Membership Meeting Held April 5th

The 2008 Spring Meeting of the Society was held on April 5th in

the community room at the Olde Charles Town Library. The outstanding leadership of four past officers in the Society was recognized by naming them Emeritus Officers: Mrs. John P. Creamer, Jr.; Mrs. Florence Moore; and Mr. Roger Perry and Dr. John Stealey III, shown below with Carmen Creamer.



Following a "State of the Society" report by President Carmen Creamer, Society officer elections were held and all incumbents were re-elected for a one year term:

- President.....Carmen Creamer
- Vice-President.....Jim Gibson
- Treasurer.....Barbara Gibson
- Recording Secretary.....Doug Perks
- Corresponding Secretary.....Betsy Wells
- Curator.....Hugh Voress

The program portion of the meeting featured a presentation on the Washington Family Legacy National Park initiative by Society member Kit McGinnis of the National Park Trust. As reported in earlier editions of the Guardian, this effort seeks to preserve at least four of the Washington Family

Homes in Jefferson County by incorporating them into the National Park Service (NPS). The four are the Bullskin Plantation, now known as Rock Hall; Claymont Court, Blakeley and Happy Retreat.

Ms. McGinnis summarized the status of efforts to obtain federal legislation to authorize and fund an NPS suitability/feasibility study, one of the first steps in the process of creating any national park unit.

The proposal has been endorsed by nineteen local organizations and government entities, as well as the West Virginia Historic Preservation Office in Charleston. Other state and national organizations are also considering expressions of support, which would not only preserve four "national treasures" but also enhance economic development in the Eastern Panhandle by expanding heritage tourism.

## Society Donates Proceeds to Free Clinic

On March 7th, 2008, President Carmen Creamer presented a donation of \$1,700 to Michele Goldman, Director of the Eastern Panhandle Free Clinic. The money is the Society's share of profits resulting from sales "*The Big Yellow House*," a conversational history book depicting life and the initiation of modern medicine in Charles Town and the surrounding area in the early 1900's. The book was published jointly by the Society, American Public University and the Jefferson Health Care Foundation. The Society's Board voted to make the donation in order to pass along the profits to the medical community. To read more about or to buy the book, visit [www.jeffmem.com/book01.htm](http://www.jeffmem.com/book01.htm).



According to Ms. Goldman, the donation came at an opportune time, because the number of low-income residents who obtained health care at the clinic has risen dramatically within the past year, and the clinic is in need of additional funds to continue to serve the community.

The clinic will host an open house on April 28th for federal and state legislators to discuss problems of treating the uninsured with clinic staff, many of whom are volunteers. To find out more about the clinic or to volunteer, call (304) 724-6091 or visit the clinic's web site at [www.easternpanhandlefreeclinic.com](http://www.easternpanhandlefreeclinic.com)

### Decorative Arts Trust Visits County

The Decorative Arts Trust is a non-profit national organization in Philadelphia PA, comprised of collectors, museum professionals, and others who share an interest in the study and preservation of the decorative arts through an exchange of information, lectures and seminars.

On Thursday, March 27th, 60 members of the Trust visited Jefferson County to tour Piedmont, Harewood, and Happy Retreat before returning to Alexandria, VA for a weekend of lectures and tours at Mount Vernon. Walter Washington, Matt Webster, and other members of the Society led portions of the tour, explaining the architecture and history of the homes and the ongoing effort to incorporate several Washington homes into the National Park Service.

Many members of the Trust were interested in learning more about the Park initiative and several expressed considerable surprise upon learning of George Washington's and his family's rich heritage in the Shenandoah Valley. It appears that even today, what we here in the county often take for granted as a rich and vibrant county history remains, much like General Washington's "Lost Plantation", relatively unknown to the world at large.

### Frank W. Buckles - "Last Man Standing"



On February 1st, Frank W. Buckles, past president of the Society, and the last known surviving United States World War I veteran, observed his 107th birthday at his home at Gap View

Farm near Charles Town. Joining the US Army at age 16, he served two years in England and France, working as an ambulance driver and escort. After Armistice Day, he was assigned to a prisoner-of-war escort company. Later in life, while working for a shipping company, he was unfortunate enough to be in Manila during the Japanese invasion of the Philippines. Interred in a prison camp for over three years, he endured starvation and deprivation before being rescued by American and Australian troops in 1945, hours before the prisoners were to be annihilated.

On March 6th, Mr. Buckles was honored by President Bush at the White House and later attended a ceremony at the Pentagon for the dedication of the WWI Veterans portrait exhibit, which showcases Frank and eight other veterans who fought in the war. To view a video of Mr.



Buckles' meeting with the President, please visit <http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/03/07/war.veteran/#cnnSTCVideo>.

According to his daughter Susannah, a Society board member, Mr. Buckles is a busy man these days, hosting visitors from around the world who wish to chat with him and honor his contributions to his county. Feel free to visit or leave a message at Frank's web site: [www.frankbuckles.org](http://www.frankbuckles.org).

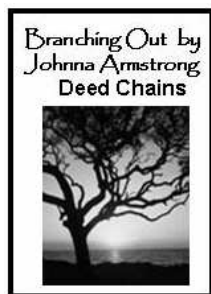
### Aglionby Family Member Visits County

On March 28th, Sue Collins, Curator of the Jefferson County Museum, and three JCHS Board members hosted a lunch with Julia Aglionby, from Cumbria, Great Britain. Ms. Aglionby, who was visiting Francis and Jill Daniel at Greystone with her husband and two children, gifted the Society with a recently published book on the History of the Aglionby Family from 1130 to 2002. Ms. Aglionby's great grandfather, Charles Aglionby,

was the son of John Yates, who sailed from Cumbria to Virginia in 1792 to inherit from his bachelor uncle. He was 13 and went off with a goat and a manservant. John's mother was an Aglionby and due to a lack of male heirs in England, Charles ended up inheriting, hence changing his name. Charles is buried at Zion Church in Charles Town. Also attending the lunch were Susannah Buckles Flanagan and her husband Mike, who are now living with Susannah's father, Frank, at Gap View Farm, which was once owned by the Aglionby family.

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In an ongoing effort to improve communications please **e-mail** [info@jeffersonhistoricalwv.org](mailto:info@jeffersonhistoricalwv.org) using subject "My Email Address" to give us your address.



**Deed Chains.** In hindsight, I don't know why an obsessive genealogist like me would undertake doing a deed chain, or chain of title as it's also called. Oh sure, it seems like a terrific idea, creating a timeline of ownership for your house, so you can learn a little something about the people who lived there before you, or find out who the resident ghost is, or know whom to blame for that unfortunate kitchen renovation. In my case, I want to research the chain of title for my development, which I know used to be a farm owned by a family that lived here for at least 250 years. I'm not quite sure when they sold the property, or why they left, and that's what I want to find out.

Doing the research itself is easy – you look at the deed to your house to find out where the deed of the previous owners was recorded; it will look something like Book 539, page 272. You look up that deed, and note the reference for the next deed in the chain, and so on, until you get back to the original owners. The deeds contain all kinds of interesting information, how the owners are related, where they lived before they bought the property, and in some cases, how the property was obtained, if it was not through purchase.

Our County Clerk's Office has a nice Records Room, and the staff members have been unfailingly kind and helpful when I've been there. The hours are 9-5 M-T and 9-7 F. (304) 728-3215. You can make copies of the deeds, but they are not cheap: the cost is \$1.50 for the first two pages, and \$1.00 for each copy thereafter, and the charge is by document. If you have one, I recommend bringing your digital camera. I can

photograph an entire page of the big books in one shot, and when I pull up the image on my computer monitor, it's larger than life and easy to read.

You can obtain an enormous amount of information about previous owners in a very short time. In my first foray of an hour and a half, I got back through 9 owners. Sometime in the 1960s, two parcels of land were purchased to create my development, so from that point on, my chain split into two and I had to follow them both, but even that was straightforward. It was after I got home that I began to realize my folly; my obsessive nature would not allow me to rest until all of these people had been researched, and my family is already complaining that our own genealogy gets shortchanged by all my "pet projects".

What to do if you don't own your home? You still may be able to do a deed chain by searching for the owners name in the Jefferson County Property Tax database, located online at: <http://65.210.94.133:8003/>. Most of the entries will give you a deed book and page number to get started with. The County Clerk's office also has Index books that may help.

If you want to see some terrific examples of deed chains online, look no further than across the Potomac River, Sharpsburg has done some amazing research, which you can view at: <http://david.hackley.googlepages.com/sharpsburghistory>.



*[Editor's Note: We have initiated a feature column on local history entitled **Mr. Jefferson's County**. Written by Doug Perks, Assistant Curator of the Jefferson County Museum and an active historian and educator in the County, we hope it gives you an appreciation for the rich heritage of Jefferson County, and that you will enjoy Doug's march through the pages of time, beginning with the earliest European settlement in the Valley of Virginia. CM]*

**Who Owned The Valley?** Over the years there have been a variety of spellings for the physical features in Jefferson County. For the purposes of this article I have chosen to use the spelling from the 1755 Frye-Jefferson map (2nd Edition). All physical features are written in Italics.

Settlement in what will become Jefferson County, Virginia, started in earnest in the early

1730s. Although there is some evidence that there may have been settlers along Elk Branch and elsewhere prior to that time the first official land grants were not made until 1734 when the Hites Smiths, Shepherds, Worthingtons, Morgans, and VanMeters, began to make their homes on the land between the Shennando and Cohongoronto.

Acquiring property west of the Blue Ridge and south of the Cohongoronto River was complicated by the fact that both the colony of Virginia and Thomas, 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Fairfax, each claimed ownership of the land.

Fairfax's claim was based on his inheritance of the land through his mother's family, the Culpepers. In 1660 following the restoration of England's King Charles II to the throne, the Culpepers and several other families, allies of Charles II, were rewarded with a land grant in the Virginia colony. Eventually the Culpepers acquired the property of the other families. Their Northern Neck proprietary in Virginia included all of the lands between the Patowmack River on the north and the Rappahanock River on the south. Therein lies the rub.

Virginia Lieutenant Governor William Gooch (lieutenant governor from 1727-1747) was very aggressive in encouraging settlement of the western region of Virginia. Settlement west of the Blue Ridge meant the potential of increased revenue for the colony. In addition the settlers west of the mountains would provide a buffer between the tidewater region and the American Indians who resided in the trans-mountain region.

There were several opinions as to how the extent of the Fairfax Northern Neck Proprietary should be defined. One opinion was that the western boundary should be drawn along the fall line, which is between the Great Falls on the Patowmack River and the falls at Fredericksburg on the Rappahanock River. Another theory suggested that the western boundary of the proprietary should be described by a line drawn between the points established at the juncture of the major tributaries of each river.

Gooch subscribed to the latter opinion. He believed that the Patowmack River began at the gap in The Blue Ridge called The Hole (present-day Harpers Ferry) formed by the juncture of two tributaries - the Cohongoronto River traveling from the west to the east and the Shennando River traveling from the south to the north.

The major tributary of the Rappahanock River was The Rapid Anne River which joined the Rappahanock River northwest of Fredericksburg. If the western boundary of the Fairfax proprietary was formed by a line drawn between the points

established by the juncture of the major tributaries of the Patowmack River and the Rappahanock River, the colony of Virginia would control all of the territory west of The Blue Ridge.

For obvious reasons, Fairfax disagreed. Fairfax contended that the western boundary of his Northern Neck proprietary was determined by a line drawn between the source of the Patowmack River and the Rappahanock River, not a line drawn between the juncture of the major tributaries of those rivers.

Fairfax came to Virginia in 1735 to get a first hand look at his landholdings. After his travels west of the Blue Ridge, two things were abundantly clear to him. First, he recognized the quality of the land in The Valley of the Shennando, and that its value would be worth the argument to have it included in the Northern Neck Proprietary. Second, Fairfax recognized that the colonial governor would not agree with his opinion regarding the establishment of the western boundary. In 1737 Fairfax returned to England to get an official opinion.

After listening to Fairfax's debate, the Privy Council determined in 1745 that the western boundary of the Northern Neck proprietary would be a surveyed line that connected the headspring of the Conway River, a tributary of the Rappahanock River, to the headspring of the Cohongoronto River, a tributary of the Patowmack River.

Fairfax returned to Virginia in 1746 with the decision of the Privy Council in hand. Following the orders of the Privy Council two survey teams, one representing Fairfax and the other the Virginia colony, were created to locate the headsprings and survey the western boundary - a 75 mile long line connecting the source of the Patowmack River to the source of the Rappahanock River.

In September, 1746, a company of "Gentlemen Commissioners", including William and George Fairfax (representing Lord Fairfax) and a surveying party led by Robert Brooks and Peter Jefferson (representing the interests of the Virginia colony) and Thomas Lewis who represented Fairfax, set out to locate the headspring of the Patowmack River and thus finally establish the western boundary. On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1746 the party located the source of the Patowmack River and marked its location with a stone inscribed with the letters "F - X."

Once the western boundary of the Northern Neck proprietary was defined, Fairfax established his permanent home at Greenway Court near White Post in what is today Clarke County, Virginia. From his new home Fairfax, who was the only permanent

resident peer in the English colonies, set about to administer the rent and sale of the land in his Northern Neck proprietary.

Although the issue of the western boundary of the proprietary was finally settled, there were other legal issues involving the Northern Neck that were argued into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In a lawsuit that lasted almost 40 years, Fairfax disputed the legality of Joist Hite's holdings in The Valley. After appeal Hite's claim was upheld in 1802 well after the deaths of both Hite and Fairfax.

The final chapter of the Northern Neck proprietary was not written until after the Revolutionary War. During the war, Fairfax and his family remained loyalists. After Fairfax's death in 1781, the proprietary passed to his family. At the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, the new state of Virginia began proceedings to acquire the land of the proprietary that had not been granted. This effectively brought an end to the Fairfax family's ownership of land between the Patowmack and Rappahanock Rivers.

The Museum Corner  
by Susan Collins  
The Soldier's Gift

In the aftermath of the raid on Harpers Ferry, anxiety spread throughout Charles Town and the surrounding countryside. John Brown and his captured followers were behind bars in the Charles Town jail, but nevertheless, rumors of attempts to rescue Brown were rife in the community.

These rumors were not without foundation. As more facts came to light about Brown and the extensive conspiracy behind the raid, Colonel J. Lucius Davis contacted Governor Wise and successfully requested additional support for the protection of Charles Town and the county. Following this decision, volunteer companies poured into Charles Town and set up temporary quarters in the town and surrounding areas.

For the officers, these hasty improvisations were made more pleasant by the generosity of local families. Southern hospitality rose to the occasion, resulting in many lasting friendships.

With the execution of Brown and his supporters, life gradually returned to normal. Charles Town's defenders returned to their various homes and expressions of gratitude were sent to their kind hosts.

One such gift can be seen in the Museum. It is a handsome English "table cabinet" made of gilded and painted papier mache, decorated with floral designs and inlaid mother-of-pearl on a black background.

Papier mache was first used in France during the seventeenth century. It was developed and patented in Britain where it became immensely popular, being used to make decorative boxes and even furniture.

Standing 13-1/2 inches high and 12-1/2 wide, this cabinet was intended to be carried from room to room as needed, and placed on a table. Raising the top reveals a fully equipped sewing box, lined with royal-blue silk. Pin cushions, scissors, tape measure, needle case and mother-of-pearl spindles designed to hold sewing silks are all neatly fitted into separate compartments. Every article is exquisitely decorated, even the tiny scissors and tape measure and molded images of dogs and birds.

Below the sewing compartment are two doors. Behind them are five drawers, each bearing a single flower-shaped pull. The first drawer is designed to hold jewelry, while the bottom drawer contains a miniature writing slope with two ink wells and a covered pen box, topped with a mother-of-pearl knob. Sheets of writing paper and tiny envelopes fill the remaining drawers.

The cabinet is in excellent condition, the paint colors as fresh as the day they were painted. It was presented to Miss Sallie Brown by the Richmond Grays in 1860 and donated to the Museum in 1984 by Mr. and Mr. John Alfriend, in memory of Miss Lucy Ambler, in whose family the cabinet descended.



New Book by JCHS's Bob O'Connor

Jefferson County Historical Society member Bob O'Connor has just published his third historical novel. "Catesby: Eyewitness to the Civil War" is a chronicle of the journey of Catesby, one of Colonel Lewis Washington's slaves at Beall Air, as he struggled to become a free man. The book is available at [www.boboconnorbooks.com](http://www.boboconnorbooks.com) or at the Jefferson County Visitors Centers in Harpers Ferry and Charles Town.

Help keep the Society's publications' costs down!! Due to the increasing demand for back issues of the Society's Magazine, we may need to reprint several issues. Therefore, we would appreciate your returning any back issues you no longer need to Doug Perks at the Jefferson County Museum. Thanks!

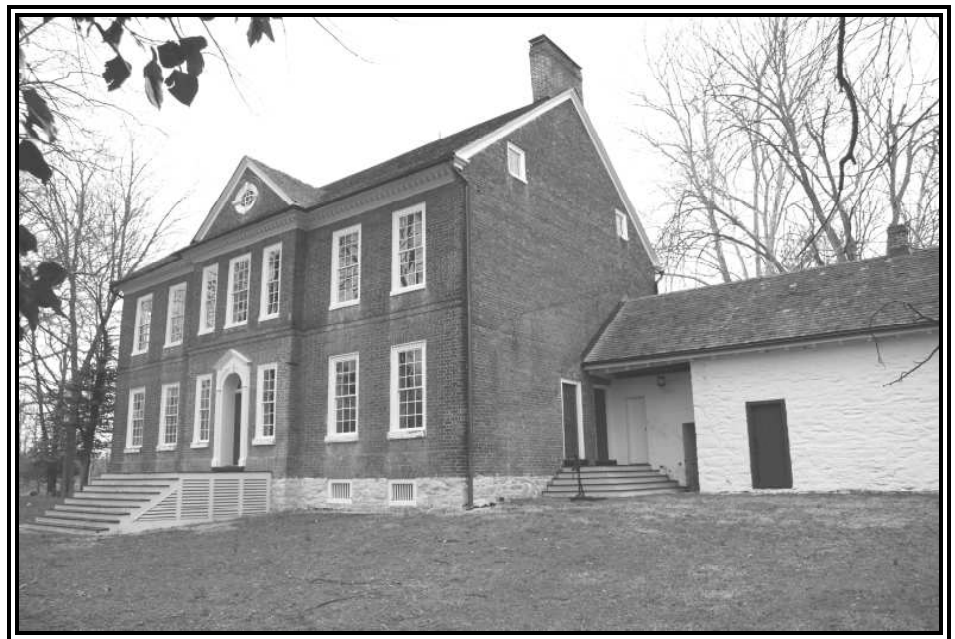


THEN and NOW

PIEDMONT

(ca 1735 & 1780)

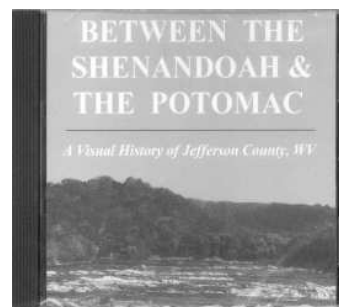
**PIEDMONT IN THE 1930'S (Historic American Buildings Survey Photo)**



**PIEDMONT IN 2008**

Piedmont was established by Robert Worthington in 1735. He constructed the stone wing (shown on the right side of the lower photograph) and called the property Quarry Banks, after his ancestral English home. The brick manse was built by Dr. John Briscoe in about 1780 and for the next 200 years generations of Briscoes lived at Piedmont until the last owner, Miss Louise Briscoe, died in 1979. Now owned by Mr. Jim Lehrer, its stately Georgian style and peaceful setting amid the willows and oaks of Evitts Run clearly evoke the words of Caskie Norvell, writing in the Society's 1953 magazine: "you cannot but reflect that the aura of the Old South lingers over Piedmont." Indeed!

**JCHS PUBLICATIONS**  
**FREE SHIPPING ON ALL ORDERS**



Publications of the Society and our partners are available for purchase by mail or on our web site, which also includes brief descriptions of each of the following products. (<http://jeffersonhistoricalwv.org/thestore.html>)

- ***“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. 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***
- ***Between the Shenandoah and Potomac: Historic Homes of Jefferson County. Hard-bound \$50***
- ***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 the 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 (Prices include postage)**

- ***West Virginia Encyclopedia.*** A new "must have" reference book loaded with information. **\$45**
- ***Military Operations in Jefferson County--An annotated 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 bodyguard, 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 and consider how different history might be if Lamon had been at his post. **\$16**

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