



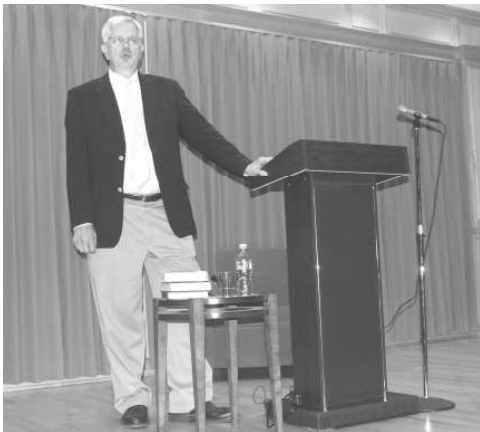
# THE GUARDIAN

Newsletter of the Jefferson County WV Historical Society    Volume VI Issue 3    July 2008

## SUMMER PICNIC TO BE HELD AT MOUNT ELLEN

5:30 to Dusk, August 6  
3427 Summit Point Road,  
Hosts: Yves and Giulia Tencalla  
(see details on Page 7)

## George Washington Lecture



On April 19th, Dr. Philander Chase, Editor Emeritus of the George Washington Papers at the University of Virginia, visited Jefferson County to present a lecture on George Washington's experiences as a Shenandoah Valley surveyor and landowner in what is now our county and how those experiences fostered his commitment to western development and American nationalism. Much of his lecture was drawn from his essay "A Stake in the West: George Washington as Backcountry Surveyor and Landholder," published in Warren R. Hofstra, ed., *George Washington and the Virginia Backcountry* (Madison, WI: Madison House Publishers, 1998). The formal portion of the lecture was followed by a spirited question and answer session on many aspects of Washington's life.

The lecture was sponsored by the Society, Friends of Happy Retreat, and the George Washington Institute of Living Ethics, and hosted by the Byrd Center for Legislative Studies at Shepherd University.

## Mount Vernon Director and Regent Visit Washington Family Homes

On June 15, 2008, James Rees, Executive Director of Mount Vernon, and Lucia Henderson, a Mount Vernon Ladies Association regent, visited the four Washington Family Legacy homes. They met with Kit McGinnis and others from the National Park Trust and Walter Washington and Curt Mason, from Friends of Happy Retreat, to learn more about local efforts to preserve the homes and explore the potential for partnership efforts.

## Historic Landmarks Commission Awards

On April 16, 2008, the Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission presented its first annual historic preservation awards in the three categories described below to a county institution and a number of its citizens for their efforts to celebrate and preserve historic resources in the community.

**Landmark Preservation Award.** This award is presented to persons, groups, or businesses that have worked to preserve a landmark building or significant historic site in Jefferson County.

- **American Public University** helped to



revitalize downtown Charles Town – but not at the expense of historic townscape. APU's thoughtful and respectful restoration

and reuse of the historic buildings along Congress and George Streets has been exemplary.

- **Curt Mason & Suzette Kimball**, owners of White House Farm in Summit Point, not only restored the 250+ year old, badly damaged, stone springhouse and barn, but sensitively restored and renovated the historic house and grounds. They have also shared their farm with groups and individuals seeking to experience our local history.
- **Oscar & Janet Stine** have lived at Elmwood for more than 50 years and over that time the family has done a magnificent job maintaining the 18<sup>th</sup> century house, ten historic outbuildings, and the Lucas family cemetery. Perhaps even more importantly, Elmwood has been maintained and will be preserved as a working farm. In Jefferson County it is the preservation of the agricultural landscape that many believe is our most cherished accomplishment.

**Historian Award.** This award is presented to deserving persons who have contributed greatly to the study and understanding of the history of Jefferson County, bringing history alive for many of us through their writings and ensuring that future generations will also have the opportunity to



understand and appreciate our heritage.

- **Betty Lowe** has written volumes about the people of Jefferson and Berkeley Counties. Her momentous work, "Folks of Swan Pond," brings alive that border community in a way that would make most historians envious.

- **James Taylor**, a life-long preservationist, is a founding member of the Black History Preservation Society, and was the driving force behind the collection and dissemination of six publications devoted to the long ignored African American history of Jefferson County, which has reestablished the link to the past for so many of our fellow citizens
- **Don Wood's** life mission has been to celebrate the history of the Eastern Panhandle. With his encyclopedic knowledge of local history and countless articles, architectural surveys, property histories, genealogies, and books, he has connected many county residents with our local history, many others who live farther away with their ancestors, and in the end made all of us grateful beneficiaries of his noble efforts.

**Therault Award.** This award is presented to persons or groups that have donated their time and expertise to the preservation and/or interpretation of Jefferson County's historic sites. It was named in honor of Bill Therault, whose countless hours of service to his community in researching, writing, and interpreting the County's history have enriched the community in many ways.



- **Ed Dunleavy.** After establishing the Shepherdstown Battlefield Preservation Association four years ago, Ed and his wife Carol have educated the people of Jefferson County about the history and importance of the Battle of Shepherdstown as they spent countless hours working to save the endangered battlefield.

- **George Rutherford** has devoted many years to celebrating the rich African American history of Jefferson County. He is a founding member of the Jefferson County Black History Preservation Society and has lead efforts to restore the Webb-Blessing House in Charles Town.
- **Irvan Groff** has been a tireless volunteer at the Peter Burr farm, where he has done everything from fix equipment and mow grass to appearing in period costume for school children.

**Note: Branching Out, Johnna Armstrong's genealogy column will return in the next issue.**



#### How Did They Get Here?

Regardless of what you may hear from the “national media,” today it’s pretty easy to get to Mr. Jefferson’s County. In 1970, the population of Jefferson

County was 21,280. The estimate of our population in 2004 was 47,663. According to the way my 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher Miss Katie Boxwell taught mathematics, that difference of 26,383 folks corresponds to an increase of 125%. This represents the greatest population boost for any three-decade period in our county’s History – so evidently we’re not too hard to find!

Driving on the roads of today we can hop into our horseless carriage and in a matter of minutes drive past (not park!) the National Mall in our Nation’s Capitol. Just a few more minutes will take us to the capitol cities of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The trip to Charleston, West Virginia takes longer, but that’s another story!

When settlement began in the lands west of the Blue Ridge mountains, access to the Shenandoah Valley was limited. The Valley is nestled between a mountain range and two rivers. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the two rivers would form a vital part of the foundation of economic prosperity for Valley people providing both transportation and power.

But in the early 1700s, the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers were barriers to settlement. Solitary hunters and “mountain men” traveled on foot or horseback carrying their belongings in a single bag draped around their shoulder. They could wade across the river at many points. But early

settlers had families and carried their households in carts and wagons – they needed an easier way to get into the Valley.

Most early settlers migrated from colonies to the north of the Valley. Virginia Lieutenant Governor William Gooch (lieutenant governor, 1727-1747) was very aggressive in encouraging settlement in the western region of Virginia. Settlement west of The Blue Ridge meant the potential of increased revenue for the colony. In addition the settlers would provide a buffer between the tidewater region and the American Indians residing in the frontier west of the mountain. Lured south by the availability of cheaper land, the migration of settlers through the colonies of Pennsylvania and Maryland began in earnest in the 1730s. For them the Potomac River would be the last obstacle blocking entry into the Valley. Using the savvy required of backcountry travelers, they looked for crossings that already existed.

In our neck of the woods, the oldest river crossing on the Potomac was Pack Horse Ford. Pack Horse Ford, so named for obvious reasons, is situated about one mile to the east and downstream from present-day Shepherdstown. For centuries animals that lived in the Valley used this ford and created a well-worn path while moving back and forth across the Potomac. The Catawba’s, the Delaware’s and the Tuscarora’s all used the ford when they came into or left the Valley that created a branch of the famous “Warriors Path.” Early settlers found this path to Pack Horse Ford and they used it to cross the Potomac.

There were several fords on the Shenandoah River used by settlers moving into the Valley from eastern Virginia. After crossing the Blue Ridge through one of two gaps – Keyes Gap (originally called Vestal’s Gap) near where present-day Route 9 crosses from Virginia into West Virginia, or Wilson’s Gap (first called Gregory’s Gap then Larue’s Gap) approximately 2 ½ miles north of the border between Jefferson County and Clarke County, Virginia – the new residents wound down mountain trails to the banks of the Shenandoah.

Just to the west of Keyes Gap was Keyes Ford located 3/8 mile upstream from the mouth of Cattail Run. Further south you could cross the Shenandoah at either Myers Ford (first called Vestal’s Ford then Rocky Ford) or Rock Ford. Myers Ford was just

south of present-day Avon Bend subdivision. Rock Ford was at the mouth of Long Marsh.

With an increase in the number of settlers came the need for a more efficient method of river crossing. The answer was a ferryboat that could accommodate carts and wagons, and provide a safe and dry trip across the mighty Potomac and the beautiful Shenandoah. Enterprising men who owned property that was near both mountain gaps and the rivers constructed flat-bottomed transportation and for a fee began carrying people across the river to the bountiful land in the Valley.

According to tradition one of the earliest ferries was operated by German immigrant Peter Stephens at "The Hole" in the Blue Ridge at present-day Harpers Ferry. Operation of a ferry there may have started as early as 1733 or as late as 1736. Again according to tradition, Robert Harper passed through "The Hole" on his way to Winchester in 1747, liked what he saw and purchased "squatter's rights" from Stephens and continued to operate the ferry. Harper eventually legitimized his claim with Lord Fairfax. Thankfully, after Harper assumed ownership, the confluence of the Potomac and the Shenandoah became known as "Shenandoah Falls at Robert Harper's Ferry" – later Harper's Ferry and then just plain Harpers Ferry.

Upstream from Harpers Ferry there were at least two ferries by the mid-1760s. Moses Teague operated a ferry on the Potomac that carried settlers near where present-day Knott Road (SSR 31/2) reaches the Potomac shore just downstream from Knott Island. At Shepherdstown, the Virginia General Assembly in 1755 granted permission to Thomas Swearingen to operate a ferry. Swearingen's Ferry was located near what is today known as *Bellevue*. After the Virginia General Assembly granted a town charter for Mecklenburg in 1762, Thomas Shepherd requested a ferry permit that was granted in 1765. However, Shepherd's permit was rescinded as unnecessary in 1766 because Swearingen's ferry permit was already in place. The ferry operation moved downstream to the foot of Princess Street where it functioned until the construction of a bridge in 1849 by the Virginia-Maryland Bridge Company.

Gersham Keyes and his family operated Keyes Ferry on the Shenandoah very near the mouth of Cattail Run. As first a young surveyor and then a landowner in the Valley, George Washington was familiar with the ferry operated by the Vestals. In the spring of 1754 Washington used the ferry to move Virginia troops across the Shenandoah. Due to Washington's familiarity with our region, the ferry was put to use once again in the summer of 1755 by

Col. Sir Peter Halkett to move his 44th Regiment of foot soldiers on its way to join British Maj. Gen. Edward Braddock at Winchester in their ill-fated expedition to capture Fort Duquesne.

Once settlers had migrated through the passes and then navigated the rivers, established roads began to appear. Not surprisingly our earliest roads are situated near early fords and ferries. From these access points, the rule of thumb was first to get to the seat of government. From 1743 until 1772 we were a part of Frederick County and Frederick Town (Winchester after 1750) was the county seat. In 1772 Berkeley County was formed from the northern half of Frederick County and Martinsburg became the new county seat. In order to pay taxes, record deeds, and settle legal disputes you had to be able to get to the seat of government. Roads to those locations began to appear.

Other factors that decided where roads would be laid out were the location of gristmills and where you could find a church. Once the Virginia General Assembly authorized landowners to lay out and build a road, other social and commercial ventures popped up along these roads to meet the needs of a growing settlement. Soon taverns and livery stables, blacksmith shops and general stores began to appear along these new roads at roughly the distance that could be traveled in one half day.

One of our earliest north-south roads was the *Philadelphia Waggon Road* that traveled southwest from Pack Horse Ford on its way to Winchester. The *Alexandria to Warm Springs Road* came into our county through Keye's Gap, crossed the Shenandoah near Cattail Run and then made its way west to the healing waters at Bath (now Berkeley Springs). The *Warm Springs Road* connected Mecklenburg (then Shepherd's Town now Shepherdstown) to Bath.

*Jost Hite's Road* connected Pack Horse Ford with Winchester. Duffields, Charlestown and Summit Point grew up along this road to provide services to weary travelers and eventually developed into villages.

As time progressed and more people settled here, other roads were laid out and the old roads were improved. A turnpike would connect Shepherdstown to Kearneysville to Leetown to Smithfield (now Middleway). The Harpers Ferry-Charlestown-Smithfield Turnpike would connect farmers to vital railroad and canal links.

Today as we drive along in air-conditioned comfort on paved roads, it's very easy for us to overlook the tremendous effort that it took carve a

civilized society out of the untamed Valley. The next time you have to slow down to a snail's pace to round a curve on a "back road," say a silent "Thank You" to all of the men and women who overcame the odds to create a place where we, like those who came before us, "...fell in love with the countryside and the life."

Thanks to Eric Lewis

Recently Eric Lewis, a CPA with Ours, Lawyer, and Lewis Company, volunteered his time to work with our treasurer, Barbara Gibson, to reconcile and bring up to date the Society's financial records using Quick Books. Many thanks to Mr. Lewis for his assistance in this important effort and for his continuing assistance on an as-needed basis.

The Museum Corner  
By Jim Glymph  
General Craighill's Epaulets

William Price Craighill was born in Charles Town on July 1, 1833. As a young man, he attended the Charles Town Academy. He graduated from West Point in 1853 ranking second in his class. Civil War generals Phil Sheridan, John Bell Hood and George McPherson were a few of his classmates. After graduation, one of his projects was the construction of Fort Sumter in South Carolina. When the Civil War started, he chose to remain loyal to the Union with the stipulation that he would not raise arms against Virginia. During the war, he worked on the defenses of Pittsburgh, Baltimore, New York and San Francisco. He also published "Army Officer's Pocket Companion: A Manual for Staff Officers in the Field."

After the war, the mostly former-Confederate population of Charles Town did not appreciate his loyalty to the Union, but his career continued. Craighill was the superintendent for the construction of defenses at Baltimore Harbor and Hampton Roads.

As head of the Engineer Office in Baltimore from 1870 to 1895, he supervised river and harbor work in Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina. As a brigadier general, he was appointed Chief of Engineers by President Cleveland in 1895.

In 1897, he retired and returned to Charles Town where he died on January 18, 1909. He is buried in Zion Episcopal Church Cemetery.

His epaulets, worn as brigadier general of Engineers, are part of the Jefferson County Museum collection. They are in a fitted "Japanned" case and were purchased from F. J. Heiberger in Washington, D.C. Each epaulet has an embroidered silver star, a silver engineer castle, a gold staff officer's button and gold spiral fringe. Come see them at 200 South Washington Street, Charles Town, WV. Website: [JeffCtyWVMuseum.org](http://JeffCtyWVMuseum.org).



Colonel Craighill's Epaulets

Washington Family Homes Tour  
to be held in September 2008

Friends of Happy Retreat (FOHR) is a non-profit organization whose goal is to purchase the home of Charles Town's founder, Charles Washington, and preserve it for the enjoyment of county residents and visitors alike. To raise funds for continuing its operations, FOHR will host a tour of four of the eight Washington Family homes: Happy Retreat, Harewood, Cedar Lawn, and Beallair. Visitors will be able to tour the grounds and enter each house for a peek at several rooms within these Jefferson County historical landmarks. Docents will be present to describe the furnishings and architecture, as well as to inform visitors of relevant genealogical information or historic events associated with the properties. Tickets to visit all the homes are \$20 in advance or \$25 on the day of the tour (\$8 per single home) and may be ordered in advance by sending a check or money order (payable to Friends of Happy Retreat) to Friends of Happy Retreat, PO Box

1427, Charles Town, WV 25414. Include your name, address, phone number, and email address with your check and **be sure to mail by September 5th.**



**Happy Retreat** was built by Charles Washington, General Washington's youngest brother, who was also raised at Ferry Farm in Fredericksburg, VA. Charles and his wife Mildred moved to Happy Retreat in 1780. When they moved to the home, it consisted of two one-and-one-half story structures, separated by either an open area or a breezeway. In 1786, Charles convinced the Virginia General Assembly to authorize the founding of a new town to be called Charlestown. He laid out 80 acres of his land to be sold in one half acre lots. He participated in laying out the town, and named many of the streets after members of his family. He also set aside four corner lots at the center of town to be given to the city once a new county was formed with Charles Town as the county seat. After Charles' death in 1799, the house passed through several owners until bought by Judge Isaac Douglas in 1837, who built the striking center section that now connects the original wings, which he also extensively renovated. Happy Retreat, owned by Mr. and Mrs. William Gavin since 1968, consists of the manor house, two historic outbuildings, and 12+ acres of woods and lawns.



**Harewood** was the home of George's brother Samuel, who moved to the house with his wife and children in

the fall of 1770. The central section of Harewood and the kitchen wing are original to 1770. A north wing in the same style was added in 1960. Harewood's parlor, which was the site of the 1794 wedding of Dolley Payne Todd and President-to-be James Madison, still boasts the original paint. At the time of his death, Samuel owned some 3,800 acres of land in the county, and his descendants subsequently built several homes near Harewood. It is the only Washington home in Jefferson County still owned by a member of the Washington family.



**Cedar Lawn** is perhaps the grandest of the estates built by Samuel's descendents on portions of the original Harewood property. Samuel's oldest son Thornton was about twenty-three when Samuel died. He had already built a large log and plank home in the area of Cedar Lawn, and named it Berry Hill in honor of his wife, Mildred Berry. The present mansion was built in 1825 by Thornton's son, John Thornton Augustine Washington. John and his wife Elizabeth Conrad Bedinger had thirteen children, three of whom are buried beside their parents in the family plot at Harewood. Cedar Lawn was sold to John R. Flagg in 1855, and to Robert Earl in 1866. Today it is owned by the Funkhouser family, which has owned and restored several of the Washington homes in Jefferson County.



**Beallair.** The original portion of Beallair was built by Thomas Beall of Georgetown in the late 1700's. Thomas

Beall willed the property to his daughter Eliza and her husband, George Corbin Washington, one of George Washington's grand-nephews. Their son, Lewis Washington, moved to the Beallair property in 1840 and added the tall, formal front portion of the house a few years later. Lewis played prominently in the events of the John Brown raid in 1859. On the night of Sunday, October 16th, John Brown sent a group of armed men to Beallair to kidnap Lewis. Taken hostage, he was transported in his own carriage to the firehouse at Harpers Ferry, where John Brown and his men laid siege, and where they were arrested two days later. Of particular interest to Brown were Lewis Washington's heirlooms, which included a sword that had been given to George Washington by Frederick the Great. This sword was taken when Lewis was captured and given to John Brown, who wore it for the duration of the siege. Lewis Washington was remembered for his coolness and nonchalance as he left the firehouse. Governor Wise conferred the title of Colonel on Lewis Washington for his exemplary conduct during this incident.

**Then and Now: Mount Ellen  
Site of the 2008 Summer Picnic  
Wednesday, August 6**

As described in the Society's *Between the Shenandoah and the Potomac, Historic Homes of Jefferson County, West Virginia*, the land along Summit Point Road on which Mount Ellen stands in Summit Point was purchased in 1787 from Dr. John McCormick's family by Abraham Davenport. He gave it to his son, John, who subsequently built this substantial brick home on the property.

The Davenports sold the property in 1832 and since then it has had several owners. During the Civil War, Mount Ellen was used as a hospital for Federal soldiers. To minimize the mud brought into the operating room, the Federals laid bricks obtained from the ruins of a nearby church in the yard around it. A subsequent owner paid his eight year old son to dig up the bricks so the lawn could be restored to its pre-war condition. Original woodwork, still intact, includes door and window frames, chair rails, floor boards, a handsome staircase extending to the attic, and a spacious kitchen at the rear.

Mount Ellen is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Yves Tencalla, who recently restored the interior of the home and added a new wing at the northwest corner. Two former slave cabins, moved to the 10-acre property some time ago, were also restored by the Tencallas. An old blacksmith's shop which may also have been moved to the property sits between the cabins and the house. See next page for a comparison of how Mount Ellen looked between the early 1860's and 2008.



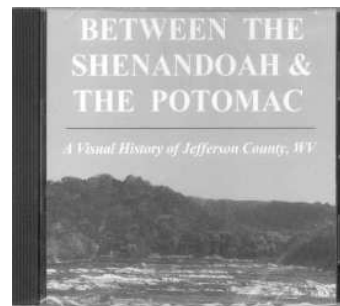
**MOUNT ELLEN during the Civil War (Sketch from the James Taylor Sketchbook)**



**Mount Ellen in 2008**



**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**

Please mail a check with your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address to: The Guardian, Attention Publications, PO Box 485, Charles Town, WV 25414. Or order and pay online at:

<http://www.jeffersonhistoricalwv.org/thestore.html>

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