



# Shenandoah County Historical Society

Summer 2017

# Newsletter

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## Preservation Awards Presented at Annual Meeting



Woodstock Brewing Company

Shenandoah County  
Library

Corhaven Graveyard

## New Board Members Elected

At the Annual Meeting on May 16th, the membership elected Marjorie Hisey Tackett and Rick Lytton to fill the Board positions previously held by the late Diane Ferguson and Andy Thayer. President, Barbara Adamson presented Andy with a Certificate of Appreciation and also spoke of the many contributions Diane Ferguson made to the Society over the years.

Immediately following the meeting, the Board held a brief meeting and elected the following officers to lead the Society for the coming year: President: Barbara Adamson, Vice-President: Janet Wagniere; Secretary: Ellen Markel and Treasurer: C.F. Wagniere.

## Shenandoah County Fair Celebrates 100 Years

The Shenandoah County Fair turns 100 years old this year and SCHS is taking part in special exhibits, partnering with the Woodstock Museum and Shenandoah County Library archivist, Zach Hottel. The theme is 100 Years Old: 10 Decades of Life in Shenandoah County. During Fair week, August 25 – September 2, a photographic history of the Fair will be located under the historic grandstands. Monday, August 28, has been designated as History Day. Exhibits will be in the activities tent during daylight hours. Through the History Council, recently created by Zach, we are drawing on county museums and individuals to bring objects for display that reflect life in Shenandoah County from 1917 through today. Some themes include textiles/quilts, business/industry, farming, cars, railroad, entertainment and the military.

The Shenandoah County Historical Society presented three "Excellence in Historic Preservation" Awards at its annual meeting and banquet on May 16 at the historic Edinburg Mill. The preservation awards program seeks to recognize outstanding preservation projects in the fields of history, architecture, scenic beauty, and material culture. These annual awards are intended to bring public recognition to these achievements and in so doing encourage others to follow their examples, bringing greater awareness of the value of historic preservation.

The 2017 Awards were presented by Committee Chair Leigh Devier to:

The Shenandoah County Library, Zachary Hottel, and Dallas Moore for the creation and development of Shenandoah Stories, a public web platform showcasing the history of specific sites in Shenandoah County.

Corhaven Graveyard for the preservation of the burial ground for enslaved African Americans of the former Edgehill Plantation in Quicksburg, Va. Accepting the award were Sarah Kohrs, Tara Haley, and Bill Haley.

The Woodstock Brewing Company for the preservation and rehabilitation of the original Casey Jones Factory in Woodstock, Va. Accepting the award were Travis Cooper and Karl Roulston.

Congratulations to all!

## Fort Valley Museum Exhibit opens at Historic Courthouse

Beginning Thursday, July 6th, a new exhibit by the Fort Valley Museum will open in the Visitor Center at the Historic Courthouse in Woodstock. It will continue until November 1st.

### New Members

- Jonathan Rinker
- Dan & Sue Harshman
- Bob & Suzanne Artz McIlwee
- New Market Area Library Society
- Bonnie Painter
- Bill & Tara Haley

### Life Members

- Phyllis Deene

## September 19th Program Meeting To Feature Native People

JMU professor and Valley resident, Carole Nash will speak about Native People of the early contact period in the Valley -- of the time frame of A.D. 1500-1750. C.

The free program will be at 7 PM at the St. Paul's Heritage Center in Edinburg.



This Newsletter can  
be sent to you  
electronically.  
Many photos will  
appear in color, and  
it saves postage!  
Notify us at:  
schs.va@gmail.com

*The Shenandoah County  
Historical Society, Inc.*

is a

501 (c)(3) non-profit  
organization.

*President: Barbara Adamson*

*Vice-Pres: Janet Wagniere*

*Secretary: Ellen Markel*

*Treasurer: C.F. Wagniere*

*Board Members:*

*John Adamson*

*Bruce Alger*

*Dennis Atwood*

*Karen Cooper*

*Anne Dellinger*

*Rick Lytton*

*Margie Hisey Tackett*

*Meg Trott*

*Dr. Charles Wood*

*Newsletter Editor:*  
*Janet Wagniere*

## Kerchival describes "Longhunters" unique attire

[In the period just prior to the Revolutionary War, hunters from the Shenandoah Valley went west into the mountains to harvest animal pelts, especially deerskins, and to trade with Native Americans. These hunters, with their longrifles became known as "longhunters" and were rugged individuals, skilled in mountain survival and expert marksmen. During the French & Indian War, Dunmore's War, and the American Revolution, they formed militia units whose skill with the longrifle became legendary. Samuel Kerchival described their unique clothing in *A History of the Valley of Virginia*, published in 1833.]

On the frontiers and particularly amongst those who were much in the habit of hunting, and going on scouts and campaigns, the dress of the men was partly Indian and partly that of civilized nations.

The hunting shirt was universally worn. This was a kind of loose frock, reaching half way down the thighs, with large sleeves, open before, and so wide as to lap over a foot or more when belted. The cape was large, and sometimes handsomely fringed with a raveled piece of cloth of a different color from that of the hunting shirt itself. The bosom of this dress served as a wallet to hold a chunk of bread,

cakes, jerk, tow for wiping the barrel of the rifle, or any other necessary for the hunter or warrior. The belt, which was always tied behind, answered for several purposes besides that of holding the dress together. In cold weather, the mittens, and sometimes the bullet-bag, occupied the front part of it; to the right side was suspended the tomahawk, and to the left the scalping knife in its leathern sheath. The hunting shirt was generally made of linsey, sometimes of coarse linen, and a few of dressed deer skins. These last were very cold and uncomfortable in wet weather. The shirt and jacket were of the common fashion. A pair of drawers or

breeches, and leggings, were the dress of the thighs and legs. A pair of moccasins answered for the feet much better than shoes. These were made of dressed deer skin. They were mostly made of a single piece, with a gathering seam along the top of the foot, and another or a little higher. Flaps were left on each side to reach some distance up the legs. These were nicely adapted to the ankles and lower part of the legs by thongs of deer skin, so that no dust, gravel or snow could get within the moccasin.

The moccasins in ordinary use cost but a few hours' labor to make them. This was done by an instrument denominated a moccasin awl, which was made of the back spring of an old clasp knife. The awl, with its buckhorn handle, was an appendage of every shot-pouch strap, together with a roll of buck-skin for mending the moccasins. This was the labor of almost every evening. They were sewed together and patched with deer skin thongs, or whangs as they were commonly called.

In cold weather the moccasins were well stuffed with deer's hair or dried leaves, so as to keep the feet comfortably warm; but in wet weather it was usually said that wearing them was "a decent way of going bare-footed;" and such was the fact, owing to the spongy texture of the leather of which they were made.

Owing to this defective covering of the feet, more than to any other circumstance, the greater number of our hunters and warriors were afflicted with rheumatism in their limbs. Of this disease they were all apprehensive in wet or cold weather, and therefore always slept with their feet to the fire to prevent or cure it as well as they could. This practice unquestionably had a very salutary effect, and prevented many of them from becoming confirmed cripples in early life.

[Article selected by John Adamson.]

## Message from the President

The SCHS annual dinner is an occasion that always reminds me of how much the Society accomplishes, year after year, and how many generous volunteers it takes to succeed. In addition, the annual Excellence in Preservation Awards, announced at the dinner, are a reminder of the many people throughout Shenandoah County who care deeply about our history, work to keep it alive and help to preserve our material culture, architecture and scenic beauty. All of this was on display at the Edinburg Mill at the May 16 dinner.

At the annual meeting I was delighted to welcome two new board members, Marjorie Hisey Tackett and Rick Lytton, whom you read about in the last newsletter. We look forward to having Margie and Rick join the board.

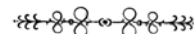
I offer my thanks to SCHS board members, historic courthouse volunteers, and members who help out with special projects and events, as well as members of the community who participate in events such as Heritage Day, sharing a myriad of aspects of our history with the public. I also thank our loyal members who attend our quarterly meetings, are gracious and appreciative to our many speakers, and who make our socializing after the meetings such a pleasure. We're glad you're enjoying yourselves and want to stay!

I expected to be offering thanks to retiring board member, Andy Thayer, in this letter. Andy joined the board in 2011, after having been a Morrison Project volunteer, but a busy life has made him decide that it's time to step down. We very much appreciate his service to SCHS over the years.

However, I did not expect to be acknowledging the untimely passing of board member and past treasurer, Diane Lowe Ferguson, who had also decided to leave the board this year. Diane and her partner, Patrick Murphy, also a faithful SCHS volunteer, felt it was time for them to make some changes. Sadly, after a brief illness, Diane died May 9. She leaves behind Patrick, sons Jim and Reed and their families, and many friends. Diane embraced Shenandoah County history, was a longtime Morrison project volunteer, and had a passion for her own Pennsylvania family heritage. After years of research, she was thrilled to have published her family history in 2016. Coincidentally, Hope Rhodes Voyten, a native of New Market and SCHS treasurer who was succeeded by Diane, passed away in Harrisonburg in April.

Elsewhere in this newsletter is an announcement of the 2017 Excellence in Preservation Awards selections.

[Continued on Page 6]





## From the County Archives

By Zach Hottel,  
Archivist

### New Collections

Most every day I am surprised at the wonderful collections that come to be a part of our archives. However, over the past few months some of our new acquisitions are so special they are worthy of mention in this article.

The first of these is our **Bird Haven Oral History Collection**. For those who might not be familiar with the Bird Haven site, it was founded in the early 1920s as an industrial site designed to employ the economically disadvantaged individuals of the Orkney/Basye area. The company manufactured toys and small furniture out of wood and sold them internationally until it closed in the 1960s.

Recently we partnered with the current owners of the site and James Madison University's Public History Program to complete an oral history project designed to collect information about Bird Haven. Students interviewed 14 individuals who had been Bird Haven employees, neighbors, or relatives of workers. All provide rich insight into what it was like to work there and to live in the community. Visit <http://archives.countylib.org/collections/show/8> to listen to these interviews or read their transcriptions.

The second recent addition to the Archives is our **Shenandoah County Fair Digital Collection**. Donated by the Northern Virginia Daily after the completion of their recent book on the Shenandoah County Fair, this online collection contains over 300 scanned photographs, pieces of fair memorabilia, and newspaper articles detailing this history of that event. There are plenty of images showing livestock, exhibits, rides, games, and even the famous "girlie shows." Visit <http://archives.countylib.org/collections/show/7> to view these images.

A third recent addition is our **MacKenzie Grimes Collection**. Though not as large as other collections, what's inside its two boxes is extremely unique. Donated by descendants of the Miley family of Toms Brook and the Miller family of Woodstock, this collection contains hundreds of photographs of those two locations. Especially important are images of Toms Brook from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century showing the industrial area near the railroad, the construction of the railroad covered bridge, and much more. One donated album also shows previously unseen images of the "black district" in Woodstock which enhances our understanding of that segregated area. These photographs can be viewed in person at the library. →



## Museum of Shenandoah Valley Offers Wednesday Specials

It was recently announced that the Museum, in Winchester, will remain open until 8:00 PM every Wednesday from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

In addition, the MSV will offer extended **free-admission** every Wednesday from 10:00 AM until 8 pm. The MSV gardens, exhibitions, and Glen Burnie House will all be open and garden picnics are encouraged. Wednesday's free-admission program is made possible by the generous support of corporate partner Howard Shockey & Sons.

## Belle Grove's 50th Anniversary Celebration

The formal dedication of Belle Grove as a museum was on August 13, 1967.

2017 marks the 50th anniversary of Belle Grove Plantation being open as a historic house museum. The property was a bequest to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1964 by Francis Welles Hunnewell of Wellesley, Massachusetts. Mr. Hunnewell had been a frequent guest when Belle Grove was operated by J. Herbert Brumback in the 1920s and he purchased the property from the Brumback family in 1929.

This year, on Sunday, August 13 from 1:00 to 5:00 PM Belle Grove will be open, free of charge, for ice cream, cake, and behind-the-scenes tours. You are invited to attend for the celebration!

The final major addition is the **Liberty Iron Furnace Collection**. Opened in 1812, Liberty Furnace produced iron for over 100 years and grew into one of the largest furnaces in the area. When it closed for good in 1915, it employed several hundred workers and was connected to Edinburg by the Dinky Railroad. For over a year we have been working to process a large collection of materials placed on long term loan by an anonymous donor. It contains approximately 25 boxes of ledgers, correspondence, and other paper artifacts from the companies that operated Liberty, and Columbia Furnaces from approximately 1870 until 1915. All items should be available at the library by July 1<sup>st</sup>. An additional collection of blueprints and technical manuals is still unprocessed.

All four of these amazing new additions, and the hundreds of other items contained within our collection, help us better understand what life was, and is like, in Shenandoah County. We invite you to stop by and view these today and, if you are interested, make a donation of historic materials.

## Program Meeting

Tuesday, September 19th  
7:00 PM

### St. Paul's Heritage Center

106 S. High Street  
Edinburg VA

#### Program:

Native People of the Early Valley  
By  
Carole Nash

## Historic Buildings Series Now on Web Site

Nine of the historic homes featured in past newsletters are now on the SCHS web site. Click on either the Resources or History tab to access the series. [www.schs1795.com](http://www.schs1795.com)



## SCHS FINANCIAL STATEMENT

At the 5/31/17 end of the fiscal year, the Treasurer reported a total of \$65,592.53 in the SCHS accounts.

### ATTENTION

#### ARE YOUR DUES DUE??

The date beside the name on your mailing label is the month and year your membership is due. We appreciate your staying current.

A new shorter web site address: [www.SCHS1795.com](http://www.SCHS1795.com)

✦ Continuing Series on Historic Buildings in Shenandoah County ✦

# WIERMAN HOUSE, MOORE'S STORE, SHENANDOAH COUNTY

By: John Adamson

"As buildings age, they become a part of the landscape and are integrated with our collective memory. They ground us, not only to the earth, but to the story of time." - Michael Watkinson, restoration builder.

Inspired by his experiences working on old Valley buildings, Michael Watkinson presented a captivating program at the SCHS annual dinner in May. During his presentation, he told a personal story of his inspiration to shape a career in the restoration construction trade. Through a series of unplanned events, Michael became the owner of a mid-19th century home in Moore's Store with family connections. The neglected house called to Michael for the care it needed. Already an experienced builder, he was drawn into a career-defining relationship that specializes in old buildings.

As I listened to his program and learned from Michael's understanding of the craftsmen whose work he now preserves, I wondered about the house that had inspired him so. When I asked if I could see the source of his inspiration, he readily agreed.

The Wierman house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. Set in a clearing along Holman's

Creek, you have to negotiate a long, somewhat bumpy driveway, before the house comes into view. Built in 1859, it looks twenty years older to me. The brick topped stone chimneys and simple center hall two-over-two floor plan are found in many local farm houses built between 1820 and 1840 in Shenandoah County. However, the document trail for this house is very good and demonstrates that Ben Wierman, purchased the property and built his house in 1859. I am never surprised when I learn that something made in Shenandoah County follows traditional design and techniques many years older than the object. Though the basic form of the house appears older, inspection of the interior reveals simple Greek Revival trim and mantles which actually are consistent with a building date of 1859.

The Wierman house is a solidly braced frame two story building resting on a full height chiseled limestone foundation. The house is 20' 2" deep by 32' 11" wide. The ratio of depth to width is an example of the "golden ratio" (1: 1.618). This ratio discovered by ancient Greeks and found frequently in nature suggests a more sophisticated builder than might be expected in Moore's Store in 1859. The unknown builder also demonstrated master carpentry in the curved skirtboard found in the three story staircase and in the fine 9 over 6 double hung windows found on the first floor. The windows are all original and seem to contain their original glass panes. Michael is currently restoring the kitchen window - thus the temporary plywood sheet in the window on the day I visited.

The skillful builder of the Wierman house created a strong frame on an enduring limestone foundation. One of the

stones near the base of the west chimney is calculated to weigh nearly one ton. Imagine the effort to quarry, deliver and place such a stone in a time before the use of powered machinery. Despite many years of neglect, the Wierman house remained in restorable condition when it found itself in Michael's care about 1999. In his annual dinner program for SCHS, Michael noted that some of the best buildings to work on are the ones that have never been harmed by poor renovation.

Originally, the front of the house faced Holman's Creek. The full height basement level can be seen when looking in this direction. At some point in the 20th century, the rear entrance of house was made the main entrance and remains so today. For many years, the owner, Ben Wierman, was the clerk in the general store in the village of Moore's Store. His commute was a two minute walk from his house and over a foot bridge spanning the creek to the store. With the advent of the automobile, villages such as Moore's Store declined and today Michael says "you have to drive at least twenty minutes to get anywhere".

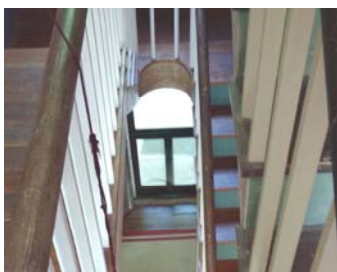
Michael has not finished restoring the Wierman house. The kitchen window has already been mentioned. In addition, Michael is reconstructing an old log cabin



North side, once rear entry, before restoration



North side of house, now restored, and now the main entrance.

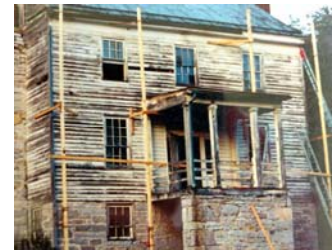


Stairway viewed from top floor



Michael Watkinson at west chimney base. Large stone at his hip level weighs nearly one ton.

The simple and unusual Greek Revival newel at the bottom of the staircase



South side restoration in progress

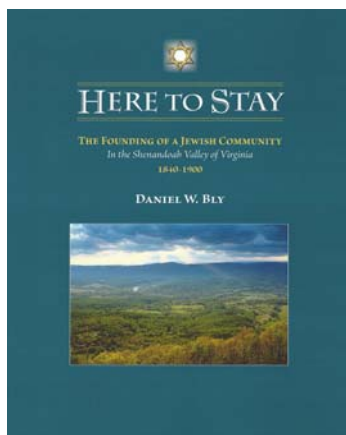


South Side restored. Now rear entrance. Plywood covers kitchen window under restoration



Old log building on Watkinson property being reconstructed for a workshop.

## New Books on SCHS list



By  
Daniel  
Bly

### HERE TO STAY The Founding of a Jewish Community in the Shenandoah Valley

This book by Daniel Bly covers the time period of 1840 to 1900 and addresses questions such as Why did early Jewish settlers choose to settle in Woodstock and Harrisonburg, VA? Why did Harrisonburg become the center of the largest and most active Jewish community in the Valley? What has been the impact and influence of a Jewish presence in the Valley? Few answers are found in the oral traditions and documents of early histories that focus primarily on the establishment of the congregation. This work attempts to identify as many early Jewish immigrants as possible and to learn more about their lives and connections to later arrivals. Index, footnotes and images are included. SCHS price \$20; members, \$19

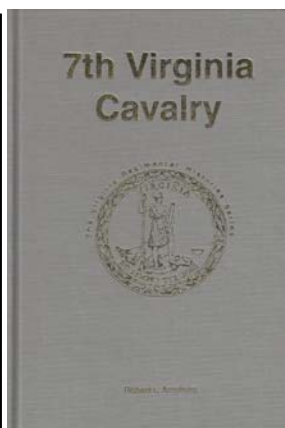
### Wierman House - [Cont. from Page 4]

which will become his workshop. This, in turn will free the basement to be restored for domestic use. Then there is the spring house which has been stabilized but is very much a work in progress. Having personally engaged Michael's firm, Shenandoah Restorations, I know how busy his work schedule is and it is easy to understand that he cannot devote all his work time and effort to his own home. But, I suspect that Michael knows that working on this inspiring old house grounds him in the profession that now defines who he is. He knows it could do him harm to "finish" his work here.

For more on Shenandoah Restorations go to [www.shenandoahrestorations.net](http://www.shenandoahrestorations.net)

### SCHS to be at the Edinburg Ole Time Festival

The Shenandoah County Historical Society will once again be at the annual Ole Time Festival on Sept. 16th & 17th, at their usual spot on Main Street, directly across the street from Sal's Italian Restaurant. There will be a vast array of books for purchase and several albums of Morrison photos to look through. Stop by.



By  
Richard L.  
Armstrong

### 7th Virginia Cavalry

This is one of the books in The Virginia Regimental Histories Series published by H.E. Howard over period from 1982 to 2004. The series provides a history of every Virginia regiment that served in the Civil War. Each one contains a unit history and annotated muster roll including every soldier known to serve with the unit. SCHS price: \$30; members: \$29

### Cavalry in the Valley A Civil War Conference

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation is sponsoring a Civil War Conference on Saturday, August 5th from 9 AM to 4 PM..

During the Civil War, the rise and fall of Confederate and Union cavalry in the Shenandoah Valley echoed the fates and fortunes of the respective armies. The early dominance of Confederate horsemen, which reflected the successes of southern armies, continued almost unabated through the Battle of New Market... but by Fall, 1854, the growing strength of Union cavalry mirrored the rise of Federal power and the waning of Confederate fortunes, culminating in the prominent role that cavalry played in crushing Union victories at the final clashes in the Valley.

This conference, entitled "Like a Thousand Bricks": Cavalry in the Valley, will look back at those events. It will cover colorful characters such as Turner Ashby, John Mosby and George Custer, the pivotal role that cavalry played at battles such as New Market, Third Winchester and Tom's Brook, and the effects on the civilian population.

Speakers will include Eric Buckland, Caroline Janney, Charles Knight, Robert Krick, William Miller, Jonathan Noyalas and Keven Walker.

The cost to attend is \$35 (\$30 for SVBF members) and includes lunch from the Mimslyn Inn.

To register and obtain more information, call 540-740-4545.



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### DO YOU KNOW THEM?

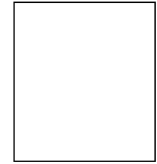
The Shenandoah Room at the County Library in Edinburg, has 58 albums filled with images from the photo files of Hugh Morrison, Jr. Stop in and see if you can find



29027



29094



P.O. Box 506  
Edinburg VA 22824

Phone: 540-459-1795  
E-Mail: SCHS.VA@Gmail.com

### Join the SCHS

Individual: \$10 per year

Family: \$15 per year

Lifetime (Individual): \$200

Lifetime (Family): \$300

Send Fee to address above.

Renewal Date is beside name on  
mailing label →

## Upcoming Events

July 4th - 9 AM to 5 PM

**Celebrate the 4th of July at the Frontier Culture Museum** in Staunton, VA.

This traditional event offers fun and educational activities for the entire family. Featured will be sack races, watermelon seed spitting, pie-eating contests, reading of the Declaration of Independence and more. Admission is to pay what you want, a little, a lot, or nothing at all. The museum is located at 1290 Richmond Road in Staunton VA (right off I-81) For info, call 540-332-78509

July 10 - 14 - all day

**Civil War Day Camp** for boys and girls ages 7 - 12 will be offered at the Virginia Museum of the Civil War, 8895 George Collins Parkway, in New Market. This economical, educational and fun opportunity will focus on a different topic every day. They will find out what Civil War life was like for Confederate and Union soldiers, VMI cadets and civilians on the home front. Play the games they played. Eat the food they ate, Drill like they did, and walk in history's footsteps. The fee for the full week is \$80. or \$20 per day. To register, call 866-515-1864 or visit their site: [www.vmi.edu/newmarket](http://www.vmi.edu/newmarket)

August 19th - 11 AM to 4 PM

**Jacob Bushong's Birthday** will be celebrated at the Museum of the Civil War, 8895 George Collins Parkway in New Market. Mr. Bushong's home stood at the center of the fighting during the Battle of New Market. Explore 19th century traditions and enjoy cake and ice cream, games, music, dancing and lots of fun. Walk in history's footsteps and discover what home life was like during the years before the Civil War rocked the nation.



The Shenandoah County Library is currently conducting a history/genealogy book sale to help support the Shenandoah Room and Truban Archives. Over 1,000 general history, genealogy, and local history books are available. All are gently used but are in wonderful condition. A list of books is available at <http://tinyurl.com/ybpg6bus> and all prices are negotiable. Contact Archivist Zach Hottel at 984-8200 if there is interest in any titles or for any questions.

## President's Message - From Page 2]

I want to thank committee members Anne Dellinger, Jim Stevenson, Nancy Stewart, Kent Womack, and committee chair Leigh Devier for their thoughtful deliberations. As a committee member myself, I know that we had a number of worthy nominees. We were all very pleased with our final selections and the variety of projects they represent.

A recap of the past year must include our quarterly program meetings. They continue to be popular and included Karen Beck-Herzog from the National Park Service, sharing the NPS's 100th Anniversary, author William Miller with his book, Decision at Tom's Brook, and Liz Sollenberger, with her tales of travel to ancestral Germany and some wonderful organ music. Of course, at the annual dinner we enjoyed member Michael Watkinson's presentation Learning From Old Buildings.

We reported earlier that members of the Narrow Passage Chapter DAR had taken on the task of researching names found in the historic courthouse graffiti writings. They've just come back with their findings. At this time, no definitive answers were found, and with too little time for us to digest their research, we'll address this again in the fall newsletter. So tantalizing! Many thanks to them for their hard work.



**MORE EVENTS ON WEB SITE**