



Shenandoah  
County  
Historical  
Society

Winter 2017

# Newsletter

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## New Exhibit Opens at Shenandoah County Historic Courthouse



### *The Shenandoah County Library Shenandoah Room Archives*

Postcards are a favorite object of collectors of memorabilia. They're usually not too expensive and are easy to transport and store. They also tell a story of what interested people in a certain time and place, where they might travel and what they might say to the recipients. Sometimes these early postcards provide images that have real historic significance as well as just being fun.

Shenandoah County Archivist Zachary Hotel has assembled a sample of the large collection of postcards from the library's Truban Archives which is now on exhibit in the Visitor's Center at the Historic Courthouse through February 2017. The Archives was fortunate to have received the gift of many hundreds of historic postcards from the late Herb Parker, which has formed the basis of the Archives impressive collection. Pictured above are two of the postcards in the exhibit.

## Shenandoah County Heritage Day is Saturday, April 8th

SCHS will host the annual Shenandoah County Heritage Day on Saturday, April 8, 2017 to be held from 11am-3pm at the Historic Courthouse in Woodstock. As with every Heritage Day, we invite local museums and preservation groups to attend and bring exhibits about their organizations and local history. We also enjoy having individuals share exhibits about their own family history, history of historic buildings, farms, schools, churches, businesses or other local history related topics.

This year, instead of focusing attention on a particular area of the county, we're spotlighting American involvement in World War I. The United States entered The Great War 100 years ago on April 6, 1917, the conflict ending with Armistice Day on November 11, 1918.

We're hoping that folks will dig into their attics or barns for any WWI era related material and artifacts that might be of interest. This includes items from the home front and life here in Shenandoah County at that time. We encourage anyone who would like to participate with an exhibit, or would like to help prepare an exhibit, to contact us at 540-459-1795 or by email at [schs.va@gmail.com](mailto:schs.va@gmail.com).

## 2017 SCHS Preservation Awards Nominations are invited

In 2014 the Shenandoah County Historical Society established an Excellence in Historic Preservation Awards program to be given at the annual meeting and banquet in May of each year. The purpose of the program is to honor projects within Shenandoah County that deserve recognition for their preservation efforts. By doing so we hope to encourage others to follow the examples of those being recognized. These awards continue an earlier program that had been created by the former Shenandoah Preservation League.

The Excellence in Historic Preservation  
[Continued on Page 5]

### New Members

John & Anne Parks  
Carol Palmer

### Life Members

Michael Watkinson

### ATTENTION

#### ARE YOUR DUES DUE??

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

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



Liz Sollenberger

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

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## Member Spotlight: Liz Sollenberger

Liz Sollenberger would really be in a dilemma if she had to tell you which she loves the most - music or history!

She was born on a farm in Campbell County, VA that had originally been purchased by an ancestor, William Gough, who had saved his money while employed as an overseer at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest.

She holds a Bachelor of Music Education from Madison College (now JMU) and a Masters Degree in Education.

Her music specialty had her teaching music and chorus, as well as language arts and US History, all over Shenandoah County. She was one of the five authors of *The Shenandoah Geography and History Text* for grades 1-12.

Liz has continuously been either a church organist and/or choir director in two different churches since 1962, in addition to weddings, funerals, etc.

The SCHS was fortunate to have her serve on it's Board of Directors for several years. She has also been President of the Woodstock Garden Club and is a member of the Shenandoah Valley Music Festival Guild. She is presently a docent at the Woodstock Museum.

This past summer, she had the surreal experience of visiting the village of her German ancestors of her mother. Once the tour guide discovered she was an organist, she was invited to play the organs of each town that the group visited. The thrill of her life.

### Message from the President

Happy New Year to all. As always, I relish the lengthening days, noticeable even this early in the new year, and giving us hope that long days and warm weather will arrive eventually. I begin by noting the passing of a longtime SCHS member, former board member and newsletter editor, Jeanne Walton. Jeanne appreciated the richness of our local history and understood the importance of historic preservation in general and the value of preserving our physical history in particular. We appreciate all that Jeanne contributed to the Society.

In early December the Historic Courthouse was included in the first Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce Homes Tour, which in 2016 featured homes in Woodstock. I didn't think the courthouse would be much of an added attraction, since we're open on a regular basis. Instead, we had almost one hundred and fifty visitors that day and good book sales as well. What a pleasant surprise that was. Many folks were first time visitors who took advantage of the festive season and good weather to stop by.

Several months ago we inherited a very nice display case. Coincidentally some time back we had been given a small collection of artifacts from the now destroyed Alms House.

[Continued on Page 6]

### Ancestor Search Website Offers Genealogy Help

*Ancestor Search* is a genealogy portal:

([www.searchforancestors.com](http://www.searchforancestors.com))

It's a small portal packed full of good information that everyone needs!

One of the links on the website is 'Tools for Genealogy' which offers: age calculator, cousin calculator, day of the week calculator, Easter Day finder, inflation calculator, metaphone calculator, perpetual calendar, roman numeral converter, and tombstone birthday calculator.

There is also a link to a Julian to Gregorian Calendar Chart which gives a list of countries that made the switch and on what date it became official. It also offers insight to how the transition played out in different areas as well as explains a lot double dating for the overlapping time period.

And, finally, there is a customizable time capsule generator. Enter a date and get the headlines, president and vice president, average income, minimum wage, a few prices (e.g.: a gallon of gasoline, a loaf of bread, a stamp) and items of cultural interest (e.g.: popular books, music, TV, movies, toys).

[Reprinted with permission from the Michigan Genealogical Council Newsletter. Article from the Lenawee County Family Researchers newsletter.]

## SCHS is looking for help on a Research Project

Every time we go into one of the upstairs rooms at the historic courthouse we're reminded, and suffer pangs of guilt, that we have not thoroughly explored the names of possible Civil War soldiers who passed through Shenandoah County, occupied our most iconic building, and left their mark. The presence of writing on the walls of the courthouse has been known since 2007. However it wasn't until 2011 that SCHS arranged to have Christopher Mills of Christopher Mills Conservation Services, LLC conduct a survey and testing to help us determine what we had. Chris did some paint removal in selected areas to discover graffiti and determine its age, and to determine successful paint removal systems. He reported that the graffiti lay underneath nine to eleven layers of paint or limewash. In only a couple of cases have we uncovered enough wall space to have discovered full names.

We are now looking for someone willing to search Civil War records to follow through with the names we have and, hopefully, find out who spent time in our courthouse and wanted to leave a mark of their presence, to be found 150 years later. We have assembled detailed information about what troops passed through the county in 1862 and 1864, the war years when action took place in the Valley. This should be a good starting point for someone who enjoys research and, with so many more resources now available online, make this project a possibility. Is there a member or other interested party out there who would be willing to work on this project? If anyone would like to talk about it, please give us a call us at 540-459-1795.

Shenandoah Room /  
County Archives Exhibit  
now on display at  
Courthouse Visitor Center





## From the County Archives

By Zach Hottel,  
Archivist

### Train Avoids New Market



In 1868 the construction of this structure marked a drastic turn in the fortunes of New Market Virginia. The B&O railroad had bypassed the town and built their new line, and depot, about two miles west of the corporation. This threatened the existence of the community since commerce would quickly shift from the Valley Turnpike to the iron horse, and with it investment, business, and population.

We are not sure why the railway avoided New Market, but most likely it involved money (Woodstock had purchased \$50,000 in stock to ensure its connection). The amount of undeveloped land around the depot would have also been enticing since investors understood new businesses would quickly emerge around the connection.

New Market would struggle with this change for many years. Histories of the community printed during the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century noted it was the town's most challenging years. The amount of traffic on the Valley Pike dropped, travelers no longer moved through town, businesses closed or relocated, and, like many other places, the town was faced with virtual extinction.

However, the town survived. The presence of the Civil War Battlefield, its connection with the Lutheran Church, and the fact that the depot was still close enough to provide some boost, helped New Market remain economically viable until the emergence of the automobile when the center of commerce once again shifted to the Valley Pike. Today, the depot has been demolished and the tracks abandoned because of this shift. How is this change of fortune similar to the one the railroad sparked when it first arrived?



The SCHS web site: [www.shenandoahcountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.shenandoahcountyhistoricalsociety.org)

## Shenandoah County Experiences Earthquake (?) in 1940

[From: *The Shenandoah Herald* newspaper]

**Woodstock, March 27, 1940** – Mystery surrounding a series of earth tremors that shook towns over a 12-mile section of Shenandoah County Monday night and caused considerable anxiety among hundreds of residents, remained the following day, when the Associated Press reported that seismographs (devices for recording such disturbances) at Georgetown, Harvard and Fordham Universities, had failed to show any shocks in this area.

The first tremor occurred at about 9 o'clock Monday night followed by a much more severe one an hour and a half later which was accompanied by an ominous roaring noise. A third was felt just after midnight.

The disturbance appeared to be most severe at Edinburg, where a telephone operator stated that the building in which the exchange is situated shook violently for several seconds. The operator, Mrs. Earl Hollar, said that she thought a heavy van had gone out of control and crashed into the building.

Numerous people in that town who had retired, were awakened when their beds shook and rushed to the street in alarm.

At Woodstock, a large audience which had gone to the local theatre to attend "Gone With the Wind" noticed the most severe shock, but there was little excitement. A large quantity of soot was dislodged and fell down the chimney in the municipal building on W. Court Street.

The tremors were felt as far north as Toms Brook, but the belt of the disturbance seemed to be narrow as there were no reports of any of the shocks being noticed at either Lantz Mills or Camp Roosevelt which are only two miles west and east of Edinburg respectively.

One well informed person who pointed out that he is not a professional geologist, held the opinion that the dropping of a rock strata to a lower level, might produce the tremors and accompanying thunder-like noise without either being recorded on a seismograph or having any surface indication of the disturbance.

Another less technical theory was that possibly some unknown cavern, perhaps as large as some of those commercially developed, might have collapsed in this section which is honeycombed with limestone caves.

Hardly had the heaviest tremor ceased when telephone switchboards were flooded with requests for information. Rumors that there had been a gigantic explosion, possibly at some distance away, were quickly proved erroneous, but many people at first believed that there had been an explosion of some sort in their cellars, while others drained hot water tanks in their homes, fearing

## March Program

Tuesday, March 21st

7:00 PM

### St. Paul's Heritage Center

106 S. High St.  
Edinburg VA

### Liz Sollenberger will tell about the Similarities & Differences Between German And American Cultures With A bit of music thrown in.

She will discuss her memorable visit to the ancestral homes of the first two German settlements in Virginia (1717 & 1719), with the Germanna Foundation of Locust Dale, VA to explore her late mother's heritage. She also played on 20 different church organs.

*Parking Available in Shentel Lot*  
Free, Public is Invited

### Shenandoah Valley Heritage Day at Museum of Shenandoah Valley is on Saturday, March 4th

Presented with Handley Library's Stewart Bell Jr. Archives, this free event includes information tables hosted by historical societies and research organizations and lectures about genealogy research by expert genealogist Charles S. Mason, Jr. At 10:30 a.m., Mason will present "Keeping the Family Secrets!" and discuss how to document family secrets. At 1:30 p.m., Mason will present "Myths, Fairytales, and Stories Grandma Told" and provide guidance to researchers dealing with family stories light on facts.

Heritage Day activities are free to all. Lecture seating is first-come, first-served. Tickets available beginning at 9:30 a.m. MSV admission fee applies to visit the galleries. Museum is at 901 Amherst Street in Winchester. Info: 888-556-5799.

that the rumbling noise indicated a dangerous amount of pressure.

The disturbance recalled a similar one in Woodstock more than 20 years ago which was severe enough to break several windows in widely separated parts of the town.

[Thanks to Dan Smith for bringing this article to our attention.]



✦ Continuing Series on Historic Buildings in Shenandoah County ✦

# STONEBURNER HOUSE – 6059 MAIN STREET, MT. JACKSON

Called the Stoneburner house in the National Register of Historic Places, the log structure at 6059 Main Street in Mt. Jackson is owned today by Suzanne Porter who purchased it about five years ago. I have the good fortune to serve on the Belle Grove Plantation board of directors with Suzie and first visited her house for a Belle Grove fund raising event she hosted earlier this year. When I learned that Suzie lived in the oldest house in Mt. Jackson, I signed up early for her dinner party to be sure to get tickets. Good people, great food, a historic house and support of Belle Grove, all at the same time!

Located on the west side of Route 11, just north of Mill Creek, this house may have been part of the original grist mill complex in Mt. Jackson, which is known to have been in operation as early as 1746, according to the National Register. The original 30 by 24 foot structure is composed of a full height limestone basement topped by a two story log structure. The logs all appear to be yellow pine and are joined with V-notch corners, typical of old log structures in our county. The date on the historic plaque indicates the house was built in 1750. That early date would make this the oldest building in Mt. Jackson and one of the oldest surviving buildings in Shenandoah County. By the standards of those times, this is a very large house and suggests to me that its builder was a prosperous individual, likely associated with the mill and its operation.

Sometime early in its history, the house was extended to the west with a log addition, probably in the early 19th century, but possibly even earlier. In the 1980s, this addition was expanded, reusing old logs, into what I would call a great room. When Suzie purchased the house, it needed an owner who would love it and attend to maintenance and upgrades required for



Large second floor fireplace sharing chimney with first floor double fireplaces

By: John Adamson



Front View - Earliest portion of house



View of Mill Creek from the rear addition



One half of the first floor double fireplace



1st floor dining room with stairs to 2nd floor



View of the south side showing addition constructed of reused logs

21st century living. With her partner, Steve Hatten helping at every step, the work has been done. Though she grew up in California and lived there for years, Suzie has a long association of family visits to Shenandoah County and told me that she always hoped to move here one day if she could find the right place. She said that the location right next to Mill Creek convinced her that she had found the place.

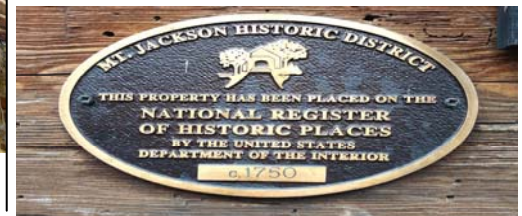
During its long history, the house has had various room configurations, including being divided into small rooms by single panel interior walls, a feature often found in older log homes. The traces of these old walls can be found on the old floorboards in the house. Today, the interior space on the first and second floors is open, providing a sense of spaciousness and light that is very appealing. Original woodwork, most notably log walls, yellow pine floors and exposed oak floor joists reveal the historic fabric of the house.

An outstanding feature is the massive limestone chimney structure that serves two adjacent interior fireplaces on the first floor. Jutting into the first floor space are two back-to-back triangular hearths. These fireplaces once served two separate first floor rooms separated by a single panel wall, now removed. Though I tried, I could not find a way to photograph this unusual configuration that showed it clearly.

Because of Suzie's determination and extensive efforts, the old Stoneburner house is now a most pleasant and historic dwelling. To me, houses that combine visual evidence of their history with gracious modern living are most appealing. Suzie and Steve have succeeded in their efforts to keep the oldest house in Mt. Jackson an inviting residence. It is interesting to note that until 1826, Mt. Jackson was named Mount Pleasant. From Suzie's experience and perspective, maybe the name should have remained unchanged.



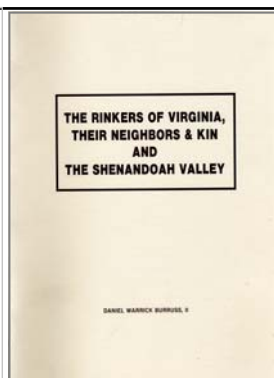
View of the north side showing original log portion and rear extension





## Books Now Available

### The Rinkers of Virginia, Their Neighbors & Kin and The Shenandoah Valley by Daniel Warrick Burruss, II



*The Rinkers of Virginia, Their Neighbors & Kin and The Shenandoah Valley* by Daniel Warrick Burruss, II. This book has been very popular and has been out of stock for over a year. The Shenandoah County Historical Society has recently obtained exclusive permission from the daughter of Mr. Burruss to reprint the original book.

The books are now printed and are in stock at the SCHS area in the Visitor Center at the Shenandoah County Historic Courthouse in Woodstock, Va.

Printing costs have increased since the original publication. The book is now available at \$26 and \$25 for SCHS members.

### Virginia Tech's American Civil War Newspapers

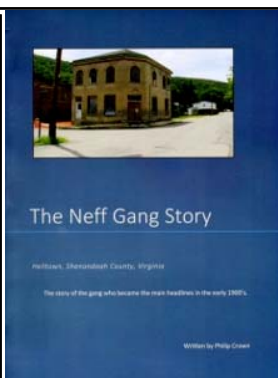
The American Civil War Newspapers website can be a valuable resource for genealogists researching Civil War era ancestors, even those outside of Virginia. The ultimate goal of the American Civil War Newspapers website is to index newspapers from the Civil War era -- Northern and Southern, Eastern and Western, urban and rural, white and black -- in order to offer a balanced cross-section of opinion, observation, and experience from all across America. <https://goo.gl/wBNicH>

### Woodstock Museum Names New Officers for 2017

The Woodstock Museum of Shenandoah County has announced its new officers for the 2017 season. They are John Wall, president; Lyla Davidson, vice president; Robert Schmidt, treasurer; and Barbara Kesser, Secretary. Also serving on the museum board are Landon Fadely, Suzanne Montgomery, Emily Scott, William Scott and Linda Varney.

The museum maintains collections at two historic homes in Woodstock: the Marshall House at 104 South Muhlenberg Street, and the Wickham House on Lawyer's Row. The facilities are open on Thursday through Saturday, May through October, or by appointment.

Interested parties who wish to become members, serve as docents at the two homes, or serve on the board of directors should email [info@woodstockmuseumva.org](mailto:info@woodstockmuseumva.org) or phone Barbara Kesser at 540-335-2162. For more information, visit: [www.woodstockmuseumva.org](http://www.woodstockmuseumva.org).



### The Neff Gang Story by Philip Crown

*The Neff Gang Story* by Philip Crown has been in the works for a couple of years. Former SCHS Board member, Philip Crown has compiled information on this infamous gang, from the Walker Chapel area of Shenandoah County who had a lot of people terrorized in the early 1900's. The idea for the book began when a group of local people in the area met to reminisce and compare stories about this gang that had been handed down through the years. Philip moved to North Carolina when most of the research was completed and the project slowed down. The book is now finished, has been printed, and is available for purchase at \$18. (\$17 for members).

### Preservation Awards -

Continued from Page 1)

Awards are intended to recognize outstanding projects in the fields of history, architecture, scenic beauty, and material culture (this includes furniture, textiles, documents, folk art, photography, basketry, tools and more). The original, or source object(s) must be at least sixty (60) years old, and the preservation project must have been completed to be eligible for consideration.

"Each year we look forward to receiving a number of high quality applications," Committee Chairman, Leigh Devier said.

"Shenandoah County is rich in accomplished and potential historic preservation projects and we are pleased to be able to support this awards program. The Society believes that the quality of life in Shenandoah County is greatly enhanced by preserving evidence of our unique history, and that publically recognizing these achievements may bring about a greater awareness of the value of historic preservation

Application deadline is April 1 of each year. A Nomination Form is included with this newsletter and on the SCHS web site. They are also available in early winter throughout Shenandoah County at libraries and museums and by contacting the Society at 540-459-1795, or by e-mail at [schs.va@gmail.com](mailto:schs.va@gmail.com).



29559

### DO YOU KNOW THEM?

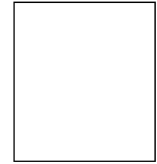
The Shenandoah Room at the County Library in Edinburg, has 58 albums filled with images from the photo files of Hugh Morrison, Jr. Stop in and see if you can find someone you know.



29558



29723



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**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 -**

January 19th - 7:00 - 8:00 PM

**A Program on State Highway Markers** will take place at the Heritage Museum, 382 High Street in Dayton, Va. Randy Jones from the Dept. of Historic Resources will provide an overview of Virginia's historical marker program, which celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2017. The oldest such program in the nation, its origins and how it has changed during the course of 90 years will be discussed. It remains one of the most popular state-run programs in Virginia and is a great example of "public history" in action. Free. Info: 540-879-2681 Sponsored by the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Soc

March 18th - 10 AM to 4 PM

**Belle Grove Plantation Opens** for the season. Located at 336 Belle Grove Rd. in Middletown, they will offer a discounted \$5 tour admission for the day to those 12 years of age or older. Several other special offers will also be in effect. For additional information, call 540-869-2028.

March 19th - 2:00 PM

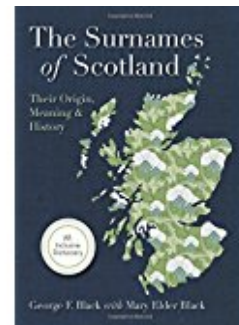
**The Myth in the Mist: The Life and Times of John Singleton Mosby** will be the subject of a program by historian Steven Campbell at the Burwell-Morgan Mill at 32 E. Main Street in Millwood/ Berryville, VA. The Mystery and legend of one of the Gray Ghosts will be discussed. Free. For info: 540-955-2600

**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)

**Message -** [Continued from Page 2]

The new case has given us an opportunity to display those artifacts and provide a complementary display to the County Farm/ Alms House exhibit already in the museum. The objects include a couple of handmade tools whose purpose none of us have been able to discern. Come in and see if you can help us decide how they were used



**The Surnames of Scotland: Their Origin, Meaning, and History**  
by George F. Black

This is a very interesting resource for people tracing their Scottish ancestors and it is now online for FREE. At over 800 pages, this book is a fascinating read for anyone who wishes to discover more about Scottish surnames – especially people who live outside Scotland. Black's book is now available at the Hathi Trust Digital Library. To read the book, just go to : <http://tinyurl.com/zcyd6qy> and then click on the link that says 'Full view.' OR [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) has the 2015 version of the book by George F. Black with Mary Elder Black.

[From: Michigan Genealogical Council Newsletter]

More Events  
are listed on Web site