



Shenandoah  
County

Historical  
Society

Fall 2020

# Newsletter

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### New Members

### Life Members

Shelby Hollar

Susan Dietz

Dr. & Mrs. Conrad Helsley

**The SCHS web site:**  
[www.SCHS1795.com](http://www.SCHS1795.com)

### ATTENTION

#### ARE YOUR DUES DUE??

The date beside the name on your mailing label is the month and year your membership is due. Thank you for staying current. Rates on Page 6.

### SCHS COMPLETE BOOK LIST

Is available on web site:

[www.SCHS1795.com](http://www.SCHS1795.com)

## 2020 Presentation Awards Presented

An appreciative audience attended the 2020 Excellence in Preservation Awards reception at the beautiful Barn at Belgravia Farm at Edinburg on Sunday, September 20. Due to the health pandemic the ceremony was postponed from May and evolved into a smaller but safe and very pleasant event. Three awards were presented to guests that included awards recipients, friends and Society board members.



L-R: LTC Troy D. Marshall, Site Director, Virginia Museum of the Civil War. Rev. William and Martha Erbach. Andrei Kushnir, artist. Charles Everett, accepting for his son, Jeffrey C. Everett

achievements and in so doing encourage others to follow their examples, bringing greater awareness of the value of historic preservation. Awards were given to:

The Virginia Museum of the Civil War and the Virginia Military Institute for their preservation and restoration of the 1818 Bushong farmhouse and farm landscape. The Bushong Farm played a central role in the Civil War

The preservation awards program seeks to recognize outstanding preservation projects in the fields of history, architecture, scenic beauty and material culture. The annual awards are intended to bring public recognition to these

Battle of New Market and helps to tell the story of Valley life before, during and after the war. Preservation Awards Committee member, Jim Stevenson, presented the award to LTC Troy D. Marshall, Site Director, Virginia Museum of the Civil War. The Rev. William and Martha Erbach [Continued on Page 3]

## Courthouse Bell Rings Again



The bell atop the Historic 1795 Shenandoah County Courthouse rang on Wednesday, September 2nd at 9:08 AM to commemorate the end of World War II.

SCHS President, Barbara Adamson is joined by member, Bill Walls, (above) in the ringing. Several others came to the brief ceremony and everybody got a chance to pull the cord and ring the bell.

Members of the Narrow Passage Chapter DAR also rang the bell on Thursday, Sept. 17th in commemoration of the signing of the Constitution of the United States and the beginning of Constitution Week.

## New Forest Service Exhibit is on Display at Historic Courthouse Museum



The US Forest Service has installed a new display in the Visitor Center at the Historic Shenandoah County Courthouse on Main Street in Woodstock. It will be there through December.

The upcoming US Forest Service display will highlight the rich history of the Lee Ranger District's Fire Warden's System, early firefighting activities on the George Washington National Forest and controlled burning activities today. Why was the Warden System so important in Shenandoah County? Do you remember the Jawbone Fire on the Massanutten Mountain? Why does the Forest Service conduct controlled burns? Come enjoy their exhibit from and learn about the history of fire on your national forest.



## From the: Shenandoah County Archives

By Zach Hottel, Archivist

### A Woodstock Suffragette →

On September 26, 1916 the Woodstock Chapter of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia was founded after the town was visited by two prominent state suffragettes. Twelve local women, one man, and five women from Lebanon Church, who formed the Strasburg Chapter, became members of the League and supporters of a woman's right to vote.

Among those was Eleanor Hollingsworth Grabill. Eleanor was the daughter of the editor of the Shenandoah Herald who once observed "the men are to be pitied" after women gained the right to vote.

How active Eleanor and the other members of the Equal Suffrage League were is unclear. Local newspapers did not report on their activities, most likely as a way to dampen any support for their mission. However, we do know that the organization was still active in 1920 when the 19th Amendment was passed and worked to register women voters.

It is also unclear if Eleanor registered to vote in 1920. Records from only one of Woodstock's two precincts from that year survived. However, her sister Alice Grabill is on the list of registered voters.

Eleanor lived until 1976. She graduated from Massanutten Academy, now MMA, was a contributing writer for the Shenandoah Herald which her sister managed, was the editor of Woodstock's Bicentennial pamphlet, and a local historian. In 1918 she married Jacob Haun a local insurance salesman and had one son, Jacob Haun Jr.



#453, Eleanor Hollingsworth Grabill, ca. 1914, Morrison Photograph Collection.

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

### Message from the President

When this column was written in June I thought that the health pandemic situation might allow us to have an in-person annual meeting and program in September. That didn't happen, of course. The annual meeting did take place and the necessary business of electing members to the Board of Directors was accomplished on Sept. 15 via a virtual meeting. I want to thank those members of the board who agreed to serve another two-year term and were re-elected. They include John Adamson, Bruce Alger, Dennis Atwood, Anne Dellinger, Meg Trott and Janet Wagniere. I also thank those board members who continue to serve so ably: Ellen Markel, Edgar Lamma III, Rick Lytton, Margie Hisey Tackett, Susan Walls and treasurer C.F. Wagniere.

Given that 2020 is the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women's right to vote, we really wanted to have a program about the suffrage movement and the vote in Shenandoah County. County archivist Zach Hottel agreed to do such a program and by the time you read this, he will have made his presentation via a Zoom meeting. Zach discovered a lot of very interesting information about the many, many Shenandoah County women who were anxious to exercise their new right to vote in the 2020 election.

I thank those historic courthouse volunteers who feel comfortable interacting with the public so that we've been able to open the courthouse for visitors. Since we're a county owned building, county staff took care of all COVID required precautions which we appreciate. We're open Fridays and Saturdays only for our usual hours of 11AM-4PM. We certainly understand those volunteers who feel they can't do this at present and hope that sometime in 2021 the situation will

feel entirely different.

You read on the front page of the newsletter about the Excellence in Preservation Awards event held on Sept. 20 at the Barn at Belgravia Farm. We regretted that the audience for the awards ceremony was small this year but felt it was a COVID-19 – safe way to make the awards. The venue is exceptional and we greatly appreciate Sparkie Miller's generosity in hosting the afternoon.

The annual dinner is usually a time when we review the past year's activities which were curtailed, as so many things have been. Last fall author Bob O'Connor presented a program about the northernmost Confederate hospital in the Civil War, the Daniel Lady Farm, near Gettysburg. In November John Adamson shared photographs and told stories about some of the historic houses that he has been writing about for several years in his Historic Buildings in Shenandoah County series. 2020 has been a story of canceled and postponed activities!

I will conclude by saying that since COVID19 seems endless, I find myself buying more masks, just to have a variety and to allow for frequent laundering. Never thought I'd be saying that! And I must say that I do enjoy seeing other people's mask designs.

Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it.

James Baldwin

*The  
Shenandoah County  
Historical Society, Inc.*

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

Pres.: Barbara Adamson  
Vice-Pres: Janet Wagniere  
Secretary: Ellen Markel  
Treasurer: C.F. Wagniere

**Board Members:**

John Adamson  
Bruce Alger  
Dennis Atwood  
Anne Dellinger  
Edgar Lamma III  
Rick Lytton  
Margie Hisey Tackett  
Meg Trott  
Susan Walls

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Janet Wagniere

## Find Your Female Ancestors

- Research a woman indirectly by seeking records of her relatives—husband, father, siblings and children. She may be named as an heir, witness or traveling companion. A letter may mention her, too.
- Marriage records are most likely to contain a woman's maiden name. If you notice from censuses most of her children were born in one county, start your marriage records search there. Look for a certificate and license application in county records. Churches many have marriage bonds or banns. Study historical newspapers, too, for an announcement.
- Seek records on each of a woman's children, even those not in your line, including birth and baptism records, marriage records and death records. One may give a maiden name if others don't. Also note others named, especially witnesses, as they may be her relatives.
- At her tombstone, look at plots near hers, since families often were buried near each other. Study the caretaker's burial records for more information about □ those people to see if anyone was buried nearby with out a headstone.

• Once you have a guess at a surname, start researching families in the area with that surname to see if any have children with your female ancestor's first name. Keep note of all the clues that support, as well as those that refute, the conclusion you've found your ancestor's maiden name. It's likely that a collection of clues will lead to her name, rather than a single momentous record that states, "I, Mary Smith Pearson .."

Source: Family Tree magazine

## Newspapers.com Adds Obituaries

Subscription genealogy giant Ancestry.com has curated what it's calling the world's largest obituary database. Using artificial intelligence, Ancestry.com extracted and indexed names, relationships and other facts from millions of digitized obituaries on its sister site, Newspapers.com. The resulting collection contains almost a billion searchable names pulled from more than 250 million death announcements from the United States and beyond. Ancestry.com subscribers may search the "Newspapers.com Obituary Index, 1880s-current" index on that site: <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61843/>.

Those who have an All Access or Newspapers.com Basic subscription may view full obituaries on Newspapers.com. (Certain newspapers may require a Publisher Extra subscription.) [Reprinted from Michigan Genealogy Society Newsletter]

## Shenandoah County Historic Courthouse & Visitor Center Opened on September 4th.

The Museum, Visitor Center and Bookstore opened on a shortened schedule for the present time. We will be open only on Friday & Saturday from 11 AM to 4 PM.

Masks are required while inside the building and proper distancing must be self-monitored, in accordance with the existing Covid-19 recommendations.

Private tours can be scheduled on other days of the week and at different times by calling 540-459-1795.

Book mail orders continue to be filled. Complete book list is on SCHS website.

## PRESERVATION AWARDS -

[Continued from Page 1]

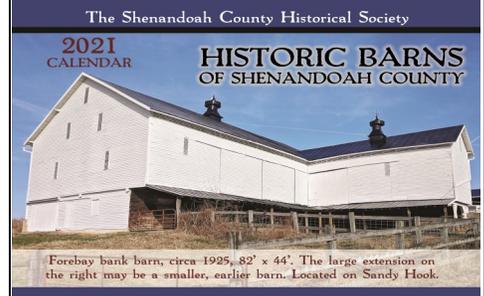
were presented an award by Barbara Adamson for their preservation and restoration of the 1847 Stoner house, 1774 Stoner grist mill and the mill dam in the village of Fisher's Hill. Their devotion has preserved these important examples of Shenandoah County village life and county history.

Preservation Awards Committee Chair, Leigh Devier, presented the award for the book, *Oh, Shenandoah: Paintings of the Historic Valley and River*. This beautiful collection of plein-air paintings by artist, Andrei Kushnir, showcases the entire Valley but with a focus on landscapes of Shenandoah County. The book includes historical vignettes by principal author, Jeffrey C. Everett, scholarly essays by Warren Hofstra and William Rasmussen, with remarks by Dana Hand Evans and Edward L. Ayers. Andrei Kushnir was present to accept his award and Charles Everett attended to accept the award for his son, principal author, Jeff Everett, who was unable to be present.

Those who attended were especially appreciative of the beautiful and spacious surroundings at the Barn at Belgravia Farm and thank our host and owner, Sparkie Miller.

**SCHS**  
**FINANCIAL STATEMENT**  
**At the 5/31/20 end of**  
**the fiscal year, the**  
**Treasurer reported a**  
**total of \$67,038.35 in**  
**the SCHS accounts.**

## 2021 Barn Calendar



Get ready . . . A brand new Barn Calendar for 2021 is already at the press and will be available soon -- at the Visitor Center at the Historic Shenandoah County Courthouse in Woodstock, at the Edinburg Mill Museum and available for mail order. The cost will be \$10 and \$2 for shipping if by mail order. The new calendar will feature barns not previously seen.

## Shrine Mont Program Rescheduled to March



Among the activities affected by the coronavirus was a presentation by Kirk Gibson about the conference and retreat center at Shrine Mont in Orkney Springs.

The program was rescheduled from March and November, so we are hoping it can come to pass in the new year.

Remote and underappreciated here in the county, this historic resort has an interesting story to share and still welcomes guests.

It is now scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 7PM in a format to be determined. Mark your calendars, but look for details in our Winter Newsletter.



✦ Continuing Series on Historic Buildings in Shenandoah County ✦

# A BRIEF LOOK AT BIG BARN OF SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Like a fisherman who wants to talk about the BIG ONES, I thought it would be interesting to share images and comments on a few of the largest barns in our county. This article draws on information and photos I have gathered in the last three years while surveying over 250 historic barns in Shenandoah County.

The demands of muscle-powered agriculture usually dictated the size of the barn needed for any farm. A simple rule is that large farms needed large barns. Large farms had more animals to house and feed, more crops to process and store and so on. Other factors also influenced barn size. Was this a second barn on the same farm? What type of agriculture was practiced? How mechanized was the farm? What building materials and construction techniques were to be used? And, importantly, what was the prevailing local practice at the time the barn was built? These questions and many other factors affected barn size. Unfortunately, farms get divided and changed in many ways over the years with the original owner no longer around to tell us the reasons for building the barn as designed. Instead, we have to let these old barns tell their own stories.

Timber frame bank barns are, by far, the most common barn form (77% of barns surveyed) among the historic (pre-1950) barns in Shenandoah County. There are also some ancient log barn survivors and quite a few pre-1950 ground barns, but both of these forms tend to be smaller than the bank barns. This article features only timber frame bank barns. Data recorded for each barn surveyed includes length and width of the original main floor and was used to select the barns for this article

**Barn #1** - Circa 1845 Posted Forebay Bank Barn, 85 feet by 45 feet. Located on Fairview Road, west of Woodstock.

The date for this barn is an estimate, but can reliably be credited as pre-Civil War because the barn appears on an 1862 map of the area. All framing timbers are hand-hewn and the boards in the granary show sash saw marks. Other clues to this barn's early construction date are the extensive use of cut nails in the granary and two inch thick oak flooring in the central wagon bay. These floor boards are joined with splines placed in grooves between each board, a construction technique not



Barn #1 with stone column supporting summer beam. .

By: John Adamson



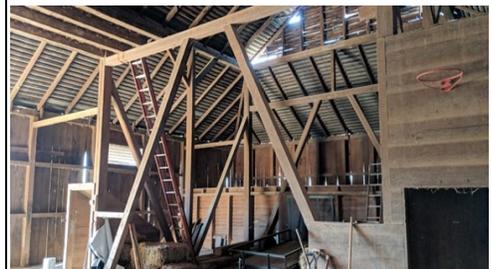
Forebay of Barn #1, note foundation failure.



Barn #1 - Repairs Completed



Barn #1 has an unusual gable on hip roof configuration.



Barn #1 has bents configured with angled posts.



Barn #2 under repair. Note unposted forebay.

found locally in later barns. Angled posts supporting cross beams in the bents are also a clue to an early construction date locally. The limestone foundation of this barn is very well laid and includes some exceptionally large blocks. Stone columns supporting a summer beam in the lower level are a rare find. Locally, summer beams almost always rest on thick wooden posts. In my surveys, I always consider finely crafted, extensive stone foundations to be a strong clue of an early barn. This barn is a great example of such stonework.

A fun feature of this barn is penciled graffiti in the granary. Not exactly graffiti, but notes written in pencil on the walls at various times, especially at threshing time. These writings note peoples' names, number of bushels of various types of grain threshed and many dates. This barn includes such notes from the 1880s through the 1940s. It is always worth looking for these written records in any barn with a granary.

Barn #1 was purchased a couple of years ago by a new owner. At the time of purchase the old barn was suffering from deferred maintenance including serious displacement of some of the stone foundation. The foundation deterioration was causing shifts in some of the structural timbers, especially the summer beams.

Fortunately, the new owner had a plan to rehabilitate the barn and repair the structural problems. As the accompanying photos show, this work has been accomplished and now this very old barn should be good for at least another 100 years.

**Barn #2** – Circa 1906, Unposted forebay bank barn 92 feet by 44 feet. Located on Hickory Lane east of Woodstock.

This barn has a solid oral history of being built by a barn building crew from Pennsylvania in 1906. Because Shenandoah County barns look very much like their cousins in Pennsylvania, this one appears right at home. [Cont. on Page 5]



Barn #2 repairs complete including added forebay posts.



## Big Barns - [Continued from Page 4]

Early settlement here included large numbers of Germanic ethnic transplants from the area west of Philadelphia in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These settlers brought their material culture and architecture, including forebay bank barns to Shenandoah County in large numbers. Once established, the forebay bank barn became the local standard well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This form, usually called the Standard Pennsylvania Barn (as described by authors Emsminger, Huber and others) is the most common form in Shenandoah County. Of the 180 forebay bank barns surveyed, 67% appear to have been built without posts supporting the forebay.



Barn #2 built with a massive ramp and six sliding doors

Average size of all timber frame bank barns surveyed in Shenandoah County is 60 feet by 42 feet, and, we most often find two summer beams supporting the floor joists of the upper level. Barn #2, however, has four summer beams – the most I have encountered in my surveys. Barn #2 shows three impressive roof-mounted ventilators. Many barns had such ventilators added in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as agricultural practice had embraced better ventilation of barns. But in this case, the ventilators appear to be original to the barn, consistent with a 1906 construction date.



Barn #2 – three (out of four) summer beams are visible

As with Barn #1, the caring current owner of this barn performed extensive rehabilitation to assure that the barn will last for several more generations. A major change was the addition of a forebay sill and posts to correct the sag that had appeared in the six foot overhang.



Barn #2 spacious interior showing bents and temporary scaffold

**Barn #3** – 1922, Posted forebay bank barn 102 feet by 46 feet. Located on Junction Road west of Strasburg.

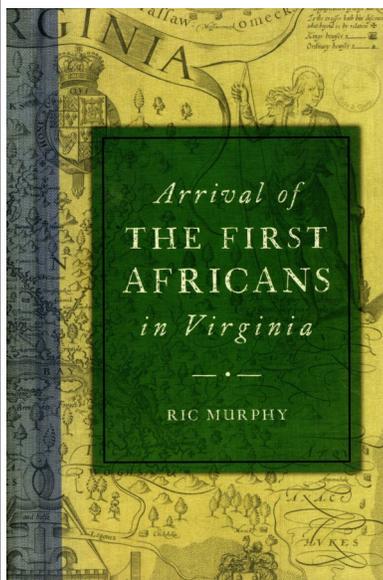
Except for an over-ambitious stable (160 feet long) and a double barn built in two separate periods (114 feet total length), this is the longest historic barn in Shenandoah County. There are much larger barns in other farming communities in America, but the smaller farms here did not usually require barns of massive size.



Barn #3 displays a one-foot overhang on ramp side and gable end.

[Continued on Page 6]

## New Additions to Book List



This new offering by Rick Murphy tells of an extraordinary journey and the beginning of a historic struggle.

In 1619, a group of thirty-two African men, women and children arrived on the shores of Virginia. They had been kidnapped in the royal city of Kabasa, Angola, and forced aboard the Portuguese slave ship San Juan Bautista. The ship was attacked by privateers, and the captives were taken by the English to their New World colony. This group has been shrouded in controversy ever since. Historian Ric Murphy documents a fascinating story of colonialism, treason, piracy, kidnapping, enslavement and British law.

SCHS Price: \$23 Members: \$22

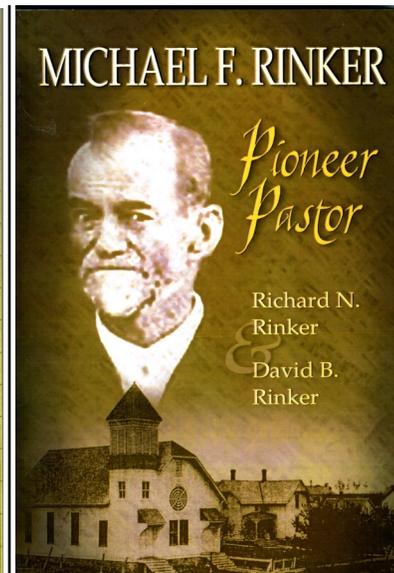
### Disasters As A Research Tool

Disasters seem to be an appropriate topic at the moment, and as we all know, there have been numerous kinds of disasters our ancestors have lived through or not.

<http://gendisasters.com>

What you will find on the website – newspaper articles about train wrecks, fires, floods, ship-wrecks, plane crashed, accidents and other disasters. Most of these articles list the dead and injured or missing. Use the Search Box to search for your ancestors or browse the articles by type of disaster, state or year.

[Reprinted from the Michigan Genealogical Society Newsletter]



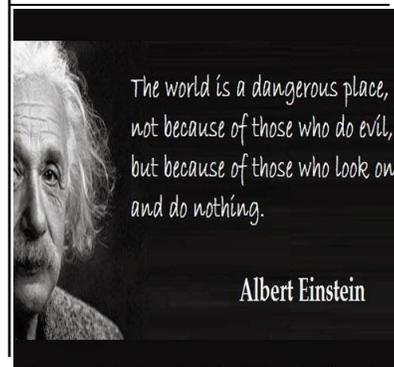
*Pioneer Pastor* follows the life of an unusual man, Michael Rinker. His life began in the Shenandoah Valley and ended in Los Angeles, CA. He was a warrior and a reconciler, a mule driver and a preacher, a prospector of people and a builder. There are some mysteries that remain unsolved as we attempted to trace his comings and goings over the years; perhaps someone reading these pages will have some answers.

The authors became interested in Michael's story when they came across a letter he had written to his parents from the front lines at Spotsylvania Courthouse, VA, during the Civil War. Other letters from him at other times in his life were also discovered.

During his ministry, Michael did a lot of traveling -- by horseback, wagon, steamer, train and trolley car. He and his wife, Minerva (Hamman), had no children, so when she died, he journeyed alone.

David is part of the Shenandoah Valley Rinker family lineage and is now a resident of Florida and an educator, but Richard is not. Both are family researchers.

SCHS price: \$15; Members: \$14



Albert Einstein

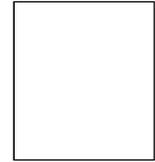


Shenandoah  
County VA

# Historical Society

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Phone: 540-459-1795  
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WEB: www.SCHS1795.com



## Join the SCHS

### New Yearly Dues:

Member: \$15 (Newsletter by E-mail)

Member: \$20 (Mailed newsletter)

Lifetime Single: \$200; Family \$300

Send Fee to address above.

Renewal Date is beside name on  
mailing label →

## Big Barns - [Continued from Page 5]

Barn #3 was built in 1922 and was designed to provide shelter and hay storage for the Waverly Dairy to the west of Strasburg. Though this barn shows very old and traditional elements including a wide forebay (9 feet) and mortise and tenon joinery throughout (6 bents), it also displays features from its 20<sup>th</sup> century construction. These more modern elements include a poured concrete foundation and a gambrel roof. Gambrel roofs are known locally in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but became much more common after the turn of the century.

The Waverly Dairy served by Barn #3 went out of business years ago, however the barn remains in active agricultural use for hay and equipment storage.



Barn #3 was built with forebay supported by posts



Barn #3 has a .a very long feeding aisle which matches its use as a dairy



Barn #3 is still in active use for hay and equipment storage.



## Looking Ahead - The 1950 Census

Mark your calendars: The 1950 census is scheduled to come out on April 1, 2022, 72 years to the day after it was taken. That's still a couple of years away, but you might be curious about what to expect.

The 1950 census asked fewer questions than the 1940 census did. The enumeration recorded responses to just 20 questions, including name, age, address, relationship to head of household, marital status, state or country of birth, occupation and (if foreign-born) whether a naturalized U.S. citizen. A 5-percent sample was asked additional questions, including the country of birth of the person's father and mother and whether the person had served in the U.S. military.

When it was released in 2012, the 1940 census was placed online and made available for free, but indexes took several months to be created. The release of the 1950 census will probably follow the same pattern. Without an index to the 1950 census, you'll need to know the 6Volume 44 Issue 3MGC Newsletter Summer 2020News con't:enumeration district (E.D.) so you can browse records once they're released. To find the E.D. for your ancestor's place of residence, go to the Unified Census ED Finder from Stephen P. Morse and Joel D. Weintraub at:

<https://stevemorse.org/census/unified.html>

Select 1950, a state, county and city or town. Then click Get 1950 ED Number(s).

Extracted from the article "Counting Up" by Rick Crume, *Family Tree Magazine*, Mar/Apr 2020 Articles from Northville Genealogical Society newsletter in the Michigan Genealogical Society Newsletter.

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