



Shenandoah  
County

Historical  
Society

Fall 2023

# Newsletter

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**SCHS Web Site:**  
[www.SCHS1795.com](http://www.SCHS1795.com)

### New Life Members

Molly Greene Haywood

### New Members

Rebecca Ebert

John & Carolyn Moomaw Chilton

Susan Eastman

Edward N. Frye

### 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.

Please note new amounts.

## Historic Courthouse Chimney Repairs



## "Shenandoah County Patriots Not Named Muhlenberg"

This is the intriguing title of our November program to be presented by Gabe Neville. The public is invited.



Shenandoah County's best-known Revolutionary War hero is Peter Muhlenberg, but there are many others who have been overshadowed by his fame. Gabe Neville will tell stories of other local patriots whose service should be remembered.

Mr. Neville, who lives in Fairfax County, is the author of the 8th Virginia Regiment website (8thVirginia.com) and is writing a book on the 8th Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley in the Revolutionary War which should be available in the next year. Gabe is a former journalist and congressional staffer who now works as a business advisor at a Washington DC law firm.

The program will take place on Tuesday, November 14th at 7:00 PM at the St. Paul's Heritage Center at 106 North High Street in Edinburg, Va.

Ample parking is available in the Shentel lot across the street. Refreshments will be served following the program.

We've all wished for rain this dry summer, but Friday, July 28 brought more to Woodstock than bargained for. A storm that included 2.25 inches of rain and strong winds felled a tree on West Court St. The tree, near the south side of the 1795 portion of the building, split in two and one half of it landed on the roof of the historic courthouse.

The tree limbs damaged the chimney, taking out the chimney cap and some of the limestones fell to the ground. Shenandoah County administrators made arrangements to have the chimney repaired by Dwayne Patton, whose family company has a long history of stonemasonry. In the photos above, you can see Dwayne on that 60-foot man lift as he repaired the chimney, using the original limestone blocks that fell, with some added materials saved from another historic property. They were able to repair and reuse the chimney cap, as well. The work was completed on Sept 16th.

A tree on the side of the Courthouse suffered some unavoidable damages getting the equipment next to the building. If it doesn't recover, it will be replaced.



## From the: Shenandoah County Archives

By Zach Hottel, Archivist

### Russell & Clara Sine Fry

This photograph shows Russel Frye and Clara Sine Frye of Lantz Mill Virginia. It was produced by Hugh Morrison Jr. at his "Court Street Studio" in Woodstock Virginia around the time of the couple's 1908 marriage.

Russell Frye was born February 22, 1888 in Shenandoah County and became a carpenter. Clara Sine was born in 1892. They were married November 4 1908 at the Edinburg Reformed parsonage by W.J.D. Sherer. They lived near Edinburg.

At some point the couple moved to Washington DC. In 1927 Russel was employed as a carpenter during construction of the National Press Building. On March 18 th of that year he fell from the seventh floor and was killed. His body was returned to Shenandoah County and he is buried at Cedarwood Cemetery. Clara lived until 1963 and is also buried at Cedarwood.

This photograph was identified utilizing information written on the reverse of the image. Approximately 50% of all images donated to the archives are undated. Be sure to label your photographs to preserve the identity of their subjects.

You can learn more about this couple, historic photographs, and Shenandoah County's history by visiting the Truban Archives. Call (540)984-8200 or email [zhottel@countylib.org](mailto:zhottel@countylib.org) to schedule an appointment.



23-0906-001: Russel Frye and Clara Sine, Brenda Kline Collection, Truban Archives, Shenandoah County Library, Edinburg Virginia.

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](mailto:schs.va@gmail.com)

### 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: Laura Zimmerman

#### Board Members:

- Dennis Atwood
- Anne Dellinger
- Kenna Fansler
- Rick Lytton
- Suzanne McIlwee
- Mary Redmon
- Susan Walls
- Karen Whetzel
- Hank Zimmerman

Newsletter Editor: Janet Wagniere

### Message from the President



Barbara Adamson

Our longtime SCHS treasurer, CF Wagniere, has decided to retire. CF has capably handled our finances for many years and we are deeply appreciative of his contribution. Thank you, CF! We now welcome a new treasurer, Laura Zimmerman. Laura is the Business Director and handles finances for the Shenandoah County Community Health Clinic. She is well positioned to take over as treasurer and continue the excellent stewardship CF provided. The SCHS board has happily approved Laura's appointment to the position. Welcome and many thanks to Laura!

Recently I, and representatives from many of Shenandoah County's historical organizations, met as the History Council. It was an excellent meeting attended by representatives of many local groups who work to save and share our history: Ft. Valley Museum, Hupp's Hill Historical Park, Mt. Jackson Museum, Hottel-Keller Memorial, New Market Historical Society, Shenandoah County Historical Society, Shenandoah County Library, Edinburg Heritage Foundation/Mill, Strasburg Heritage Association, Strasburg Museum and Woodstock Museum. So many! We love our history!

### A 2024 Heritage Day Invitation

Here's an early announcement of Shenandoah County Heritage Day 2024! This county-wide day of sharing our history is set for Saturday, April 13, 2024 at the New Market Fire Hall on South Congress St. in New Market.

The Fire Hall is a wonderful, large space and so we're hoping that, in addition to our local history organizations, we'll have many individuals who will attend to bring and share their historical stories.

We invite you to come and exhibit family history, house history, church histories, cemetery histories, town and village histories and more. Many topics to choose from! There is no cost involved; we supply tables and chairs.

Heritage Day is hosted by SCHS and the Shenandoah County Library Archives. For more information, you may contact Zach Hottel, county archivist at 540-984-8200 or leave a message at the SCHS phone, 540-459-1795 and we'll get back to you.



#### SCHS is on FACBOOK

Visit our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/SCHSVA](https://www.facebook.com/SCHSVA) or simply click on the Facebook icon at the bottom of our website main page: [www.SCHS1795.com](http://www.SCHS1795.com)

## County Library Announces Plans for Future Expansion



The Shenandoah County Library Board of Trustees is embarking on an ambitious plan to expand and renovate the existing County Library building in Edinburg. The Board has shared with the community its reasons behind the proposal, which will improve and enlarge public use and staff work spaces. The expansion will also enlarge and substantially improve the library's Shenandoah Room and Truban Archives.

SCHS has always had a close relationship with the library and the archives. Many of us have spent hours doing research in the Shenandoah Room. This is where our researcher does her family history work. It's where anyone in Shenandoah County who wants to learn more about their families should go. And it's where we house the 50+ Morrison Collection albums for public access.

The Truban Archives are the depository for a great deal of our county's history and County Archivist, Zachary Hottel, has made good use of the limited space currently available for these materials.

The Board of Trustees has made a compelling case for the expansion of the Shenandoah Room and the Truban Archives. This project will add to the many benefits they provide to the community. SCHS is a strong supporter of the project and hopes that the community will be as well. A fund raising campaign will begin soon.

## County Library to Host Multiple Events in October

The annual **Shenandoah Valley Archives Fair** will be held at Bowman Library in Stephens City from 11:00AM -1:00PM on Thursday, October 5. It will feature the Shenandoah County Library and 25 other archives from throughout the valley for a chance for participants to learn about collections and to ask research questions. Info: [www.handleyregional.org/archives/archives-fair](http://www.handleyregional.org/archives/archives-fair)

The next is a series of pop up exhibits that will be taking place at several of the individual county libraries during the month. These exhibits will feature material from the archival collection related to the community hosting. County Archivist, Zach Hottel will be on hand to answer questions and to make research appointments. These sessions are scheduled as follows

Tuesday, October 3. New Market Area Library, 11:00AM - 2:00PM.

Saturday, October 7. Fort Valley Community Library, 9:30AM - 2:30PM.

Wednesday, October 11, Orkney - Basye Community Library,  
11:00AM-2:00PM

Friday, October 13. Strasburg Community Library, 11:00AM - 2:00PM.

Tuesday, October 24. Shenandoah County Library, 5:30 - 7:30PM.

Information about both of these is available on the library website [www.countylib.org/local-history](http://www.countylib.org/local-history) and should be on social media soon. Please pass the word.

### LIBRARY NEWS:

**Morrison Milestone:** Thanks to the hard work of dedicated volunteers from the library and historical society we can happily share that over 25% of the Morrison Studio Collection is now available for viewing online at [archives.countylib.org](http://archives.countylib.org). Since October 2021, 7800 images and associated metadata from that collection have been added to the library's digital collection along with over 70 new photo identifications.

**New Collection:** The Truban Archives celebrates the addition of the Sara Borden Collection. This collection of photographs and documents relates to the community of Harrisville (west of Toms Brook) and St. Johns UCC Church, documenting part of its history from the early to mid-20th century. You can learn more about this collection and view its inventory: [https://findingaids.countylib.org/repositories/2/resources/10/collection\\_organization](https://findingaids.countylib.org/repositories/2/resources/10/collection_organization)

## New Book



**PEGGY'S WAR** is a meticulously researched novel that adheres closely to the true story of Margaret "Peggy" Rhodes and the young men she protected during the Civil War. She is a fiercely loyal Union woman living in the Shenandoah Valley, a region of Virginia that strongly supports the Confederacy. While her husband is slowly dying of consumption, Peggy conceals draft dodgers and deserters in a secret cellar under their bedroom floor.

She does this while managing a farm, raising five children, and serving as a postmaster for the underground railroad run by Mennonites and Dunkers. Confederate forces capture one large group of fugitives — many of them Peggy's cousins — and take them to Richmond's notorious Castle Thunder. Then the rebels charge Peggy's uncle, Gabriel "Doc" Heatwole, with treason and imprison him in the Rockingham Courthouse with Dunker Elder John Kline. The story climaxes during Sheridan's burning of the Valley, when Custer's cavalry gives Peggy fifteen minutes to empty her house and barn before they set them on fire. SCHS Price: \$22 Members:\$21

### SCHS COMPLETE BOOK LIST

Is available on web site:

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

✦ Continuing Series on Historic Buildings in Shenandoah County ✦

## EXPLOSION AT THE LONAS & HOTTLE CANNERY

[The following article is from the Sept. 6, 1906 *Shenandoah Valley* newspaper and was submitted by Kenna Fansler:]

"On Tuesday evening about 3:30 o'clock, at Lonas & Hottle's cannery in Mt. Jackson, there was a terrific explosion of the boiler, used in operating the machinery. The explosion was heard all over town and all people rushed in that direction, surmising what had occurred. Several parties in town who happened to be looking in that direction saw the boiler sailing skyward, turning over and over as it went.

On arriving at the cannery, it was found the boiler had gone directly upward from the base on which it sat, going directly through the roof, and according to the statement of eye witnesses, several hundred feet in the air, falling about 50 to 60 feet from the cannery building in which it stood, into the stable of S. P. Lonas, missing the barn but a few feet. The impact was so great that a large hole was torn into the ground.

On examining the boiler, it was found the entire casing around the fire box was split and torn. The cause of the explosion is unknown. That the loss of life was not great was a miracle indeed, as there were about 24 working in the cannery, from children to grown persons, and a number of people and teams were around the place and the mill, which adjoins. Mr. Lonas was unfortunate enough to have his fine bay horse hurt badly by a shaft running into its shoulder by a runaway horse that was frightened by the explosion. The employees, it is said, beat all records for getting out of a dangerous building.



*Mr. Lonas's house in Mt. Jackson and he is sitting on the front porch in this early photo. The building is now the home of Dellinger Funeral Home.*

This cannery equipment was purchased in March 2, 1903 (*Shenandoah Valley* newspaper) by Mr. S. P. Lonas & Mr. C. J. Hottle (originally from Harrisonburg) which was located in Maurertown, Va. and was known as the **Excelsior Canning Co.** The equipment was moved to the old Maphis Mill on Mill Creek, which Mr. Lonas owned, and was located a few blocks west of Main Street near the railway bridge."

According to this article, they planned to engage in the canning of tomatoes, beans, and corn under the above name, and would be able to can from 6,000 to 10,000 lbs. every 24 hours. The same 1903 article stated that once the cannery was in operation, Mt. Jackson would be second to no other metropolis in the Valley.

Mr. Lonas was a very prosperous businessman in Mt. Jackson. He started in business in the 1880s at Rinkerton, Va., moving to town about 1900. His home, which he built, is now the Dellinger Funeral Home.

He also built the large building next door where he conducted business as a general merchant in all types of merchandise from clothing, candy, household merchandise to farm implements and fertilizer. His brother, John P. Lonas, was also a prosperous businessman whose business was across Main Street.

The Maphis Mill was believed to have been built by Benjamin Allen in 1734 (Benjamin Allen's Mill Creek). The property was acquired by John Pennywitt and later by his son-in-law John Morgan. After Morgan's death, the

mill was acquired by William and Elizabeth Sigler (Elizabeth being the daughter of John and Elizabeth Morgan). Joseph Maphis acquired the property before the Civil War and operated the mill. The mill was destroyed by General Sheridan's armies in Oct. 1864. The mill was rebuilt as a flour and grist mill at that time. Joseph Maphis continued the mill operation until 1897 when it was purchased by S. P. Lonas at the bankruptcy sale of Mr. Maphis.

The site of the mill is located a short distance off Rt.263 -Orkney Grade – on the right side of Orchard Drive after crossing the bridge that is in front of the Benjamin Allen home.



### Edinburg VFW Post 2447 To Place Exhibit in Historic Courthouse Visitor Center Opening October 6th

The display will include items from their collection of memorabilia from its founding through the period just after World War I thru the Global War on terrorism. Included in the display are German, Japanese, Vietnamese, Russian, and Iraqi helmets and other equipment as well as their own from all the above conflicts. The exhibit will be on view every Fri. and Sat., 11-4 through the end of the year at 103 N. Court St.

### Holiday Events at Virginia Museum of Civil War

#### Spirits of New Market

Saturday, Oct. 21st - 6 – 8 p.m.

Explore the battlefield after hours and step back in time at the annual lantern tour program and celebrate the indomitable spirit of those whose lives were impacted by the Battle of New Market. Follow your guide on a lantern-lit tour of the Battlefield encountering living historians portraying the soldiers, townsfolk, and the Bushong family. You will be able to interact with the characters and ask questions.

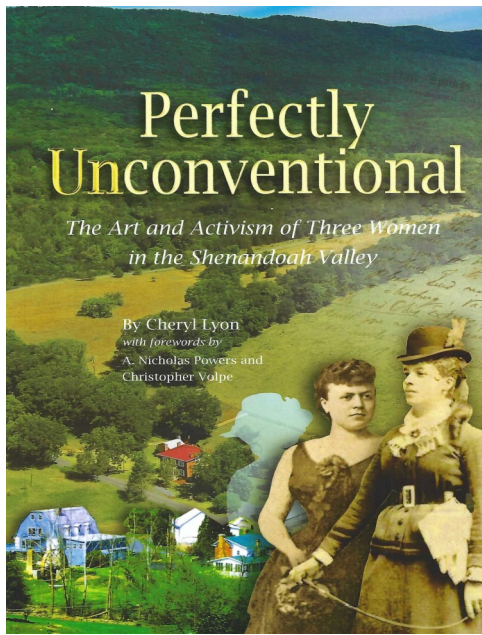
#### Christmas on the Farm

Saturday, Dec. 2nd - 10 AM – 3 PM

Join in and celebrate the holiday season at the museum, battlefield, and Bushong Farm! Explore the museum and make take-home crafts, enjoy festive treats, and see a special Christmas film. Step back into 1859 and visit the Bushong family as they cook, sing, and tell stories.

**Tix required for both events. Call 866-515-1864 for prices, availability and more info.**

## New Book



**Perfectly Unconventional: The Art and Activism of Three Women in the Shenandoah Valley** by historian Cheryl Lyon is a must-read for local history fans.

[The following review is by Linda Wheeler of *The Mountain Courier* Newspaper.]

This tells a wonderful story of three city women who arrived in the rural Virginia hamlet of Fisher's Hill in the 1880s, escaping the proscribed scribed, and restrictive lifestyle for women in the Victorian era to pursue creative careers far from home.

A chance find sparked the entire project. Lyon, who has a family home in Fisher's Hill, happened upon a mention of one of the women in an old newspaper clipping, and was intrigued. However, the women's careers and their time spent in Fisher's Hill, where they rented rooms and space for an art studio, turned out to be forgotten history. No one knew anything about them.

So Lyon rounded up some friends and established the Fisher's Hill Ladies Project with local historians and researchers Hope Brim, Neil Thorne and the late Gloria Stickley. Together they celebrated each new discovery, carefully amassing enough information for a book. In so doing they rescued from obscurity three daring women: professionally trained artist Maria J. C. a'Becket, retired professional power walker turned artist, Bertha Von Hillern and writer Emma Howard Wight.

The book itself is a beauty. Printed on heavy, polished paper, they →

### Just A Little Peach Basket

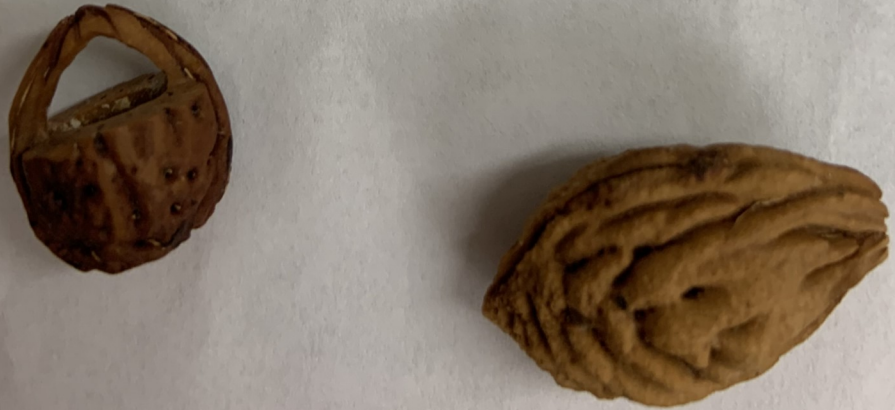
By Robert H. Miller  
(Bobby Miller)\*

When I was just a small boy growing up in my home town of Woodstock, VA, I remember a kind elderly man who had an unusual hobby. His name was George ("Silver Bill") Lytton and after he retired he would sit on a bench at the Court house square and carve little tiny baskets out of peach seeds. I was always amazed at how pretty these little baskets were but perhaps what touched me most was what he did with them.

As George would sit and carve his little peach baskets, his eyes were always alert for any strangers who might pass by. Then he would walk up to them and hand them a peach basket and say, "Please accept this with the compliments of the town." Sometimes he would stand on the sidewalk next to Woodstock's only stop light and hand out his little peach baskets when cars were stopped at the stop light. He was truly Woodstock's ambassador of goodwill. I'm sure the strangers appreciated his gift of the little peach baskets and were impressed by his kindness and generosity.

Just a little peach basket so small in size but given out of friendship and to welcome strangers to our town by someone with a big and generous heart. I guess the old saying is true, "Little things mean a lot."

\*Second son of Dr. Harold W. Miller, Sr.



Submitted By: Suzanne McIlwee

## County Parks & Recreation Schedules Civil War Lecture

Critical to the outcome of the Civil War, the Shenandoah Valley witnessed 300 combat actions between 1861-1865. The Valley was close to both capitals, provided an avenue of invasion for both armies, and was a key source of food and supplies for the Confederates. The Confederates fought to protect that source of food and supplies. Many notable soldiers fought in the Valley, including Stonewall Jackson, Jubal Early, Philip

glow on the page. You could cut them out and frame them - they are that good. Each section is heavily footnoted and significant documents are included. SCHS Price: \$35.00

Sheridan and George Armstrong Custer, along with thousands whose names are forgotten. However, the Valley's Civil War story also includes the hardships of the citizens, many of whom endured the pilaging and burning of their farms and businesses.

The lecture will take place on Thursday, November 2nd from 1:00 to 2:30 PM in the Board of Supervisors Room at the County Government Building in Woodstock.

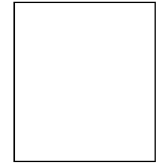
The event is free but you must register to attend by October 30th. The activity number is 470382B.

Register at Parks & Rec. at 600 N. Main St. in Woodstock or call 540-459-6777 for more info.



Shenandoah  
County VA

# Historical Society



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E-Mail: [SCHS.VA@Gmail.com](mailto:SCHS.VA@Gmail.com)

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

## Join the SCHS

### New Yearly Dues:

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

Member: \$20 (Mailed newsletter)

Lifetime \$200

Send Fee to address above.

Renewal Date is beside name on  
mailing label →

## Upcoming Events

Saturday, October 14th - 2:00 PM  
**Common Ground of Botanists Francis Hunnewell II and Lena Artz** by Andrea Weeks at the Fort Valley Museum's Trinity Church building.

Fort Valley was once home to a pioneering botanist of the Massanutten Mountains, Lena Clemmons Artz (1891 - 1976). A Woodstock native, high school biology teacher and owner of a cabin near Elizabeth Furnace, Lena dedicated her life outside of the classroom to documenting the unique plant communities of Shenandoah and Rockingham Counties and advocating for their preservation. Until an archive of her field notebooks and personal papers was discovered at Lord Fairfax Community College herbarium, little was known about her remarkable life story and accomplishments. This presentation summarizes findings from this archive to illuminate her life's work and how it unexpectedly intersects with that of another unsung local botanist, Francis W. Hunnewell, II, the last private owner of the Belle Grove Plantation. FREE. More Info:

<http://www.fortvalleymuseum.org>

Saturday & Sunday, Oct. 21st & 22nd  
**Strasburg VA Ghost Walking Tours Are Back** from 6 - 8 PM at Strasburg Visitor and Information Center at Hupp's Hill, 3322 Old Valley Pike in Strasburg. Family friendly event. Learn about the Town's haunted history! Ghosts in caverns, ghosts in homes, ghosts everywhere! Hosted by the Town of Strasburg and Strasburg Heritage. Free-Will donations to Heritage Assoc. will be accepted.. Rain or shine event. More info:

[www.StrasburgVaHeritage.org](http://www.StrasburgVaHeritage.org)

Saturday & Sunday, Oct. 21st & 22nd  
**159th Anniversary Reenactment of the Battle of Cedar Creek.** Contact the Cedar Creek Batttefield Foundation for information times tickets, etc at 8437 Valley Pike, Middletown, VA 540-869-2064 [info@ccbf.us](mailto:info@ccbf.us)

December 1st through 30th  
**Belle Grove Plantation Holiday Tours** In the historic Manor House, there will be a 12-foot Christmas tree in the Parlor and area Garden Clubs will decorate each room with a "Winter Whimsey" theme. Guided Tours: Monday through Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (last tour 3:15 p.m.) and Sundays, 1-5 p.m. (last tour 4:15 p.m.) Christmas by Candlelight (self-guided tours and live music--schedule to be announced): Friday and Saturdays 4-8 p.m 336 Belle Grove Road, Middle-town, VA (540) 869-2028

## 54th Page County Heritage Festival

Oct. 7th & 8th [10 AM -- 5 PM]

Luray, VA

Rain or Shine

Page Valley Fair Grounds,  
15 Fairlane Drive, Luray

1-540-743-3915

### 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