



Shenandoah  
County  
Historical  
Society

Fall 2016

# Newsletter

**Highlights in this Issue:**

- Volunteer Member Spotlight  
President's Message      **2**  
Civil War Dancing
  
- Shenandoah Stories  
November Program  
Courthouse Volunteer Event  
War of 1812 Records      **3**  
Genuki Overhaul  
Amazon Smile Request
  
- October: Archives Month  
Women in the Military      **4**  
Virginia Quilt Museum  
exhibit
  
- Building a Log Cabin  
Jonathan Noyales Seminar      **5**  
Burwell-Morgan Heritage
  
- Historic Buildings Series      **6**  
Page County Heritage Days
  
- New Book: Tom's Brook  
New Books on the Horizon
  
- Upcoming Events      **8**

**World War I & II  
75th and 100th  
Anniversaries to be  
Commemorated**



**Highlights from  
the Truban Archives**

Between December 2016 and September 2021 the United States will observe the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First World War and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War Two. To mark these momentous events, the Commonwealth of Virginia has created the Virginia World War I and World War II Commemoration Commission to plan, develop, and carry out programs that celebrate our citizens' involvement in these historic conflicts.

The historic community in Shenandoah County intends to fully participate in these anniversary commemorations by partnering with the Commonwealth during state wide events and by hosting unique local activities. These will focus on honoring our veterans and those who served on the Homefront, interpreting the role Shenandoah County played in these conflicts, preserving the material history and historic sites related to these wars, and connecting interested visitors with educational opportunities.

Events scheduled thus far will include a veterans recognition event on December 8th at the County Library. The Shenandoah County Historical Society will focus their 2017 Heritage Day, in April 2017, to World War I, and the year after to World War II. There will also be exhibits at local museums related to these conflicts, and much more.

**SCHS Launches New  
Web site**

The SCHS is pleased to announce that our new web site was launched in September and it has been garnishing a lot of compliments from those who have paid a visit.

The site, produced by Hank Zimmerman of Shenandoah Valley Productions includes a host of easy to use features. Each time you visit the site, you are greeted by a different slide show of photos selected from the Society's collection of photos by Hugh Morrison, Jr. The list of books offered for sale by the Society begins on the home page and is arranged by subject, contains a color image of the book cover and it is much easier to read and navigate. [Continued on Page 4]

**November Program Meeting  
to feature  
Author William Miller  
and his new Civil War book  
*Decision at Tom's Brook*  
*George Custer, Thomas Rosser,  
and the Joy of the Fight***

When the flamboyant personalities of opposing generals George Custer and Thomas Rosser arrived in Shenandoah County in October 1864, circumstances promised high drama. Custer's Federals had devastated much of the Valley despite the efforts of Rosser's weakened and enraged Confederates.

The resulting battle between the two old friends on the banks of Tom's Brook show up in history books as a trifling, almost humorous affair most commonly known as The Woodstock Races. Society member and author Bill Miller will discuss his book about these stirring events and present a non-traditional perspective of the story as a tragedy, a mystery and the climax of an ordeal for people of Shenandoah County.

The program takes place on Tuesday, Nov. 15th at the St. Paul's Heritage Center, 106 S. High Street in Edinburg. The public is invited; refreshments are served afterwards. Ample parking is available in the Shental lot across the street from the Heritage Center.

**New Members**

- Pam M. Pampe
- Cheryl L. Truban
- Jeff Hines
- Donna Smith

**Life Members**

- Bruce Alger

**ATTENTION**

**ARE YOUR DUES DUE??**

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

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



Marjorie Tackett

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.

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*Janet Wagniere*

## Volunteer Spotlight: Marjorie Hisey Tackett

Margie is a true "Valley Girl". She was born in Woodstock, grew up in Edinburg and graduated from Central High School. She is the daughter of late Eddie & Charlotte Hisey and has spent her entire life in Shenandoah County. Most of her professional career has been as a radiologic technologist. She has worked with a group of orthopedic surgeons in Winchester and also with a medical group in Shenandoah County. Her work in the county often brought her to the courthouse to file documents and represent her employers.

She inherited her father's love for history and documentation of the past. Throughout his life, he made scrapbooks of photos and articles of interest over the years

that cover a wide range of subjects. Genealogy was a shared interest and she took some of Jean Martin's genealogy classes at the library and began tracing her family ancestry. She went from the Hiseys, Wightmans, Downeys, Wismans and finally worked her way to Major George Grandstaff and then on to Darby Downey in Ireland in the 1700's.

She had a funny motivation for the search for Irish ancestry. . . Her daughter, Angela, presented her with three wonderful grandchildren and the last one was a redhead! She didn't know of any redheads in the families, so she searched until she found there was an Irish connection!

We look forward to having you on our team.

## Message from The President

Fall is here with the many activities that come with it. Though my children are long out of school, I always mark my mental calendar by the school year. Maybe having grandchildren keeps that calendar in the back of my mind.

I begin by welcoming two new volunteers to our historic courthouse team, Diane Miller and Marjorie Tackett. We're delighted to get to know them and appreciate their contribution.

Keeping up with modern technology is a challenge we all deal with and one that doesn't necessarily go hand in hand with a love of things old. We're fortunate to have Hank Zimmerman and Janet Wagniere, among others, to carry us forward. Hank has designed a new website for us, with many hours of assistance from web manager Janet, and input from board members Dennis Atwood, CF Wagniere, John Adamson and member Zach Hottel. Hank is a consummate professional and has been a pleasure to work with over the months. Please check out the website, its terrific content and ease of navigation. Thank you Hank, and everyone involved!

Shenandoah County Library Archivist, Zach Hottel, has begun many new initiatives during his year in this position. One of them has been the recent formation of a History Council, an idea that SCHS had occasionally discussed but never explored. I'm very pleased that Zach has made the History

Council a reality. The Council is a loosely formed group of representatives from the county's many museums and historic preservation organizations. The intent is to work together to share information and maximize the impact we may have with the public, discussing issues and problems common to us all.

On Dec. 3 will be the 1st Annual Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce Holiday Homes Tour, this year to be in Woodstock. SCHS will be participating by having the historic courthouse on the tour. We hope that some of you will attend and stop by to see us. Proceeds from the tour will benefit Woodstock Museum and Shenandoah Garden Club.

Elsewhere in this newsletter Zach Hottel has announced statewide efforts to commemorate the 100th anniversary of our country's involvement in WWI, and the 75th anniversary of our part in WWII. SCHS is pleased to be partnering with the Library Archives and County Tourism to assist with planning and implementation of activities and events over the course of several years. Our annual Shenandoah County Heritage Day, next year on April 8, 2017, will focus on WWI. We will have details later! But start thinking about what you may have to share from that era.



## Shall We Dance?



The Shenandoah Valley Civil War Era Dancers is an all-volunteer, non-profit group whose main goal is to raise money for battlefield preservation by teaching and enjoying early American dance.

Their website lists all of their practice and events schedule as well as their donations. They offer free and open to the public dancing, usually 4 Thursday's a month in 3 different locations: Luray, Harrisonburg and Front Royal.

Join them from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM as they have fun learning dances from the 1700's and the 1800's, including lines, circles and square sets, along with a waltz or a polka from time to time. Free and no dance experience is necessary. Wear regular clothes and comfortable shoes.

Check their web site or call for locations and times:

Phone: 540-743-9389

E-mail:

[tommack1861@gmail.com](mailto:tommack1861@gmail.com)

Web site:

<https://sites.google.com/site/svcwed/>

## CHURCH REMINDER

For several years, we have been gathering information on all of the churches in the County, including ones that have closed. We have written to and contacted all known churches but many have still not responded. The information is on the web site under "Resources". Please check and see if your church information is posted; if not, maybe you can make it happen.

"To know nothing of what happened before you were born, is to forever remain a child."

— Cicero

## Ancestors, Family, and Associates in the War of 1812 Records

Now Available on Ancestry Academy  
FREE of Charge

This is a great video and should appeal to anyone with an interest in one of the lesser known wars of the United States. [This] announcement from the War of 1812 Preserve the Pensions team states:

"The War of 1812 was America's 'Second Revolution' – little understood by many in America how precarious the survival of the new nation was. This segment enlarges the student's understanding of the causes of the war and how the Napoleonic War on Europe's continent distracting the British military may very well have saved the nation. Ending in 1815 with the ratification of the Treaty of Ghent, the war directly led to the penning of our nation's national anthem, The Star Spangled Banner and propelled Battle of New Orleans' famous General Andrew Jackson to the Presidency of the United States, serving as its seventh president.

To place an ancestor in the context of history, this segment paints the landscape of the social climate during the War's four year course – 1812 to 1815."

[www.ancestry.com/academy/course/war-of-1812?ref=searchbar](http://www.ancestry.com/academy/course/war-of-1812?ref=searchbar)

## Genuki Overhaul

The popular website Genuki (one of the top free genealogy websites in the UK) is going through a major overhaul. After 21 years, the website is working towards improving the user experience with new stylized pages making it easier for users to find their ancestors. Details can be found on the Genuki news page:

[www.genuki.org.uk/news](http://www.genuki.org.uk/news)

[Both articles above reprinted with permission from the Michigan Genealogical Council Newsletter – Summer, 2016. Both items above are from the Northville Genealogical Society newsletter.]

**amazon**smile

Your Amazon purchases can reward SCHS.

All one must do to sign up is to go to: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1637605> and confirm your selection of SCHS. Or, you can go to: [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and pick your non-profit from a list. In the future, one must go to smile.amazon.com instead of just directly to the amazon site (as in the past), and SCHS will receive a donation of 5% of the amount of your purchase. No change is made in your regular or Prime account.



A  
New Way  
to  
Discover  
History

The Shenandoah County Library and Archives has announced the release of their new web-based tour site *Shenandoah Stories*. This project, in development for the last four months, is designed to help residents and visitors alike learn about Shenandoah County from their computer or mobile device.

Shenandoah Stories is unlike most history themed websites. Instead of simply listing historic information, this page allows you to "pin" the history of various sites to their physical location and presents the visitor with one large map filled with pictures and interpretation related to sites they want to learn about. This allows visitors to the site to discover historic locations near where they are and where they want to visit. It also allows them to search for sites based on their preferences or by tours created by the archives.

Each entry in *Shenandoah Stories* is complete with pictures and a description of the historic site. Some, when information is limited, are short. Others are lengthier and contain a wide array of photographs. All are based on in-depth research conducted using primary sources, the county's historic site survey, and published records. Each should represent a variety of county lifestyles during a range of time periods.

Visit [www.shenandoahstories.org](http://www.shenandoahstories.org) to discover what *Shenandoah Stories* offers today. Over the next few months they will be working to market the site to residents and visitors alike through a partnership with the Shenandoah County Tourism Department and other organizations. They will also always be looking for new sites, information, and pictures. Feel free to contact the Archivist, Zach Hottel, at [zhottel@countylib.org](mailto:zhottel@countylib.org) for questions or with anything you would like to share.

Shenandoah Room / County Archives  
Exhibit to open November 1st at  
Historic Courthouse Visitor Center

## November Program

Tuesday, November 15th  
7:00 PM

**St. Paul's Heritage Center**  
106 S. High St.  
Edinburg VA

**Decision at Tom's Brook**  
**George Custer,**  
**Thomas Rosser, and the**  
**Joy of the Fight**

**William J. Miller, Author**  
A Non-Traditional View of  
the Battle of Tom's Brook

The Civil War battle at Tom's Brook on October 9, 1864, shows up in history books as a trifling, almost humorous, affair most commonly known as The Woodstock Races. Mr. Miller will present a more realistic perspective of the story as a tragedy, a mystery and the climax of an ordeal for residents of Shenandoah County.

*Parking Available in Shentel Lot*

## Courthouse Visitor Center Volunteers to be honored

The second annual Volunteer Appreciation dinner will take place next month at the Edinburg Mill.

Since we now have a continuing presence at the 1795 Historic Courthouse in Woodstock, we have established a wonderful corp of volunteers who man the Visitor Center each Thursday, Friday and Saturday, year round. In addition to that ongoing presence, we have still another, smaller team who man our booth whenever we go out into the community for festivals or special events.

The SCHS Board of Directors values the services of these members and we like to express our appreciation by hosting a dinner in their honor each year. These loyal volunteers are: Dennis Atwood, John Adamson, Larry Beazley, Billy and Gloria Boone, Gerald Buttram, Karen Cooper, Diane Ferguson, Kevin Frazier, Robert Frye, Ellen Markel, Diane Miller, Janice Miller, Patrick Murphy, Anna Mae Ortgies, Jim and Kim Stevenson, Nancy Stewart, Margie Hisey Tackett, Meg Trott, and Kent Womack.

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



## From the County Archives

By Zach Hottel,  
Archivist

### October is Archives Month

During the month of October communities, historic sites, and archives across the country will celebrate American Archives Month. This is an opportunity to highlight the value of archives, their collections, and archivists.

This year the Truban Archives at the Shenandoah County Library will be sponsoring several activities throughout the month. Our celebration will kick off with the opening of our county wide, Archives Month exhibit at 1:00PM on Saturday October 1<sup>st</sup>. In line with the Commonwealth of Virginia's theme for this celebration, the exhibit will highlight "Art in the Archives" by featuring photographs and interpretive panels showing local paintings, quilts, drawings, earthenware, textiles, and other artistic items. These will be drawn from the collection of the Truban Archives and five other museums in Shenandoah County. The portions of this exhibit will be on display every Friday and Saturday in October at the following host sites:

Strasburg Museum 10 AM - 4 PM  
 Hupps Hill 9 AM - 5 PM  
 Woodstock Museum 1PM - 4PM  
 Shenandoah County Historic Courthouse 11AM - 4 PM  
 Edinburg Mill 9:30 AM - 5:30PM  
 Shenandoah County Library 10 AM - 6 PM on Fridays  
 and 10 AM - 3 PM on Saturdays  
 Mt. Jackson Museum - Fridays: 1 - 4 PM; Saturdays:  
 10 AM - 4 PM  
 New Market Area Library - Friday: 1 - 5 PM and  
 Saturdays 9:30 AM - 1 PM

Individuals visiting the exhibit are encouraged to participate in our Archives Month passport program. Visitors can pick up one of these passports at each host site and they will receive a stamp for each portion they view. Persons who see all six pieces of the exhibit will be entered to win a special archives month prize package. Limit one entry per person.

Children in the community are also invited to our special "Coloring the Past" Archives Month Childrens' program to be held on October 5<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM. During this event participants will be able to create their own art work based on the special items that are part of the "Art in the Archives" Exhibit. The finished products will then be on display in the County Library at Edinburg through October 31<sup>st</sup>.

On Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> archivist Zachary Hottel will participate in "Ask An Archivist" Day. This is an opportunity for the public, either in person or via social media, to ask questions about what an archives does, how to preserve your personal collections, ways to connect with local history, and much more. This local segment of an all day, nation-wide event that involves archivists from hundreds of institutions from around the country, will last from 10:00AM-3:00PM. Be sure to use #askanarchivist to follow the conversation on social media.

For more information on Archives Month you can visit [countylib.org/local-history](http://countylib.org/local-history) or <http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/archivesmonth/>. Also, be sure to follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook as we post photographs and historic information related to these events and our collections throughout the month.

## Women In The Military

Our forefathers weren't the only soldiers who served in the military. Some of our foremothers served, too. In special women's branches of the military, 350,000 women did more than support their men from the homeland. And that's not counting the women who served in the army and navy nursing corps.

The Women's Army Corps (WAC) was established in 1942 for auxiliary noncombatant duty in World War II. Organized originally as the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), the name was changed in 1943.

Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) was a group of U.S. civilian pilots under contract to the Army in World War II. WASPs served as test pilots, ran training missions and ferried new aircraft. Congress disbanded the group in 1944. In 1977 WASPs were granted military status and eligibility for veterans' benefits.

During World War I, women were accepted into the navy for the first time, and about 11,000 enlisted. Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) was established as a unit of the U.S. Navy in 1942 during World War II. Women who enlisted in WAVES were commissioned in the Women's Reserve of the U.S. Naval Reserve. Their work included air traffic control, naval air navigation and communications. Recruiting continued until 1945.

SPARs, the Women's Reserve of the U.S. Coast Guard, was named for the Coast Guard motto, "Always ready," S(emper) par (atus). SPARs was formed during World War II and disbanded in 1946.

The Marine Corps Women's Reserve (MCWR) was established during World War I and reinstated during World War II.

But don't bother to check for military records if your ancestor was a mother at the time in question. The services prohibited the enlistment of women with children. The services also avoided placing women in positions where they might give orders to men. Officials prohibited women from serving overseas as long as they could get away with it.

In 1948, with the passage of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, the WAC, WAVES and MCWR were made integral and permanent components of the appropriate armed services unit, as well as the reserves.

[Reprinted with permission from the Michigan Genealogical Council Newsletter - Summer, 2014. Above article with permission from Anita Stuever, past president of the Calhoun County, MI Genealogical Society.]

### Web Site - [Cont. from Page 1]

Upcoming events are in a new format. One can search for subjects within the site. Several of the features have been given new levels of attention and are easier to find. Contacting us is much easier than in the previous site. The entire site automatically adjusts for I-Pads, tablets and smart phones.

Links to our SCHS page on Facebook and History Pin are now included.

We encourage you to visit and take a look through the various features: the address remains:

[www.shenandoahcountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.shenandoahcountyhistoricalsociety.org) plus we have incorporated a easier to use address: [www.schs1795.com](http://www.schs1795.com) for those who visit often.



## Quilt Exhibit

Periodically the Virginia Quilt Museum exhibits its newly acquired quilts.

Their latest exhibition is scheduled for Sept. 20-Dec. 17, 2016 and includes two wonderful Shenandoah County quilts. Both the Elizabeth Neff and Annie Elizabeth Funkhouser Zirkle quilts, on hand at our Neff homecoming in June, will be on display. If you missed them earlier we encourage you to visit the quilt museum and enjoy them along with many other quilts both old and new. Check their museums website, [www.vaquiltmuseum.org](http://www.vaquiltmuseum.org), for info about other current exhibits and details about the hours of operation.

## Building a Log Cabin

From *A History of the Valley of Virginia* by Kercheval, 1833

### Chapter XXIII, The House Warming

I will proceed to state the usual manner of settling a young couple in the world.

A spot was selected on a piece of land of one of the parents for their habitation. A day was appointed shortly after their marriage for commencing the work of building their cabin. The fatigue party consisted of choppers, whose business it was to fell the trees and cut them off at proper lengths – a man with his team for hauling them to the place, and arranging them, properly assorted, at the sides and ends of the building – and a carpenter, if such he might be called, whose business it was to search the woods for a proper tree for making clapboards for the roof. The tree for this purpose must be straight-grained and from three to four feet in diameter. The boards were split four feet long, with a large frow, and as wide as the timber would allow. They were used without planning or shaving. Another division were employed in getting puncheons for the floor of the cabin; this was done by splitting trees about eighteen inches in diameter and hewing the faces of them with a broad-axe. They were half the length of the floor they were intended to make.

The materials for the cabin were mostly prepared on the first day, and sometimes the foundations laid in the evening; the second day was allotted for the raining.

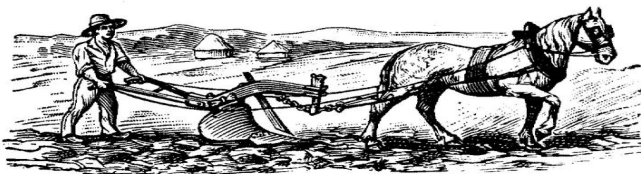
In the morning of the next day the neighbors collected for the raising. The first thing to be done was the election of four corner-men, whose business it was to notch and place the logs, the rest of the company furnishing them with the timbers. In the meantime the boards and puncheons were collected for the floor and roof, so that by the time the cabin was a few rounds high, the sleepers and floor began to be laid. The door was made by cutting or sawing the logs in one side so as to make an opening about three feet wide; this opening was secured by upright pieces of timber about three inches thick, through which holes were bored into the ends of the logs for the purpose of pinning them fast. A similar opening, but wider, was made at the end of the chimney. This was built of logs, and made large, to admit of a back and jams of stone. At the square two end logs projected a foot or eighteen inches beyond the wall, to receive the butting poles, as they were called, against which the ends of the first row of clapboards were supported. The roof was formed by making the end logs shorter until a single log formed the comb of the roof. On these logs the clapboards were placed, the ranges of them lapping some distance over those next below them, and kept in their places by logs placed at proper distances upon them.

The roof and sometimes the floor were finished on the same day of the raising; a third day was commonly spent by a few carpenters in leveling off the floor, making a clapboard door and a table. This last was made of a split slab, and supported by four round legs set in auger holes; some three-legged stools were made in the same manner. Some pins stuck in the logs at the back of the house, supported some clapboards which served for shelves for the table furniture. A single fork, placed with its lower end in a hole in the floor, and the upper end fastened to a joist, served for a bedstead, by placing a pole in the fork with one end through a crack between the logs in the wall. This front pole was crossed by a shorter one within the fork, with its outer end through another crack. From the front pole, through a crack between the logs of the end of the house, the boards were put on which formed the bottom of the bed. Sometimes other poles were pinned to the fork a little distance between these for the purpose of supporting the front and foot of the bed, while the walls were the support of its back and head. A few pegs around the walls, for the display of the coats of the women and hunting shirts of the men, and two small forks or buck's horns to a joist for the rifle and shot-pouch, completed the carpenter work.

In the meantime masons were at work. With the heart pieces of the timber of which the clapboards were made, they made billets for chunking up the cracks between the logs of the cabin and chimney. A large bed of mortar was made for daubing up these cracks; and a few stones formed the back and jambs of the chimney.

The cabin being finished, the ceremony of house warming took place, before the young couple were permitted to move into it. This was a dance of the whole night's continuance, made up of the relations of the bride and groom and their neighbors. On the day following, the young couple took possession of their new mansion.

[Thanks to John Adamson for providing this interesting excerpt.]



## Jonathan Noyales Hosts Seminar / Tour at Lord Fairfax College

"Another Era in Our War Life:" Sigel and Hunter in the Lower Shenandoah Valley, Spring 1864" is the subject of this day-long program which will begin at the Midletown Campus of Lord Fairfax Community College on Saturday, October 22nd from 10:00 AM to 4:15 PM. The opening session by Author/Professor Noyales will address, "Will this all end?": The Uncertainty of Life in the Shenandoah Valley on the Eve of the War's Fourth Spring.

Following a lunch break, attendees will carpool and tour sites associated with operations in the lower Valley during the Spring of 1864. Sites scheduled are between Winchester and Stephens City and include Sigel's headquarters at Hollingsworth's Mill, site of the Market House in Winchester, Hull's Store, Locust Hill, Oliver M. Brown house, Rev., Dr. Andrew H.H. Boyd house, McLeod's Hill and Stephens Run as well as other sites.

Space is limited, so early registration is encouraged. Cost: \$20 per person.

To register contact LFCC's Office of Workforce Solutions at 540-868-7021 before October 21st at 12 Noon.

Questions may be addressed to:

[jnoyalas@lfcc.edu](mailto:jnoyalas@lfcc.edu).

## 6th Annual Heritage Day At Burwell-Morgan Mill is October 29th - 11 - 4 PM

This annual event of the Clarke County Heritage Association is an opportunity to experience every day life in the 1700's.

The event will offer demonstrations on how people in the colonial era did fundamental activities such as food production, woodworking, spinning and cooking. There will also be kids' games, fresh apple and pear cider, and there will be an encampment of Revolutionary War re-enactors from the Second Virginia Regiment. All activities will be inside or right outside the Mill and if it's a nice day, may spread out to the meadow.

At 1 p.m. there will be a live performance of "Famous Women in American History." One is invited to grab some cider and come learn about these historical figures from a unique first-person perspective.

Free and open to the public, there will be activities for people of all ages. Attendees are encouraged to wear warm clothing and sturdy shoes. The Burwell-Morgan Mill is located at 15 Tannery Lane. Millwood/Berryville VA. Info: 540-955-2600

✦ Continuing Series on Historic Buildings in Shenandoah County ✦

206 S. MAIN STREET, EDINBURG

A pretty brick house sits up on a hill right across Stony Creek from the Mill in Edinburg. Facing the Valley Pike in such a prominent location this old house must have witnessed many interesting moments during its more than two hundred years. John W. "Bill" Roller is the fortunate owner and appreciates the house's history and location. Bill's grandfather, Erasmus Bauserman, a Confederate veteran who served in Company K of the 12th Virginia Cavalry, bought the house in 1899 for \$1100. Upon Erasmus's death, the house was passed to his daughter, Bess Bauserman. Bess married Wellington Burgess Roller and their son Bill was born in 1929. The house has been Bill's home for every one of his 87 years.

The two story house is composed of two rectangles. The brick front portion (34 by 20 feet) is the "new" part of the house, built about 1834. The rear log portion (29 by 15 feet) was probably built about 1790, but it is hard to be sure. The prominent location on the Valley Pike, next to the mill sites along Stony Creek, would have been a very desirable location in the early history of Shenandoah County, so the oldest portion of the house could predate 1790. Unfortunately for the historian in me, the log fabric of the old portion is covered making it very difficult to find clues that might reveal the age of the structure.

While the age of the earliest part of Bill's house might be hard to discern, its important location on the north bank of Stony Creek is not. In fact, there is an old roadbed located between the house and Stony Creek. This old road remains, unpaved and grown up in grass, but it is quite obvious when

By: John Adamson



Note the old road along Stony Creek starting in the left foreground.



The old road looking west with Stony Creek on the left.

you face the house. The old road was undoubtedly an important link between the Valley Pike and the mills located to the west along the creek. Today's Stony Creek Boulevard is a modern road that did not exist until the construction of Interstate 81 required that a new road be built into Edinburg in the late 1960s. The old road is part of the parcel the house is located on and extends along the north bank of the creek several hundred yards to the old railroad bridge over Stony Creek. Bill keeps this area mowed and it makes a very pleasant walking trail with nice views from bluffs above the creek and it has a secluded bench to take a rest and ponder local history. Though I have passed by this location hundreds of times, I was unaware of the old road until Bill took me for a short walk upon it.

An outstanding feature of Bill's house is its pretty porch decorated with exuberant scrollwork, often called "gingerbread". This porch was added to the brick front of the house by Erasmus Bauserman shortly after 1900. Another nice feature found on

the façade of the house is the graffiti written on the mortar joints by visitors over the years. Two bricks bear the chalk signatures "Lena" and "Blanch". They left their names joyfully preserving evidence of their friendship with Bill's mother, Bess, more than 80 years ago.

So we have a pretty house in a prominent and historic location in one of Shenandoah County's charming towns. It seems to me that Bill is indeed fortunate to have lived all of his years in this house, the place he treasures most. I thank him for sharing it with me and, through this little essay, with all the members of the Historical Society.



Bill Roller standing in front of the early 20th century porch



Chalk signatures of visitors "Lena" and "Blanch".



1834 Newel post in the brick portion of the house.

**Page County Heritage Festival  
Is Oct. 8 & 9**

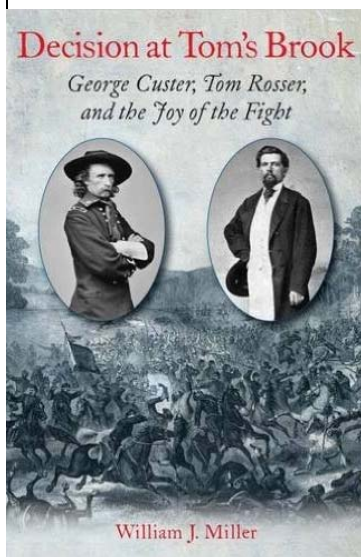
Celebrating their 47th year, the annual Festival will be held over the Columbus Day weekend at the Page County Fairgrounds at 15 Fairlane Road in Luray, Va. Events take place from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm both days.

In addition to hundreds of crafters, and lots of great food, there will be all-day demonstrations of spinning, crocheting, apple-butter boiling, tole and oil painting, basket making, wheel-thrown pottery, blacksmithing and other traditional handiwork.

For tractor and engine enthusiasts, the Page County Heritage Festival's Steam & Gas Engine Show will be a one-of-a-kind treat. One can watch log sawing, feed grinding and corn chopping all powered by steam and antique tractors. Also, there will be numerous small antique engines, antique automobiles and tractors on display -- all in running condition.

Nearby properties, owned and operated by the Page County Heritage Association - the Calendine Museum, the Hamburg Store, the Mauck Meeting House, and the Massanutten One-Room School - will also be open. Info: [contact@pagecountyheritage.com](mailto:contact@pagecountyheritage.com)

## New Book



### **Decision at Tom's Brook - George Custer, Tom Rosser and the Joy of the Fight**

By:

William J. Miller

[The following is a review by SCHS member and Civil War scholar, R. Patrick Murphy]

On Route 11 at the southern end of the town limits of Tom's Brook is a highway historical marker that reads in a single sentence: "Action of Tom's Brook: Here Early's cavalry under Rosser and Lomax was driven back by Sheridan's cavalry under Torbert, October 9, 1864." There is a Virginia Civil War Trails marker in the nearby Shenandoah County Park. Neither of these signs does credit to what happened on that cold October day. This action or fight—it hardly rises to the dignity of a battle—was the penultimate fight in the Shenandoah Valley during the Civil War, the almost total destruction of Confederate cavalry in the Valley, and the worst defeat of Confederate cavalry in the War. In a remarkably well written and well researched book, author William J. Miller provides a detailed analysis of the action. *Decision at Tom's Brook: George Custer, Thomas Rosser; and the Joy of the Fight* (Eldorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie LLC, 2016) is for sale by SCHS for \$31.00.

The action at Tom's Brook was really two fights, one between Union Brigadier General George A. Custer and Confederate Brigadier General Thomas L. Rosser on the Back Road and one between Union Brigadier General Wesley Merritt and Confederate Major General Lunsford L. Lomax on the Valley Pike. The fight between Merritt and Lomax was not much of a fight at all; Lomax was completely overwhelmed by Merritt's greater numbers, better horses, and superior weapons. The fight between Custer and Rosser on the Back Road, around a geographic feature known as Coffman's Hill, was far more interesting because of the psychological makeup of Custer and Rosser. Miller posits that both Custer's and Rosser's personalities were informed by *gaudium certaminis*, the joy of the fight. In a well-balanced analysis, Miller concludes that "the fight on Coffman's Hill was not the triumph of courage, fighting ability, and leadership Rosser claimed, but an unnecessary, poorly managed, humiliating misadventure in recklessness" that led to the precipitous, 26-mile, panicked Confederate retreat from Tom's Brooks to Meems Bottom south of Mt. Jackson, known as "the Woodstock Races."

Custer's post-war life has been examined ad nauseam; Rosser's post-war life is less well-known.

[Continued in next column]

## New Books

### On the Horizon

We are pleased to announce that we will soon have two long-awaited books to offer for sale:

*The Rinkers of Virginia, Their Neighbors & Kin and The Shenandoah Valley* by Daniel Warrick Burruss, II. This book has been out of stock for over a year and we even have several people on the wait list. The Shenandoah County Historical Society has recently obtained exclusive permission from the daughter of Mr. Burruss to reprint the original book. Plans are already underway and we hope to have copies available in time for holiday purchasing. If you are interested, let us know and we will notify you as soon as it is available. It will be available at \$26 (\$25 for members)

*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 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 at the printing stage and will be available soon at \$18. (\$17 for members)

### Tom's Brook - [Continued]

Although Rosser was a successful builder of railroads in the United States and Canada, he was obnoxiously pugnacious until his death. In particular, he tried to blame his humiliating defeat at Tom's Brook that plagued him the rest of his life on his superior, Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early, and his subordinates, Colonels Thomas T. Munford and Richard W. Carter.

Well-illustrated and well-indexed, *Decision at Tom's Brook* contains three useful appendices: orders of battle; strengths and losses, with the names, so far as discernable, of both Union and Confederate killed, wounded, and prisoners of war; and notes on maps and topography. It is happily formatted to have footnotes as opposed to endnotes. This book is one of this reviewer's favorite Civil War books, not only because it is particularly well written, but also because this reviewer has been over the ground on which the action at Tom's Brook took place and was able to visualize exactly what happened and where. Any person interested in the Civil War in Shenandoah County should have this book in their library. Price: \$31.00 (Members: \$30.00)



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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.

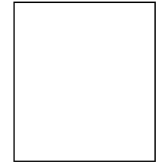
Stop in and see if you can find someone you know.



29123



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Edinburg VA 22824

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

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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 - More events on Web site

October 3rd - 11:30 AM - 6:30 PM

**Oktoberfest at the Frontier Culture Museum** in Staunton, Va. Visit an actual German farm right here in the Shenandoah Valley. There will be traditional food, dancing, good /german beer, original music, and plenty of fun for kids of all ages. For ticket prices, entertainment schedule and other information visit the web site at: <http://www.frontiermuseum.org/oktoberfest-2016/> Info: 540-332-7850

October 8th - 2 - 4:00 PM

**Battle of Hupps Hill program** National Parks Ranger, Jeff Driscoll, who will discuss the short but bitterly fought engagement that took place on the slopes of Hupp's Hill, just north of Strasburg. Free. A Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Program at 33239 Old Valley Pike, Strasburg. Info: 540-869-3051 or 869-2064.

October 8th - 9 AM to 1:30 PM

**Tour of Tom's Brook Battlefield** by author and historian Bill Miller, on the 152nd anniversary of the battle. Tour will travel the 60-mile route off the beaten tracks

through the famous farmland that made the Shenandoah "the Breadbasket of the Confederacy." Cost is \$65 per person and is limited to 12. For reservations and info: <https://decisionatomsbrook.com/tours-and-talks/>

October 15th & 16th 10 AM - 4 PM

**Battle of Cedar Creek Commemoration Weekend.** Belle Grove Plantation and their partners in Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park will commemorate the 152nd Anniversary of the Civil War Battle of Cedar Creek. For more details call: 540-869-2064

October 29th - 6 - 9 PM

**Ghost / Graveyard Tours** in Strasburg. This Family-friendly event is a walking tour of the historic cemeteries of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Queen Street, and the Mt. Zion United Methodist and includes stories about graves of prominent citizens, the history of the churches and cemeteries and more. It is sponsored by the Strasburg Heritage Association. Tours leave every 15 minutes from the Strasburg Community Library and last approximately one hour. Tickets are \$3 and available at the Town office. \$5 on day of event. Children 5 and

under are free; 13 years and under must be accompanied by an adult. Tour available for disabled. Info: 540-465-9501

November 17th - 7:30 PM

**The Great Virginia Cattle Drives**, long before Texas was known about, will be discussed by Nancy Sorrels. Cattle was once a key industry of the Valley and residents drove then to market. The New Market Historical Society event is free and is held at the New Market Town Hall at 9418 John Sevier Road in New Market.

December 3rd - 11 AM to 4 PM

**1st Annual Shenandoah County Holiday Homes Tour**, sponsored by the Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce. This year the Tours will be in Woodstock, and the 1749 Historic Courthouse will be one of the tour sites. Check newspapers for details. Snow date: 12/4

December 11th - 2 - 4 PM

**Learn about postcards and greeting cards from various holidays including the Christmas holidays.** Charles Thorne will present the program sponsored by the Strasburg Heritage Assoc. at St. Paul Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall on Washington St., in Strasburg. Free. The public is invited.