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The Thomas Balch Chronicle

The Newsletter of the Friends of Thomas Balch Library of the Town of Leesburg, Virginia
A Library for History and Genealogy

Volume 7 Issue 2

July 2003

Painting of Historic "Meeting the Piscataway" Unveiled by Library Friends

A perfect first day of summer, and one without rain, June 21 saw the presentation and unveiling of a major gift to the Thomas Balch Library. Entitled "Meeting the Piscataway," the oil on linen painting by William Woodward, depicts the first recorded meeting between colonists Burr Harrison and Giles Vandercastel and American Indians in Loudoun County.

The painting, commissioned by the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, was made possible through a generous contribution by Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Dodge of Washington, D.C. Mrs. Dodge (Lalla Harrison Dodge) is a descendant of Burr Harrison. As a young woman, Mrs. Dodge often visited the Leesburg home of the Hayden Harrises. That home held a painting of the meeting between the Piscataway Indians and two colonists, one of whom she was told, was her ancestor Burr Harrison. The painting was lost when the Harris home burned. The memory of that scene, however, remained.

Last year, Mrs. Dodge visited the Library and asked if the Library would be interested in having a painting of that event. This offer was met with enthusiasm, and Mrs. Dodge asked for a recommendation of an artist.

Ann Noel was, at that time, a member of the Friends' Board. She was heading the project for the mural commissioned by the Friends for the Library, and she suggested William Woodward, the artist then executing the mural. The meeting between Mrs. Dodge and Mr. Woodward resulted in the collaboration that led to the unveiling event.

Well known historian Eugene Scheel spoke, giving the background of the event pictured that was of special value to those in attendance. (See next column for extracts from the report of the meeting the two colonists gave to Governor Nicholson).

Aside from many members of the Harrison family from all across the country also present for the unveiling were Town of Leesburg Mayor Kristen Umstaddt, members of the Town Council, and the Balch Library Advisory Commission.



Mrs. Dodge and Ann Noel with the new painting

PHOTO BY FRAN POSTON



PHOTO BY FRAN POSTON
Historian Eugene M. Scheel

A report to Governor Francis Nicholson of Virginia, regarding the meeting of envoys Burr Harrison of Chopawamsic, and Giles Vandercastel of Accotink, with the Chief of the Piscataway Indians to summon him to meet with the Governor in Williamsburg. Out of caution, the Piscataway did not accept the invitation but instead asked the Governor to visit them.

In obedience to His Excellency's command and an order of this Corte bearing date the 12th day of this Instance, April (1699). We, the subscribers have bene with the Emperor of Piscataway, att his forte, and did then Comand him, in his Maj'tys name, to meet his Excellency in a General Assembly of this his Maj'ties most Ancient Colloney and Dominion of Virginia, the ffirst of May next or two or three days before, with some of his great men. As soone as we had delivered his Excellency's Commands, the Emperor summons all his Indians thatt was then at the forte - being in all about twenty men. After consultation of almost two oures, they told us they were very bussey and could not possibly come or goe downe, but if his Excellency would be pleased to come to him, some of his great men should be glad to see him, and then his Ex-lyly might speake whatt he hath to say to him if Exceellency could nott come himself, then to send some of his great men, ffor be desired nothing butt peace.

They live on an Island in the middle of the Potomack River, its about a mile long or something Better, and aboute a quarter of a mile wide in the Broaddis place. The forte stands att ye upper End of the Island butt nott quite ffinshed, & there the Island is nott above two hundred and ffifty yards over; the bankes are about 12 foot high, and very beard to asend.

As for Provisions they have Corne, they have Enuf and to spare. We saw noe straing Indians, but the Emperor sayes that the Genekers Lives with them when they att home; also addes that he had maid peace with all ye Indinas except the ffrench Indians; and now the ffrench have a minde to Lye still themselves; they have hired there Indians to doe mischief.

As for the number of Indeens, there was att the fforte a bout twenty men & aboute twenty women and about Thirty children and we mett sore. We understand there is in the Inhabitace a bout sixteene. They informed us there was some outt a hunting, butt we Judge by there Cabbins there cannot be above Eighty or ninety bowmen in all.

This is all we Can Report, who subscribes ourselves

Yo'r Ex'lyly Most Dutifull Servants

Giles Vanderasteal Bur Harrison

(Extract from the report, from Harrison Williams' book *Legends of Loudoun*.)

Another Balch Treasure

Friends' Board member Wynne Saffer sent the following example of the many jewels a good researcher can discover at the Thomas Balch Library:

REFUGEES, FREEDMEN & ABANDONED LANDS
National Archives
Microfilm Collection

Record Group - M1055
Roll Number - 5

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Lincoln, Loudoun County Va
1st Month 1st day 1866

General Hancock

Some three or four days ago, a colored man, nearly blind, and I should suppose from his appearance, seventy five or eighty years of age, made complaint to me as a justice of the peace, that his former master's representatives were going to turn him and his wife out of the house where they have been living. He is entirely incapable of labor and of course cannot get another house. I told him his case was a hard one, but I did not know whether I could do anything for him, as our present laws are altogether opposed to the rights of the freedman. I think as they have had all the benefit of his labor for his whole life, and have sold nearly all of his children as slaves in the South, that they should not be allowed now to turn him out of doors to starve, but should be compelled to clothe and feed him comfortably the few short years of his life. He formerly belonged to Hugh Smith now deceased, near Mount Gilead in this county.

If not too closely engaged, I should like to receive a note giving information as to whether anything can be done for him, or whether he is to be left to the mercy of rebels and traitors.

Respectfully,
Henry S. Taylor

The man's name is Paris, but I forget his last name. [Paris & Sydna Champ]

It's our intent to feature such items of interest in each Chronicle. Next issue will bring you two letters from the Lincoln area. One describes in detail, the devastation of Major General Wesley Merrit's Burning Raids, while the other tells of the exodus to California of Loudoun gold-seekers. We welcome your suggestions for what you would like to see. Please contact the editor with your ideas.

Home Interest Club Cookbook Released

Compiled by Dr. George Hruneni, part-time archivist at the TBL, a new old cookbook, featuring real old-timey recipes from the 100-year archives of the Home Interest Club has been published by the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library.

Highlighted at the reception following the unveiling of "Meeting the Piscataway" painting on June 21, were the delicious cookies prepared from the cookbook and served by Home Interest Club members Betty McNair and Lucy Potts.

The cookbook contains a selection of puddings, cakes, as well as soups. It is available for \$10 at the Library and at selected outlets throughout the County. Of course, all proceeds go to the Thomas Balch Library.

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Continuing Support For Friends' Programs

The Thomas Balch Library has a long history of community support from both private and public sectors, including the organization of the all-volunteer Friends of the Library in 1995. The Friends continually receive contributions in both time and money for the many outreach projects and programs which we sponsor. All monies received support and benefit the Balch Library and its collections, which is why it is always exciting for the Friends to receive new and renewing membership applications, contributions, memorial gifts, and an occasional anonymous donation! Interestingly, the past four days have brought us orders for two bricks (\$200) for the Harrison Memorial Garden, a large brass leaf order (\$500) for the Tree of History and an anonymous donation of \$15,000 in honor of Mrs. Clarence Dodge, who generously commissioned, through the Friends, an oil painting by William Woodward. The painting, entitled *Meeting the Piscataway*, now hangs in the Howard Clark Room at Thomas Balch Library as a permanent part of the collections.

Susan Webber

Cheryl Sadowski, Jane Sullivan and LaVonne Markham. The final phase of this project is to complete booklets which will be available at the library for future field trips for teachers and students, and a fully completed lesson plan on the Friends' WEB site which can be downloaded. This phase of the project should be completed by September 15, 2003.

Rachel Thompson is meeting with Bill Brazier, coordinator of social studies for the Loudoun school district to discuss the resources available at the Balch website during a fall department chairs' meeting. Steve Engratt will contribute his WEB expertise in seeing that this information is easily accessible from the Friends' WEB site.

This project is the first of many that are planned to implement the goals of the Friends in educating the Loudoun community as well as surrounding counties of the resources that are available at the Balch Library.

Rachel Thompson

Letter From the President:

A Thank you to Jane Sullivan

When the Town of Leesburg took over the operation of the Thomas Balch Library in 1992, Jane Sullivan was appointed Manager. A few weeks ago Jane announced her resignation – to take a position nearer to her home in West Virginia. All who are involved with the Library will miss Jane.

She has a strong knowledge of history and genealogy and knows the Library's collections intimately. Accordingly, she has been especially effective both in guiding acquisitions and in assisting users.

The Library developed dramatically during Jane's tenure. The expansion and renovation of the building were certainly the most visible

changes during this period. Equally important, however, have been the enormous expansion of the collections, the establishment of strong operational processes, and the development of the highly professional and friendly staff. Jane has utilized effectively the support provided by the Friends and has been most helpful with the programs which the Friends have initiated – including those in education, Black History, and publications.

This autumn the Friends will be inviting Jane back to the Library to formally thank her for her wonderful leadership. In the meantime, please join me in wishing her well.

Fred Morefield

540-668-7100 morefieldf@cs.com



Jane Sullivan

A Parting Note from the Library Manager

It is with mixed feelings that I announce my departure from Balch Library on June 13th. I have worked here for more than 15 years and have seen the library grow from a small room in the basement with 200 books to a beautiful facility with a collection of over 12,000 books as well as diverse collections such as archives, photos and microfilm. We have become very technologically advanced and have been able to provide our patrons with a wide variety of on-line resources. We give frequent classes and lectures at the library and in the community and work closely with other heritage organizations in Loudoun County.

I have enjoyed my years here and despite being a “Yankee” I have learned a lot about Loudoun County history. It has been fun to combine my genealogy hobby with my job and to have such great resources at my finger tips. Most significantly, I have led the library through a large building project. With the help of many people, I have seen Balch be-

Member To Member

Take advantage of this new program to let others know of the important work accomplished by the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, and to give exposure to the Library's collections, too.

When you give a gift membership to one or more of your family and friends, as our thanks, we will extend your membership for a year. What could be an easier way to help TBL and also your family and friends.

A Reminder to the Friends of the Library:

Don't forget to renew your Friends' membership. It's truly an investment in the future; by contributing to the preservation of our past, you ensure that this information is there for the generations to come. And you can use this form for your friends, too.

Carol Kupchik

The Friends of the Thomas Balch Library

invite you to join us!

Yes! I wish to join the Friends and play an important role in supporting the collections and programs of the

Thomas Balch Library

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Individual \$20.00

Family \$25.00

Student/Senior \$15.00

Patron \$50.00

Sustaining \$100.00

Benefactor \$250.00

No, I do not wish to join, but I would like to make a tax deductible contribution of \$ _____

The Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc., is a 501(c)3 corporation

Please forward with your check to:

Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc

P.O. Box 2184 Leesburg, VA 20177

come a first class research library. With all of this, however, my fondest memories will be of the many people whom I have gotten to know over the years. Some have been frequent patrons, others library staff and volunteers and still others colleagues in the community. Working here has given me an appreciation of this County and its great sense of history.

My new job will be as coordinator of the Eastern West Virginia Rural Health Education Consortium. My husband and I have moved to West Virginia, so it will be good to work closer to home and to meet more people and see more places in my newly adopted state. I am also ready for a new adventure in my life. I leave here with some sad feelings but most of all with good memories. Fortunately, I will not be too far away and I will certainly keep in touch and come back — but as a patron!

Jane Sullivan

Calendar of Events:

We hope you enjoy your summer.
Look for upcoming events in a separate mailing
before September. . .Stay cool!

Advisory Commission Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m. Open to the public.

Loudoun Genealogical Society Meetings: 1st Wednesday every other month, 7 p.m. Public welcome.

Civil War Round Table: 2nd Tuesday of the month, except for July and August. 7:30 p.m. Public welcome.

Unless noted, all events are held at Thomas Balch Library, 208 W. Market St., Leesburg, VA 703-737-7195



The Thomas Balch
Chronicle

Thomas Balch Library
P. O. Box 2184
Leesburg, VA 20177

Inside: Farewell to Jane Sullivan; Unveiling “Meeting the Piscataway”



The Friends of
Thomas Balch Library, Inc.
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E-Mail:
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Board of Directors:

Paul Bice, *Treasurer*; Jane Bogle; Terri Coleman, *Corresponding Secretary*; Phyllis Cook-Taylor; Neil Horstman; Annie L. Hulen; Carol Kupchik; Lewis Leigh, *Vice-president*; Leland Mahan; Fred Morefield, *President*; Margaret Morton; Peggy Roberts; Wynne Saffer, *Recording Secretary*; Pauline Singletary; Rachel Thompson; Susan Webber, *Assistant Treasurer*

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Hours:

Mon., Thurs & Fri. 10-5

Tues. 10-8 • Wed. 2-8

Sat. 11-4 • Sun. 1-5

The Town of Leesburg, Virginia
Advisory Commission for
The Thomas Balch Library

Commission Members:

Jim Roberts, *Chairman*; Francis Fera, *Vice Chairman*; Jim Hershman; Jim Lucier; Tom Marshall; Joan Rokus; Martha Schonberger; Mark Herring, *Representative, Board of Supervisors*; Melinda Kramer, *Representative, Leesburg Town Council*