



The Thomas Balch Chronicle

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

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Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc.

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The Ninth Friends' Annual Meeting

Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc. conducted its 9th Annual Meeting on November 7, 2004. The seventy plus members attending approved the slate of officers presented by nominating committee chair Doug Foard and welcomed as new board members Gail Adams, Connie Fletcher and from a floor nomination, Jim Hershman. Officers elected, who will assume their positions in January, are Paul Bice, serving a second term as president, Susan Webber vice president, Tom Crutchfield, treasurer, Annie Hulén, recording secretary and Terri Coleman, corresponding secretary.

Outgoing board members Fred Morefield, Lee Catlett and Sallie Vaaler received thanks for their services and valuable contributions to the workings of the Friends organization.

The Friends learned that 2004 publication sales through October were more than \$15,000 and all Friends' publications have been reprinted this year. The Friends and the Black History Committee have each produced a handsome brochure. The recently published *Loudoun County's African-American Communities Tour Guide and Map* is experiencing outstanding sales. Expected soon from the printer: *A Story of Round Hill, Loudoun County, Virginia* by Ann W. Thomas

Among the very active Black History Committee plans are the commissioning of a painting for the Library and production of a special video about the life of Wilson Townsend, Jr. (See page 2 for *Upcoming Events*.) The Committee also will publish *In the Watch Fires* by Elaine Thompson, the story of the Emancipation Association in Loudoun County.

The Friends were honored by Leesburg Mayor Kristen C. Umstadt's introduction of program speaker, Balch Library Manager Alexandra S. Gressitt who shared with the members her vision and plans for the maintenance and growth of Thomas Balch Library that will make it the finest institution of its genre in the entire area. (See page 3 for an extract of the text.)



Murray Rose, an original incorporator of the Friends of Thomas Balch and it's first treasurer, and his wife Barbara, also a charter member of the Friends organization.



Board members Paul Bice, Doug Foard, Pauline Singletary and Lewis Leigh ponder the officer slate.



Board member Reginald Simms and Fred Morefield, with Brenda Douglass, former board members



BHC chairman Pauline Singletary and Leesburg Mayor Kristen C. Umstadt



Board member Susan Webber, Leesburg Councilman Kelly Burk, Alexandra S. Gressitt and former board member Lee Catlett.

Balch Library Commissioners Honor County Historians, Former Commission Members

The Advisory Commission for the Thomas Balch Library, on November 14, 2004, recognized four individuals for their outstanding contributions to the preservation of Loudoun County's heritage and its history. Held at the Library, this is the 12th year for these very special awards.

Rachel Yarnell Thompson was nominated for her most recent project *A Glimpse into the History of African Americans in Loudoun County*. This work, now available on the Friends' website, provides access to documents and other information that can be used by teachers to meet the Standards of Learning programs. The site also directs teachers to secondary sources available at the Library.

Genealogist and author Marty Hiatt was recognized for her contribution to Loudoun County as an author, publisher, instructor, and researcher, particularly for her efforts to preserve the County's vast church and cemetery records. Additionally, she was instrumental in establishing the Loudoun Genealogy Club and website.

Peggy Sands Drummond, correspondent for the African American community since 1954. Said her nominator Eileen Carlton, "She began writing in an era when very few journalists were female, when very few journalists were black. She has given and continues to give a public voice to the black community of Loudoun. Mrs. Drummond has put her admirable strong will to very effective use in this forum on more than one occasion."

Carol Morris Dukes, president of the Lincoln Preservation Foundation, has been a tireless leader in the effort to preserve the vibrant history of the Goose Creek District, the largest of Loudoun's historic districts. Her involvement in discovering and exposing the history of the Quaker village of Lincoln has resulted in renewed effort by the Foundation to rescue a number of historic sites.

At the Awards ceremony, the Advisory Commission also recognised two former Commissioners for their long and valuable service to the Library and to the County: Joan Gillette Rokus joined the Commission as representative for the Board of Supervisors and then became a member in her own right, and James Lucier who was appointed to the first Advisory Commission and also served as its chairman.

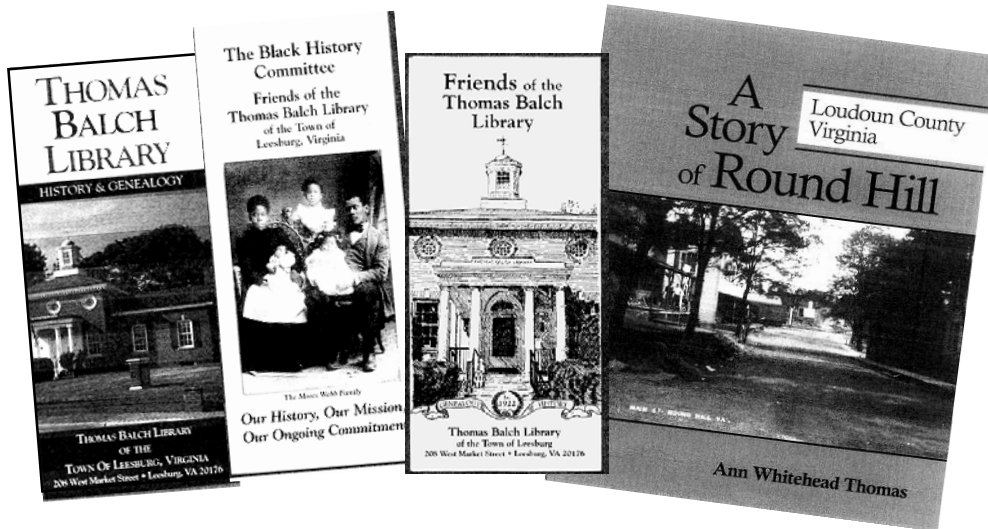


Honorees Rachel Thompson, Marty Hiatt, Peggy Drummond, & Carol Dukes

Welcome & Thank You New & Renewing Members

Gail Adams
Amy Bertsch
Roberto Costantino
Francis R. Fera
Anne S. Frazer
Ry A. & Anne D. Geiger
Bill & Carol Hanes
Neil W. & Anne Horstman
Sally Balch Hurme
Louisa S. Hutchison
Evelyn A. Johnson
Carty & Rennee Lawson
Barbara Loomis
Robert B & JoAnn V. Lyon
O. Leland & Cecelia Mahan
Tom and Barbi Marshall
Jean P. McDonald
Ken & Michaela McIntyre
Jane Packard
Glynis Patterson
Diane Rice
Joan G. Rokus
Elizabeth Seccombe
G. Scatterday
Thomas & Sandra Smart
Duanne & Lee Smith
Ann Whitehead Thomas
Elaine E. Thompson
Alfred P. Van Huyck
Keith L. Wauchope

Check Out These New Publications



Save These Dates!

Dec. 4 - 11 am to 4 pm. A reception and presentation to the Library of an original painting by BHC member and local artist Katherine Summers and a showing of her works.

Dec. 18 - Two intensive workshops on the War of 1812.

10 - 12 noon, James Lucier will discuss *James Monroe and the War of 1812*.

1-3 pm, Craig Scott will address methods for *Military Research - War of 1812*.

Feb. 10 - Premiere, at the Tally-Ho Theater, of commissioned video exploring the life of Mr. Wilson Townsend, Jr., growing up and conducting his business as a black man in Leesburg, Virginia during the time of great change in race relations. Snow date: Feb. 10. The video was made possible through a grant from the Loudoun Library Foundation.

Civil War Round Table:

2nd Tuesday of the month except for July and August. 7:30 pm. Public is welcome.

Advisory Commission for the Thomas Balch Library Meetings:

2nd Wednesday of each month. 7:00 pm. Open to the public.

Library Manager Alexandra S. Gressitt's Remarks to the Annual Meeting of Friends of Thomas Balch Library

A short time back having already been asked and somewhat incredulously on my part agreed to speak, I received a note sharing with me a title for my presentation, "The Legacy of Thomas Balch; The Vision for His Library." Titles of talks are curious creations. Often they are chosen months in advance to provide a theme and meet a printers' deadline. However interesting the biographic and historic details of Thomas Balch and of this his memorial, many of you have lived and experienced it and thus have the capacity to speak more eloquently than I to the integral role this institution has played in the life of Leesburg. So what I shall do instead is talk first a bit about accomplishments over the last eleven months and then turn to a vision for the future.

Books and manuscripts are teachers, companions and friends, not ornaments on library shelves or in recesses of dark and moldering vaults. They are living expressions of our lives, of our past and of our present and they are the energy that creates the path we are so bold as to call our future. They provide opportunities for us to choose which road we take in life. They have the capacity to speak to us, to enlighten us, to send a shiver up our spine or create that whispery hint of a smile or the gentle drop of tears reflecting memories past and yet to come. Thomas Hardy a novelist and poet, a bridge between the agricultural and industrial worlds, penned a short poem in which he asked, perhaps somewhat plaintively, "Why do I go on doing these things?" / "Why not cease?" For those for whom archivy, manuscripts and special collections are not a profession or a passion; this may be your question too. Come share with me these next few moments the accomplishments and ambitions and you too shall have an answer.

In every way Thomas Balch Library is unique – a town supported public facility dedicated to the preservation of historical and genealogical materials of its community. It is an expression of a dedicated community. It is a vision embraced; a vision achieved. Visions however are but fleeting moments molded by external forces and internal musings. My initial image of Balch has altered, morphed, shrunk and grown from one experience and adventure to another through these last eleven months. It has been a year



Leesburg Mayor Kristen Umstadt, Library Manager Alexandra S. Gressitt and Friends' President Paul Bice, at the 9th Annual Meeting

jam-packed with people, events, challenges and opportunities. Community members and leaders, Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Black History Committee members, and Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commissioners have all passed through my office sharing concerns and expressing support. Security and custodial issues, building and property line concerns with attendant dramatics; collection development, access, security and storage; policies and procedures; outreach including web presence, classes and lectures, and staffing needs have been just a few of the preoccupations. The status of the library, its needs and its constituencies has been assessed and concerns are being addressed. Many changes, such as the relocation of the Yardley Taylor map from direct to indirect light exposure, implemented over the last year are simple and straightforward, attentive to detail, yet collectively have created a new and quieter atmosphere. An increased level of integrity has been achieved through accountability with respect to collection holdings (inventory) and incoming donations (acquisitions database) and energies have been focused on enhancing security without diminishing cordiality. A commitment has been made toward providing better access through processing and cataloguing of manuscript collections and enabling a part time staff member to catalogue books. Steps have been taken to provide better storage and organization for such collections as Maps and Microforms. Plans are afoot to shift the book collection into straight Dewey order thus aligning the collection itself with the card catalogue and enabling patrons to better manage and control their research. To meet changes generated from Town Hall and elections both the Website and our Bro-

chure have been updated. A patron survey conducted in September will provide direction and opportunity for future development. These and other achievements throughout the year have been accomplished with the assistance of both full and part time staff and volunteers at Thomas Balch Library.

Throughout the year donations (in-kind and monetary) and grants have been received and revenue generated.

- Monetary donations have been received in the amount of approximately \$9300. [Loudoun Genealogical Club: \$6680; Estate of Ruth Bishop: \$1000]

- In-kind donations – There have been some 220 accessions since the first of the year and to give just three examples - the Williams Family Papers, several hundred Civil War books from John O'Brien and records of the Women's Club of Loudoun, Inc. It is instructive to note that just one of these 220 collections was appraised at \$15,000.

- Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc. provided financial support in the amount of \$3327 for 7 flat screens, 2 CD burners; archival supplies, an honorarium, professional memberships and books.

- From the first of December 2003 through October 31 of this year volunteers contributed over 1061 hours. This represents a remarkable three fold increase in the number of volunteer hours contributed to Thomas Balch Library. The volunteers in their dedication are deserving of far more than a warm round of applause.

- A Grant from Loudoun Library Foundation (\$3262.50) enabled us to purchase microfilm including the remainder of the Northern Neck Land Grants, miscellaneous country and state records and a chunk of the *Loudoun Times Mirror*. Room Rental fees generated some \$3500 and Book Sales generated another \$4400 in revenue

- Programs have continued. Among the more successful are the Appraisal Fair, tour of the Clerk's Office, classes in Deed Research, Genealogy, and Northern Neck Land Grants research, a Photographic ID Party and Book signings.

All in all it has been a year spent addressing unfinished business, current or on-going needs and planning for the future. It has been one in which financial and human resources have been juggled

to meet pressing demands.

I often think that if we really knew what territory lay ahead of us and what we might have to put ourselves through to achieve the work we desire, we would probably lock ourselves in a padded room and refuse to emerge. In the beginning, and in our youth, we run toward our work, but soon find the entire journey demanding a more measured pace, and a perseverance we can only learn in the pilgrimage itself. The projections that follow are simply that – projections, visions, hopes and anticipations. Painted though they are with broad bold strokes of color and texture necessary and appropriate for special collections management, I have no illusion they will happen swiftly, but in time all will come to pass. For the purpose of this presentation I have limited projections to four essential but artificially created elements, none of which can stand alone, each is intertwined in some way with another.

PHYSICAL PLANT

The facility is in part newly constructed (Bowie Gridley 2000) and in part refurbished (2000 renovation of a 1922 Waddy Woods building). The facility is in use seven days a week with more than one thousand patrons passing through each month. Normal wear and tear from this volume of use is apparent and routine painting and carpet replacement needs to be scheduled. But, there are also issues remaining from construction and reconstruction. These include, but are not limited to roof and atrium window leaks and damage consequent to the leaks, carpeting issues, inadequate external doors, and missing and loose guardrails. It is a goal that facility issues will be addressed and in the very near future become nothing more than matters of routine maintenance. With a collection that currently occupies 80% of available shelving we will soon be faced with more serious needs and pressing concerns.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT

The library collection includes over 11,000 volumes and periodicals, 150 linear feet of manuscript material; 24 linear feet of photographs, 187 linear feet of newspapers, 4 linear feet of oral history tapes and reel to reel media tapes; 44 linear feet of reference files; over 900 family history files; over 1350 reels of microfilm, microfiche and some 300 maps. Its appraised value in 2000 was over \$1 million. Periodic reappraisals are pertinent. Books and periodicals are currently

catalogued by Loudoun County Public Library and Balch staff. Access to our holdings is available electronically through Horizon – now accessible from the Thomas Balch Library website. Approximately 93 manuscript collections have been catalogued on NUCMC (National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections) and of these only a few have been processed with standardized collection guides. Access to NUCMC records is through the Library of Congress website. Sooner rather than later, these records, like those in the Horizon catalogue, must be made available directly from our website. From our recent survey, we learned that manuscript use is severely handicapped by a lack of public awareness. Balch holdings, while small, are rich in their representation of Loudoun County and environs and worthy the attention of researchers. There are a number of databases that have been created such as the cemetery and photographic indexes. It is a goal to create integrated search capabilities to facilitate research access to these and other databases. I have investigated through conversations with Electronic Scriptorium possibilities of digital asset management; with Hood College and NOVA internship opportunities and with the Town of Leesburg clerks' office records management options.

Many books and periodicals are received through donation. While donation is a significant way for special libraries like the Balch to acquire books, it also results in pockets of missing items and a sometimes ragged collection development policy. A donor, for instance, may give volumes one and two of a four or five volume set. The shelves of Balch have many examples of this and an effort to fill out these "holes" has begun. Civil War holdings are large; conversely the American Revolution, War of 1812, WWI and WWII collections sparse. The complexion of Loudoun County has changed dramatically over the last twenty years yet the holdings of Balch do not adequately reflect this change. Our map collection includes an original copy of the Yardley Taylor Map (1853) first map of Loudoun County and, as staff and volunteers worked to folder and organize the maps, we found scattered throughout the manuscript holdings evidence of other historically significant maps. I expect to be meeting with Richard W. Stephenson, retired from the Library of Congress and

co-editor of *Virginia In Maps Four Centuries of Settlement, Growth, and Development* (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 2000) to seek ways of cataloguing and developing our map collection. A systematic approach to collection development and maintenance in all areas must be established and remain open for periodic review.

MARKETING AND OUTREACH

To those who know Thomas Balch Library it is recognized for the research repository that it is. But those who know are fewer than those who know not and those who find out often do so by happenstance. We must seek ways to market the library and broaden its user base. We currently have a web presence, but what about on-line exhibits? There is a need to standardize our message and take it to the people such as in a power point presentation. And yes we have a brochure – but what about a book that tells the story of Thomas Balch and the library and illustrates and explains the architectural features, artwork, garden, and furnishings? People come here not just to research the Civil War, Loudoun County or their ancestors, but to admire Thomas Moser chairs, the artwork and other appointments, architectural features and to bask in the beauty and peacefulness of the garden. Marketing and outreach opportunities are abundant – we must exploit them to our advantage.

FUND RAISING AND ENDOWMENT

Integral to the success of any special collections library is financial security. This usually entails fund raising and the development of an endowment. Almost like a broken record many of you have heard me speak endowment development. Endowment needs will never fade away. For many, that the Town of Leesburg operates the library is sufficient and rather like an endowed parish, see no reason whatsoever to provide alternative support. Operating and maintaining a library like Thomas Balch is not inexpensive. Processing and cataloguing of manuscript collections and books is labor intensive and often requires specialized training. Educational opportunities for staff such as the two week course at National Archives and Records Administration and classes at the Rare Books School at UVA carry a price tag that may exceed reasonable expectations of the town but not the needs of the library. Preservation and maintenance of Collections is also costly – the price tag for re-

Letter from the President

As we take a moment from our busy and sometimes hectic schedules and survey the events of the year we all should be very proud of the accomplishments of Friends of Thomas Balch Library. Many year-end letters start this way and mine is no different. When you are the President of an organization that is run entirely by volunteers, you begin to see just how committed your team can be.

This year's Board of Directors of Friends of Thomas Balch Library has done a wonderful job in bringing forth new opportunities and finalizing old ones. The Board of Directors, listed on the front of this newsletter, might be folks you know. If so, please give them a thank-you for a job well done. I find it difficult to properly convey my appreciation for their countless hours of work and tireless devotion to Thomas Balch Library.

I guess that's at the heart of all we do - we see something special here at Thomas Balch Library - a shine, a glitter, a treasure - and we want others to know where that treasure is located. The treasures of Thomas Balch Library take many different forms: the people who work so hard as Board members, the Balch Library Advisory Commissioners, and the wonderful staff and volunteers of the Library itself. When you speak of Thomas Balch Library you first must consider its manager (and torch bearer), Alexandra Gressitt. Alexandra brings an impressive background in historical documentation, archive manage-

ment, genealogy and library administration - this coupled with the passion she has for the "treasures" of this library promises a growing and fruitful tomorrow.

storing a small world globe owned by a local Vermont historical society bore a price tag of \$60,000 - and they had two of them to preserve. While Thomas Balch Library holdings do not include historically significant globes it does have collection materials in immediate need of conservation treatment. Hand in hand with marketing is the desire to exploit the riches of our holdings through classes and lecture series, musical and cultural events or providing research fellowships - these too must be underwritten. Acquisition of materials in a special collection repository is often through means atypically used by a local government - through auction, on line (E-Bay) and through individual dealers. An endowed acquisitions fund would assist the library

ment, genealogy and library administration - this coupled with the passion she has for the "treasures" of this library promises a growing and fruitful tomorrow.

Friends of Thomas Balch Library achieved success in many areas in 2004. We produced new publications including new brochures for the Friends and for the Black History Committee and a highly regarded *Loudoun County's African American Communities: A Tour Guide and Map*. To meet the high demand for the interesting and valuable information between their covers, it has been necessary to reprint all of our previous publications: All five volumes of *Loudoun Discovered*, the two *Essences of a People*, and the Home Interest Club cookbook, *A Taste of Loudoun County*. A brand new publication is approved and ready for printing in time for the holidays, *A Story of Round Hill* by Ann Whitehead Thomas. The Black History Committee has commissioned a new painting for the Library by William Woodward.

The Education Committee, with Annie Hulen and Rachel Thompson, has finalized *A Glimpse into the History of Black Americans in Loudoun County*, now located on our web site.

The Friends shouldered a great deal in 2004 and our success proves they are a wonderful team of individuals who have pulled together as a team. Every team has a Very Valuable Member and this year I would like to award this title to Susan Webber. I will be the first to say that Su-

san will NOT want any of this recognition - which is true-to-form for Susan. Susan has had the title of Assistant Treasurer this year, but her job description has involved a lot more. She was instrumental in the details and behind the scenes for the annual meeting, she works as a part of the Black History Committee, and is the "go to person" to answer any questions regarding anything at The Friends. I know that I have been blessed by her involvement as have many others and we appreciate the countless hours she has contributed.

in developing its collection without conflicting with standard town financial processes. Endowed funds in honoring the past and the present, secure the future.

This has been just a fleeting glimpse through the looking glass at Thomas Balch's today and tomorrow - a library utilized by people of all ages, all walks of life and from all parts of the world; an institution providing both an opportunity for general historical and genealogical research and supporting through grants, research in and publication of its holdings and a purveyor of educational and cultural opportunities. *Mellowed By Time* and lifting my eyes up from deep *Under the Greenwood Tree* the canvas I view is indeed a *Rare and Pleasing Thing*.

Alexandra S. Gressitt, Library Manager

san will NOT want any of this recognition - which is true-to-form for Susan. Susan has had the title of Assistant Treasurer this year, but her job description has involved a lot more. She was instrumental in the details and behind the scenes for the annual meeting, she works as a part of the Black History Committee, and is the "go to person" to answer any questions regarding anything at The Friends. I know that I have been blessed by her involvement as have many others and we appreciate the countless hours she has contributed.

Friends of Thomas Balch Library are proud to be associated with and to help support the finest Historical and Genealogical Library in "these here parts" and in the world, for that matter.

Paul W. Bice, President

A Reminder to Friends of the Balch Library:

Be certain to renew your Friends' membership. It is truly an investment in the future; by contributing to the preservation of our past, you ensure that this information is available to the generations to come. Use this form to enlist your friends, now.

Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc. 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
Business/ Professional	\$ 35.00
Patron	\$ 50.00
Sustaining	\$ 100.00
Benefactor	\$ 250.00

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P.O. Box 2184 Leesburg, VA 20177**

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Vol. 3 <i>The Hunt Country and Middleburg</i>			
Vol. 4 <i>Quaker Country and the Loudoun Valley</i>			
Vol. 5 <i>Waterford, the German Settlement and Between the Hills</i>	\$ 20.00/volume		
Full set of five volumes plus companion map	\$100.00		
<i>The Essence of A People: Portraits of African Americans Who Made A Difference in Loudoun County, Virginia</i>	\$ 15.00		
<i>The Essence of A People II: African Americans Who Made Their World Anew in Loudoun Co., and Beyond</i>	\$ 15.00		
<i>Loudoun County's African American Communities: A Tour Map and Guide</i>	\$ 5.00		
<i>A Taste of Loudoun County: Our Favorite Recipes 1903-1951 Home Interest Club Cookbook - Centennial Edition</i>	\$ 10.00		
<i>A Story of Round Hill, Loudoun County, Virginia</i> by Ann W. Thomas	\$ 20.00		

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