



1922-2005

Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc.

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The Thomas Balch Chronicle

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A Library for History and Genealogy

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Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission Honors Four at Annual History Awards Ceremony

On Sunday, November 13, four historians received the 2005 Loudoun History Awards at the eleventh annual awards ceremony. The awards are sponsored by Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission. Attending were all the commissioners, former commissioner Joan Rokus, Leesburg Mayor Kristin Umstatt, and some 50 patrons. Commissioner Shirley McClain Hall worked her usual magic with a delightful repast, a full Scottish Cream Tea, and Commissioner Jim Roberts made a photographic record of the event.

Honoree **Patricia B. Duncan**, has made available the genealogical record of Loudoun County through transcribing court and other official records. In her nomination of Ms. Duncan, previous honoree Bronwen Souders stressed that "Her assistance to Loudoun County researchers—both resident and non-resident—is little short of astonishing. She is the author of 16 books and a CD, all compiled from county documents or source material gathered at Thomas Balch Library. She has also published books on Clarke and Fauquier Counties in Virginia; Jefferson County, West Virginia; and Hunterdon County, New Jersey. These seventeen publications, all written within the past six years, total 4,313 pages of easily readable, indexed, source information made available to descendants anxious for any tidbit about their ancestors."

In addition, Ms. Duncan is essentially a full-time transcriber from microfilm and is a heavy contributor to the Loudoun list-serve. This Loudoun "page" serves as a clearing house to help Loudoun descendants all around the world.

Betty Whiting Flemming, nominated and introduced by Susi Slocum, is a well-known and highly respected member of the national needlework community. In 1996 she founded the Loudoun Sampler Guild to emphasize historical and social significance of embroidery sewn by schoolgirls. By studying the needlework of young girls, insight is gained about the social, religious, and educational influences of the time. As a volunteer in the Textiles Division of the Smithsonian Institution's American History Museum, she learned conservation and used that training to emphasize and preserve schoolgirl embroidery. St. Joseph's Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland invited her to conserve their distinctive sampler and needlework collection. She lectures at venues such



L to R: Carol Ball, accepting the award for Pat Duncan; Pauline Singletary; Betty W. Flemming; Thomas Horne

as Williamsburg and the York County Culture and Heritage Commission, sponsors of a 2003 needlework exhibition about embroideries and education in antebellum South Carolina. Mrs. Flemming also founded the juried Loudoun Needlework Exhibition at which local artisans enjoy the opportunity to present their needle art accomplishments. Proceeds from this event provide grants to museums, historical societies, and other organizations desiring to conserve, preserve, or acquire historical needlework.

Pauline Singletary, who holds a Master of Library Science from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, spent 30 years with the New York City Public Library and retired as Assistant Director of the Manhattan Branch, coming to Loudoun County in 1992. Mrs. Singletary began her volunteer work as a member of the Advisory Board of the Eastern Regional Library in 1994. She was invited to join the Loudoun Library Foundation in 1995 where her first interaction with Thomas Balch Library occurred during the fund raising effort for the renovation. Following these activities, she became a member of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library Board.

An anonymous gift for the renovation project to name a room at the Library for a Loudoun African-American resulted in the formation of what ultimately became the Black History Committee of the Friends. Mrs. Singletary was elected the first Chair. During her highly successful five-year tenure, the BHC assisted in the expansion of the library's collections and formed numerous successful community outreach programs, including adding to the oral history collection at the TBL. At her urging the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors agreed to support funding the co-sponsorship of the African Ameri-

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can Historic Architectural Resources Survey. The survey aided securing grants from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy, the Loudoun Restoration and Preservation Society, and the Loudoun Library Foundation to publish *Loudoun County's African American Communities: A Tour Map and Guide*.

The Honorable Thomas D. Horne is a judge of the 20th Judicial Circuit that includes Loudoun, Fauquier and Rappahannock Counties. In addition to his many activities within the legal, educational and community venues, Judge Horne has a firm commitment to preserve the rich history of Loudoun County.

The Loudoun County Circuit Court Clerk's Office is responsible for retention of historical court records dating back to 1757 when the county originated. Along with the Clerk's office, Judge Horne developed plans and ideas for improved retention of historical records. He has actively led efforts to maintain the character and integrity of the historical Old Courthouse in Leesburg. His talks with students visiting the courthouse include a complete history lesson on the Magna Carta and its significance to our contemporary legal system and the law.

Judge Horne initiated, commissioned and monitored an effective archaeological dig on the courthouse grounds which produced a collection of historical artifacts now displayed in the courthouse. Visitors are able to view this window to the past and enrich their appreciation of our valuable heritage in Loudoun County. Judge Horne's commitment to present affairs, his investment in the future through his teaching and guidance of young people, and his dedication to preserve and protect this heritage for future generations makes him a worthy fiduciary of our rich history in Loudoun County.

Book Signing A Great Success

Thomas Balch Library hosted 113 guests on September 24. The occasion was a book signing by author and historian Elaine Thompson of her latest, *In the Watchfires: The Loudoun County Emancipation Association, 1890-1971*. The book has been well received within Loudoun County and beyond with numerous sales made to libraries all across the country.

Available at the library and commercial outlets for \$20.00, it makes a wonderful Christmas gift.

Researchers At Work:

To demonstrate the many facets of Thomas Balch Library, we asked two professional historians, **Wynne Saffer** and **Lori H. Kimball**, to tell us how they use the Library in their research. We welcome anyone who has used our facilities to tell us their stories. We would like to share your experiences with others who may not be aware of what TBL has to offer.

Who Owned Your Property?

While serving on the Friends of the Slave Quarters at Arcola, I began mapping real estate of 1860 landowners in eastern Loudoun County. I was greatly assisted by a publication at Thomas Balch Library – *Loudoun County Real Estate Assessments & Licenses for 1860*. The County was divided into three assessment districts for which George K. Fox, Jonah Tavenner and Thomas Wrenn were the assessors.

I completed the work – *Loudoun County Virginia 1860 Land Tax Maps, Thomas M. Wrenn's District* – and donated it to the Library in 2002. It includes 18 maps on which property boundaries are marked, along with the owner's name.

To identify who owned your property in 1860, a laborious way is to trace the chain-of-title for that property back to that year at the courthouse. (See our next issue for details on this method.)

However, many resources are available at Thomas Balch Library to research the older records without going to the courthouse. There are microfilm of the Deed indexes (1757-1878) and Will indexes (1757-1949). These materials are also on microfilm, as are the land tax records (1782-1870). Two books at the Library to which I often referred for this project are *Index to Loudoun County, Virginia Wills 1757-1850* by Louisa S. Hutchison and *Marriages of Loudoun County, Virginia 1757-1853* by Mary Alice Wertz. The will book provides names of persons named in the will, which is helpful for land acquired through inheritance. The marriage book provides the maiden name of wives, which is needed if the property belonged to the wife or was inherited by her, since in most cases, ownership is listed in the husband's name.

Maps may be helpful. Yardley Taylor's Map of Loudoun County (1853) is the first map to identify the location of property owners. However, not all owners are shown, as Taylor required a fee to include the name on his map. *The Loudoun County, Virginia Original Land Grants, Sections A, C & D (1997)* by Nettie Schreiner-Yantis offers the locations of land grant boundaries within Loudoun. Many of these boundaries still appear today. Current property boundaries can be accessed on-line at loudoun.gov.

Should property research refer to a chancery suit, e.g. division of an estate, only the courthouse holds those records at this time. While a visit to the courthouse may be necessary to complete your research, you can get a good head start using the resources of Thomas Balch Library

Wynne C Saffer

Tracking Historical Archaeology

My assigned research project for my Historic Archaeology class at Northern Virginia Community College was my introduction to Thomas Balch Library. Armed only with the word "Goresville", an area along Route 15 just south of present-day Lucketts, my research partner and I arrived at the library looking for sources to help identify the people and businesses that once inhabited that area of Loudoun County.

We started with Eugene Scheel's *Loudoun Discovered* books, which provided us with several family names. From there we branched out to the family files and online genealogy databases. Using the census records, we were able to track the movement of people in and out of the Goresville area as well as identify additional family members. The "people aspect" was one part of our research assignment; land ownership was another. Using the key family names, we analyzed old deeds and tax records. The deeds provided additional useful information, such as adjoining landowners (thus giving us more names to research), patterns of land ownership (two of our key families were constantly buying and selling land), and interesting tidbits, such as references to an icehouse and blacksmith shop. I continue to use the resources at the Thomas Balch Library. Each time the books, maps, online databases, microfilm records, and family histories enable me to do my research right here in Leesburg. However, none of this would be possible without the assistance of the library staff. Whatever your area of interest, from pure genealogical research to learning about Loudoun's history to researching a specific geographical area or topic, Thomas Balch Library is a vital resource.

Lori Hinterleiter Kimball

*The Library Manager,
the Entire Staff,
the Volunteers, and the Friends
Wish you Peace,
a Most Joyous Holiday and
a Happy and Prosperous 2006*

BHC at Bazil Newman Plaque Dedication

About eight years ago, Wynne Saffer and Mary Fishback, of Balch Library's cemetery committee, were guided by the late Supervisor Ronald Blake to a grave site where River Creek Development was being built. It was the resting place of Bazil Newman, born free in Loudoun county in 1779. Wynne took notes for the Library's cemetery databases about the tombstone, the state of the grave and the numerous surrounding depressions. Fortunately, they also took photos of the gravestone, which has disappeared.

After River Creek completed a new golf course, Toby Cooper, a River Creek resident worked to assure that the site would be



PHOTO: THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

marked. October 1, 2005 saw the dedication of a plaque honoring Bazil Newman by the Black History Committee and the River Creek Homeowners Association.

The story of Mr. Newman and his family as been carefully researched and recorded by Bronwen Souders, secretary of the Friends' Black History Committee. She describes this most unusual man who stood out in his early 19th century setting, particularly considering he was 'a person of color.' As the owner of a warehouse, a grist mill and considerable land holdings, along with his ferry boat operation, his business acumen is obvious. Mr. Newman's suspected involvement with the Underground Railroad is difficult to verify, but hints are there.

To read more about Mr. Newman and his extensive family, contact Thomas Balch Library. Also, see Bronwen Souders's article about Bazil Newman in *Essence of a People II: African Americans Who Made Their World Anew in Loudoun County and Beyond*.

From the Friends . . .

Discussions among the Friends' board members and the Library Manager often have ended with the concensus that Thomas Balch Library is one of the best-kept secrets in Loudoun County! To that end, education chair Annie Hulen and new board members Brenda Douglass and Cheryl Sadowski have produced a marketing plan designed to increase public awareness of the Library, its collections and services. It is hoped this will reach new residents and businesses through a combination of advertising to promote publications and classes, construction of a banner stand designed to facilitate public outreach at local community and business events, and the writing of a series of articles discussing the history of select Loudoun communities. In addition, Alexandra Gressitt and her staff are developing a Power Point presentation to be used in promotion. This new marketing venture is scheduled to begin in January. The Friends also maintain membership in the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce, advertise in the Loudoun County Visitors Association Annual Visitors Guide and recently joined the Friends of Libraries, U.S.A.

The Annual Meeting and Election of Directors has been moved from Fall to early Spring, upon the recommendation of the TBL Advisory Commission.. Please mark your new calendars for Sunday afternoon, March 5, 2006. We promise a most entertaining and informative speaker. Guests and prospective members are also most welcome to join us.

**A Reminder to Friends of the Thomas 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. Check your label for your own renewal date, and use the form below to enlist your friends, now.**

New & Renewing Members

Scott & Gail Adams
John L. Barnhard, Jr.
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Cathleen Magennis Wyatt

Save the Date

Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc
Annual Meeting
2 pm - March 5, 2006

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 Thomas Balch Library.

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 Friends of the
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Save the Date:
The Friends' Annual Meeting
2 pm, March 5, 2006

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Home Interest Club Cookbook - Centennial Edition

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by Ann W. Thomas

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In the Watchfires: The Loudoun County Emancipation Association, 1890-1971 - by Elaine Thompson

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