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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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Spring 2008

Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc. Conduct 11th Annual Meeting

Despite nasty weather, twenty-seven members of Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc., and their guests attended the 11th Annual Meeting and Election of Directors on Sunday, January 20, 2008.

Called to order by Friends' president Brenda Douglass, the members were presented with a slate of directors, which was duly accepted. Continuing as president for the upcoming year, Brenda Douglass will be assisted by Patty Rogers-Renner as vice-president, Annie Hulen, secretary, Jeff Bolyard, treasurer, and Susan P. Webber, assistant treasurer. New board members include: Herbert DuVall, Stilson Greene, and Donna Norton.

Library Director Alexandra S. Gressitt informed the members of advances and improvements made by the Library in the past year and presented advance notice of exciting things to come.

Friends' board member Douglas Foard of Lovettsville addressed the group. His topic was the subject of his most recent book, *The Imperious Laird: John Campbell, the Fourth Earl of Loudoun*. In his comments, Dr. Foard took note of recent columns in the local press that characterized the county's namesake, Lord Loudoun, as a "despicable English aristocrat," urging that the jurisdiction be renamed.

Foard disputed that opinion. He argued that Virginia's colonial government had every right to be delighted with John Campbell's appointment in 1756 as commander-in-chief of Anglo-American forces in North America since he was a high-ranking professional soldier and the colonial frontier was in flames from French and Native American attacks. Loudoun, a Scottish laird, had served as aide-de-camp to the English king, done battle against the monarch's enemies both on the European continent and at home, was a member of the House of Lords, and of the Royal Society in London. In fact, Foard noted, Loudoun was named Governor of Virginia during his tenure in North America (1756-1758) as an inducement by the royal government to get the Earl to accept the command. He agreed to the title, banked its emoluments, but never set foot in the colony.

Not long after Loudoun's appointment the French government selected the Marquis de Montcalm to head its forces in North America. The next two years were essentially a duel between these two aristocrats and the forces they mustered. In the end, the Frenchman proved victorious, winning major victories over the Anglo-Americans at Oswego, New York in 1756 and Fort William Henry in New York the following year. While Loudoun had no immediate role in these defeats the blame was assigned to him in London. He was recalled from command in 1758 while planning a major campaign that year to drive the French from their Canadian bastions. It happened that those plans were largely implemented by Lord Loudoun's successors. For that reason, Foard noted, he was not obliged to present his remarks in French.

Douglas Foard is a retired history professor having taught for many years both at Ferrum College and George Mason University. His biography of Lord Loudoun, and all Friends' publications are available for sale at the Thomas Balch Library and online at www.balchfriends.org.

Black History Committee Contributes African American National Biography to Library

The Black History Committee voted to purchase the newly published *African American National Biography* for Thomas Balch Library. This eight volume tome, published by Oxford University Press, contains 4,100 entries.

Henry Louis Gates and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham co-edited the compilation of biographies which will bring attention to the famous as well as many previously unrecognized people.

Seventeen "subject editors" assumed responsibility for checking and approving biographical entries which were written by 1,700 outside writers.

One of these "outside contributors" is BHC's Elaine Thompson who wrote the entries on Billy Pierce and Howard W. Clark, Sr.

An online version is part of a collection of online reference tools called the Oxford African American Studies Center and is available by subscription. All online entries will not be available for several months. The Du Bois Institute's database has over 15,000 names. It is hoped, eventually all could be included.

Elaine E. Thompson

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Alexandra S. Gressitt

Library Exhibit Honors Loudoun's Black History and Loudoun's Own Tuskegee Airman, Martin L. Cook

In celebration of Black History Month, the exhibit at Thomas Balch Library, curated by Black History Committee members Pauline Singletary and Louis Jett, featured a large collection of memorabilia and archives of Loudoun County African Americans collected and preserved by Mr. Jett. A part of this collection honored the memory of the late Martin L. Cook, a Purcellville native son, who was one of the highly regarded Tuskegee Airmen.

Martin Cook's widow, Evelyn Cook and his daughter Doreen Cook Hope visited the library to view the exhibit. They had loaned a considerable archive of the Tuskegee Airmen, including Martin Cook's Congressional Gold Medal presented to the Tuskegee Airmen by President Bush on March 29, 2007.

Martin L. Cook, born and reared in Purcellville, became entranced with aviation at a very young age and when an airplane landed in a field northeast of town, his grandfather paid the fifty cents for Martin to have a ride. Airplanes dominated his life as a child and teenager, as he built model airplanes, and devoured anything he could find about aviation.

After graduation from high school in 1940, Martin worked at a number of odd jobs, but with the entry of the United States into the war, Martin was determined to become involved.

Prior to 1941, no U.S. military pilots had been black. However, a series of legislative moves by the United States Congress that year forced the Army Air Corps to form an all-black combat unit. After taking the US Army Air Corps aviation cadet entrance exam, Martin passed and was on his way to becoming a flying officer. He remained in the service until the end of the war, and went on to Catholic University, earning a degree in Aeronautical Engineering. He remained active in the US Air Force Reserves, retiring in 1983 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He lived in Purcellville with his family until his death on October 24, 2002.

At Last, Recognition for Tuskegee Airmen

The U.S. Army Air Corps had established units around the country for aviation cadet training, which included the identification, selection, education, and training of pilots, navigators and bombardiers. Psychologists employed in these research studies and training programs used some of the first standardized tests to quantify IQ, dexterity, and leadership qualities in order to select and train the right personnel for the right role (bombardier, pilot, navigator). The Air Corps determined that the same existing programs would be used for all units, including all-black units. At Tuskegee, this effort would continue with the selection and training of the Tuskegee Airmen.

On 19 March 1941, the 99th Pursuit Squadron was activated at Chanute Field, Illinois. Over 250 enlisted men were trained at Chanute in aircraft ground support trades. This small number of enlisted men was to become the core of other black squad-

rons forming at Tuskegee and Maxwell Fields in Alabama. By June 1941, the Tuskegee program officially began with formation of the 99th Fighter Squadron at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama. The unit consisted of an entire service arm, including ground crew. After basic training at Moton Field, they were moved to the nearby Tuskegee Army Air Field for conversion training onto operational types. The airmen were placed under the command of Capt. Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.,

one of the few African American West Point graduates. His father, Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., was the first black general in the U.S. Army. The 99th Pursuit Squadron soon joined two new squadrons out of Tuskegee to form the all-black 332nd Fighter Group.

Transported to Tunis to operate against the Luftwaffe, the group received a Distinguished Unit Citation for its performance in Sicily. The squadron won its second Distinguished Unit Citation while attached to the 324th Fighter Group, attacking German positions at Monte Cassino. Under the command of Col. Benjamin O. Davis, the Airmen escorted heavy bombers on raids into Austria, Hungary, Poland and Germany, racking up an impressive combat record. Reportedly, the Luftwaffe awarded the Airmen the nickname, "Schwarze Vogelmenschen," or "Black Birdmen." The Allies called the Airmen "Redtails" or "Redtail Angels," because of the distinctive crimson paint on the vertical stabilizers of the unit's aircraft. Although bomber groups would request Redtail escort when possible, few bomber crew members knew at the time that the Redtails were black.

By the end of the war, the Tuskegee Airmen were credited with 109 Luftwaffe aircraft shot down, a patrol boat run aground by machine-gun fire, and destruction of numerous fuel dumps, trucks and trains. The Tuskegee Airmen were awarded several Silver Stars, 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 8 Purple Hearts, 14 Bronze Stars and 744 Air Medals.

In all, 992 pilots were trained in Tuskegee from 1940 to 1946; about 445 deployed overseas, and 150 Airmen lost their lives in training or combat. Recognition of their service was at last, honored by Congress and President Bush on March 23, 2007.



The Tuskegee Airmen Congressional Gold Medal

The Loudoun County Public Schools Administration has invited the Black History Committee of the Friends of Thomas Balch Library to participate in the 2008 Social Science Fair as judges and sponsors.

This year the Fair's special anniversary category is "The Anniversary of Desegregation of Douglass High School: African American History and Loudoun County and the United States" Projects in this category will focus on the connection between African American history in our larger society and events here in Loudoun.

The judging and awards ceremony will take place on June 4, 2008 at Freedom High School in South Riding.

The Black History Committee has participated in this program since 2001. Each year, the committee donates copies of their publications, as well as a monetary gift to the student(s) selected as winner by our judges.

Not so Long Ago . . . It's Coming Down the Pike *By Gail Ann Adams*

Today it seems we can't get news and information fast enough. Fax, e-mail, and text messaging all get to the recipient within moments. To mail via the Post Office is now referred to as "snail mail" even though they can get a package to the other side of the country in one day!

It might be hard to imagine but it wasn't always this way.....not so long ago.....

The first Post Office in Leesburg opened on March 20, 1793 with Thomas Lewis as Postmaster. Transportation was by horse and later by train. Mail by horse was not always so fast and subject to many factors including road conditions.

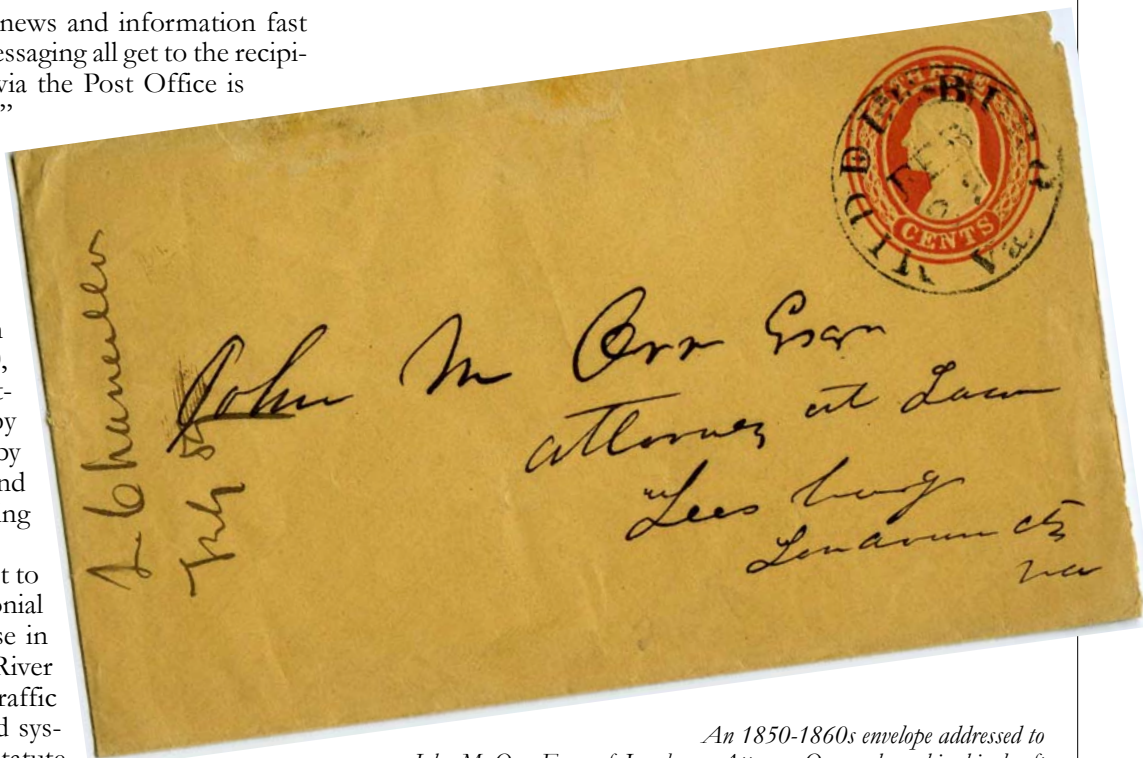
Road conditions were about to improve. During the later colonial period trade was on the increase in between towns on the Potomac River and the Shenandoah Valley. Traffic increased and the primitive road systems began to deteriorate. A statute of 1748 mandated that roads were the responsibility of the local communities. Residents who lived two to three miles from the roads were responsible for their maintenance. Merchants in Alexandria knew this would be a problem and could be a barrier to their economic prosperity and lobbied for remedial legislation. The resulting legislation was the catalyst for our turnpike system. Private companies were chartered by the state to build and maintain roads.

One of the first charters was by the Little River Turnpike Company who in 1802 operated 34 miles of "paved" road from Alexandria to the ford of the Little River, later known as the village of Aldie. Success of this company gave birth to others. In 1822 the Leesburg Turnpike merged with the Georgetown Turnpike. In 1828 the Northern Turnpike Company was chartered and the early 1830s brought the Snicker's Gap Turnpike Company.

The turnpike system had several positive aspects for Loudouners. Travel, transporting goods and livestock and improved postal service were among them. By 1820 mail arrived three times a week in Leesburg from "Washington City," and twice a week from Winchester and western areas of several states. Mail was a bit slower from Waterford, Hillsboro and Charles Town and received only once a week in Leesburg. By the early 1840s mail service had increased to and from these places and other hamlets.

Residents did not check for mail as often as we do today. They were given up to four months to pick up their mail before it was sent to the general post office as "deadletters." Residents in areas in the county without postal service could find out if they had a letter by checking "*The Genius of Liberty*" which published lists of names of those who had mail waiting to be picked up from 1818 to the 1840s.

Mail service continued to improve and expand until the 1860s and the War Between the States. During the war years local civil government and peacetime conveniences were cur-



An 1850-1860s envelope addressed to John M. Orr, Esq., of Leesburg. Attorney Orr re-hung his shingle after the Civil War, and helped solve legal questions stemming from claims against the Federal government pertaining to property loss in the burning of Loudoun Valley in 1864, and confusion over General O.O. Howard's order for confiscation of land in the County. Mr. Orr later became Mayor of Leesburg.

tailed to the will and needs of the military. County Court was not held from February 1862 until July 1865. Properties were confiscated by both forces of the Union and Confederacy. Mail service was severely hampered. People in Loudoun would now have to go to the federal post office at Point of Rocks, Maryland where letters from north of the Potomac were picked up. However, in 1864, the Federals maintained a strict blockade along the Potomac.

The war finally ended and by the middle of June 1865 mail between Leesburg and Point of Rocks resumed. It was vital for economic reconstruction of Loudoun to return to unfettered transportation and renewed communication.

From May 1860 to the Civil War mail was carried by train between Alexandria and Leesburg. In 1866 this was extended to Hamilton. Horse and rider, horse and buggy and stage coaches were the arteries that extended mail service where the trains did not run. The rural mail carrier of the late 1800s and early 1900s was not only a deliverer of mail but a confidant. Country folks would wait at the mail box for a daily chat. He was often rewarded with goodies in the mail box.

The Turnpike system provided positive contributions for long-range impact of the county. They improved old colonial roads, cut new roadbeds, provided a reliable mode of transportation, and helped bring mail and news to the residents of Loudoun. Many of the roads currently traveled in Loudoun are from the nineteenth century turnpike system.

Today we have cars, trains, boats, planes and all sorts of electronic capabilities. We've come a long way...from not so long ago!

A Note from the Editor:

Over the past few years, Library Director Alexandra S. Gressitt and the staff of Thomas Balch Library have worked hard to make the Library as “user-friendly” to its patrons as possible. The Town of Leesburg is fortunate to boast perhaps the finest history and genealogical library in the tri-state area. Thomas Balch Library offers myriad material for research of all kinds. Internet connection to a large number of sites at the library provides easy access to much information not otherwise available.

Adding to this, a series of programs is offered in 2008 to improve Thomas Balch Library’s “user-friendly” state. Tested this past fall, the programs sparked sufficient interest to be expanded considerably. Check out these programs designed especially to make your research and time at the library a fruitful one.

Maximizing your Time at Thomas Balch Library: An Introduction to the Library, Its Resources and Research Techniques

A series of classes introducing novice and experienced researchers to the intricacies of resources at Thomas Balch Library will be offered throughout the year. This series will include a tour of the facility, subject specific training by experienced staff, handouts, and an opportunity to ask questions. These classes will be limited in size, registration is required, and classes will repeat as demand suggests.

General Introduction to Thomas Balch Library

Thursday, 7 February 2008 10-11am

This session led by Alexandra S. Gressitt, Library Director and staff member since 2003, will provide a general overview of the Library, its history, organization, collections, services, programs, and volunteer and intern opportunities.

Leesburg: A Glimpse of History

Thursday, 6 March 2008 10-11 am

This session, led by Mary Fishback, Library Assistant and staff member since 2000, will provide an introduction to researching local history. This class will help you learn how to research the fascinating history of a small town using collection materials in Thomas Balch Library.

Beginning Genealogy

Thursday, 3 April 2008 10-11 am

This session will be led by LaVonne Markham, Library Specialist and staff member since 1999, whose specialty is genealogical research. Find secrets to locating your ancestors using resources and online subscriptions available at Thomas Balch Library.

Manuscript and Archives Research at Thomas Balch Library

Thursday, 1 May 2008 10-11 am

Stephanie Adams Hunter, Library Archives Specialist and staff member since 2005, will introduce users to the manuscript and archive holdings at TBL. The kinds of materials available, how they may be accessed and their use in historical and genealogical research will be discussed.

Research Using Visual Collections at Thomas Balch Library

Thursday, 5 June 2008 10-11 am

Beth Schuster, Library Reference Specialist, staff member since 2007 and visual collections coordinator, will introduce users to Visual Collections at Thomas Balch Library.

Traditional Genealogical Resources at Thomas Balch Library

Thursday, 7 August 2008 10-11 am

Mary Fishback will lead this session. Learn how to use traditional research materials in the collections of Thomas Balch Library to uncover your family history. Users will be introduced to documenting and abstracting historical resources.

Research Using Visual Collections at Thomas Balch Library

Thursday, 4 September 2008 10-11 am

Beth Schuster will introduce users to visual collections at Thomas Balch Library. Types of images available, how they may be accessed, and their use in historical and genealogical research will be discussed.

Manuscript and Archives Research at Thomas Balch Library

Thursday, 2 October 2008 10-11 am

Stephanie Adams Hunter will introduce users to manuscript and archives holdings at Thomas Balch Library. The kinds of materials available, how they may be accessed and their use in historical and genealogical research will be discussed.

Leesburg’s Historic District Files and Sanborn Maps

Thursday, 6 November 2008 10-11 am

Annie McDonald, Preservation Planner and staff liaison to the Leesburg Board of Architectural Review, will delve into using primary and secondary resources available at Thomas Balch Library for researching a property’s history. She will explain the purpose behind the architectural surveys of the late 1990s and how to use architectural survey files, Sanborn fire insurance maps, and historic photographs to identify how a building changes over time. Previously employed by a DC-based preservation consulting firm and by a regional non government organization in Chattanooga, Tennessee, she has been with the Town of Leesburg since September 2005.

Loudoun County Historic Building Files and Assessment and Parcel Database Usage

Thursday, 4 December 2008 10-11AM

This session will be led by staff members Mary Pender and John Berfield.



The B. Powell and Agnes G. Harrison Memorial Garden at Thomas Balch Library

Leesburg's Best Kept Secret?

One of the most peaceful and pleasant spots in Leesburg is the Memorial Garden at Thomas Balch Library. Paved with memorial bricks honoring patron friends and families, and wreathed with fragrant lavender and other appropriate plantings, the showcase of the area is a delightful gentle fountain that should soothe the most harried visitor. Take a moment to enjoy one more reason to visit "user friendly" Thomas Balch Library. We welcome you.

Should you wish to honor a friend or to remember a loved one, memorial bricks are available from the Friends of Thomas Balch Library.

Contact Peggy Roberts, memorials chair, for further information, at 703-777-3932

New Acquisitions at Thomas Balch Library – Jan./Feb. 2008

A Civil War Soldier of Christ & Country, by Mary Giunta
African American National Biography, 8 vols. by Henry Gates
Colonial Churches of Virginia, by Don Massey
Colonial Families of Surry, vols. 1-8, by John Brayton
Desertion During the Civil War, by Ella Lon
Digitizing Your Family History, by Rhonda McClure
Emigration from the U.K. to America, 4 vols., by Ira Glazier
Family History 101, by Marcia Melnyk
Five Tragic Hours, by James McDonough
Fort Pillow, by John Cimprich
Freedom's Promise, by Elizabeth Regosin
Gone for a Soldier, by Alfred Bellard
Indian Wills, 1911-1921, vols. 1-7, by Jeff Bowen
Massive Resistance, by George Lewis
Postcards in the Library, by Norman Stevens
Reminiscences of the Civil War, by John Gordon
Sea Hawk of the Confederacy, by R Thomas Campbell
Sequatchie Families (Tenn.), by James Douthat
The Armorer of the Confederacy, by Joseph Durkin
The Fred Factor, by Mark Sanborn
The German-American Diary, by C W Heckert
The Germans of Colonial Georgia, by George Jones
The Ideology of Slavery, by Drew Gilpin Faust
Three Battles of Winchester, by Brandon Beck
LaVonne Markham, Library Specialist

More to Enrich Your Experience at Thomas Balch Library

Each month, the exhibit cases in the Margaret Mercer room are changed with new and informative displays. Check these, upcoming for the remainder of this year:

- March - Loudoun County Club of Zonta, a worldwide service organization working to advance the status of women.
- April - Loudoun County Black History Memorabilia.
- May - Facsimiles of artist Sherry Sanabria's paintings, with text.
- June - Mount Zion Church history and programs.
- July/Aug. -
Civil War relics from the John Creamer Collection.
- Sept. - 250th Anniversary of Town of Leesburg.
- Oct. - Loudoun County Kitchens - Loudoun Farm Museum.
- Nov. - Loudoun History Awards and Virginia's Native American Heritage.
- Dec. - New collections at Thomas Balch Library.

New: Artist Installations in Lower Level Meeting Room

Beginning in January a new addition to Thomas Balch Library's enrichment program is the installation of award winning artist Jim Hannah's photographs of a number of Loudoun County homes and scenic vistas. These exquisite images demonstrate ways in which the most ordinary site can be enhanced by the hand and the eye of an artist such as Mr. Hannah. The exhibit, in the downstairs meeting room, will be up until April 30.

Following this, an installation of works by Judith Lillis, also an award winning photographer, may be viewed May through June.

Do not miss these exceptionally high quality exhibits. They are well worth your time.



Lecture Series to Mark Leesburg's 250th Anniversary

Two-hundred fifty years ago, on June 15, 1758, following closely on the establishment of Loudoun County as a legal entity in 1757, the British Colonial Council in London

“... having this day taken under Consideration the most proper Place for establishing the Court House of Loudoun County, it appearing to them that the Plantation of Captain Nicholas Minor was the most convenient place and agreeable to the Generality of the People in that County, it was their opinion, and according ordered, That the Court House for the said County be fixed on the land of the said Minor.”

And, that October 12, the Virginia General Assembly approved establishment of a town called “Leesburg” on Minor’s 60 acres.

In recognition of these events, Thomas Balch Library is presenting a series of lectures and panel discussions about distinctive features of this historic community.

The first of the series will be held Sunday, 25 May 2008, at 2 pm. Elizabeth Brand Monroe, Professor of History at Indiana University and Purdue University Indianapolis, will introduce us to **“William Wirt: A Presence in the Heart of Leesburg.”** Wirt was President Monroe’s Attorney General and a major figure in what American historians term “the Era of Good Feelings.” He began his legal career in Leesburg under the tutelage of Thomas Swann and a street in historic Leesburg is named in Wirt’s honor.

On Sunday, 1 June 2008, **“Leesburg’s Development as Reflected in its Archaeology”** will be explored in a panel discussion of the town’s archeological footprint chaired by Michael Clem, Loudoun County archaeologist and including Heidi Siebentritt of the Loudoun County Planning Department, and Professor David Clark, the founder of the Loudoun Archaeological Foundation.

“Mapping Leesburg,” an illustrated lecture on the town’s cartographical appearance over time by Eugene Scheel, Loudoun County geographer and historian, will be presented on Sunday, 22 June 2008.

On Sunday, 14 September 2008, a panel chaired by Paul McCray of the Northern Virginia Park Authority and including Tim Deike of the Leesburg Executive Airport, and Noel Grove, a former writer for *National Geographic* and coauthor of a recently-published volume on Loudoun history, will present **“Leesburg as Transportation Hub.”**

“Leesburg’s African-American Community: An Exceptional Experience,” a discussion of unique African-American experiences, social relations, and the vital role of church and schools will be held Sunday, 28 September 2008. Speakers will include Deborah A. Lee, public historian, Elaine E. Thompson, author, and the Rev. Harold Stinger of the First Mount Olivet Baptist Church.

Sunday, 2 November 2008, we will hear a joint presentation by Richard Gillespie, Director of Education at Mosby Heritage Area, and Tracy Gillespie, Director of Historical Operations for Morven Park entitled **“Advantageously Situated, Indifferently Built: Leesburg on the Eve of the American Revolution.”**

Mark your calendars now for these informative and valuable lectures that promise to be every bit as exciting and interesting as the series held in 2007, commemorating Loudoun’s 250th.

Calendar of Events

The high quality of programs presented by Thomas Balch Library is recognized by the increasing numbers of patrons attending them. Don’t miss out on these outstanding offerings -- there’s something to suit every taste.

Sunday, 2 March 2008, 2 pm

There and Back Again: Nazi Anthropological Data at the Smithsonian - presented by Edie Hedlin, Ruth O. Selig, and Beth Schuster. The story of the travels of the *Institut für Deutsche Ostarbeit* papers from Krakow to Germany to the US and back to Poland. The collection consists primarily of anthropological research data gathered from Poles in Nazi-occupied Poland by Nazi-employed anthropologists, invaluable to genealogists, historians and scholars of many specialities.

Monday, 3 March 2008, 7 pm

Clerk’s Office Tour, Loudoun County Courthouse Historical Records -- John Fishback, Historic Records Manager for Loudoun County, discusses the extent of Loudoun County’s records holdings, where to look for records of births, deaths, marriages, and deeds, and how to use these records in research. Meet in the parking lot of Thomas Balch Library at 6:45 pm

Sunday, 9 March 2008, 2 pm

The Carters of Oatlands: One Hundred Years of a Loudoun Family -- Elizabeth Simon, curator of interpretation and collections at Oatlands Historic House & Garden. This presentation will place the Carter family of Oatlands in the social and business milieu of 19th century Loudoun.

Saturday 26 April 2008 9 am-12 noon

Saturday 31 May 2008 9 am-12 noon

Walking Tour of Leesburg -- James Roberts, a Leesburg native gives an insider’s commentary of local people, places and points of interest. Factual, historical and anecdotal information is presented in a unique storytelling fashion. The tour will leave from Thomas Balch Library parking lot at 9 am.

Other Activities at Thomas Balch Library

Thomas Balch library Advisory Commission meets at the Library the second Wednesday of each month at 7PM. The public is always welcome.

Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc. a 501c3 corporation organized to provide support for Thomas Balch Library, meets at the Library the third Tuesday of every other month at 8:30AM. The public is always welcome. For more information call 703/737-2166 or visit www.balchfriends.org

Black History Committee of Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc. meets at the Library the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7PM. The public is always welcome. For more information visit www.balchfriends.org

The Library Director's Letter

Winter and Spring programs are underway. A variety of exhibits and programs, including a special series reflecting Leesburg's history, will be offered. For these and other events at Thomas Balch Library see the Winter Spring edition of the *Balch Column* and online at <http://www.leesburgva.com/services/Library/Newsletter/> or see the calendar on page 6.

Events for the Fall are nearly completed and scheduling of events for 2009 has started.

Our first event for the Winter/Spring was held Sunday February 24. James R Sweeney, Associate Professor of History at Old Dominion University, shared his understanding of a very complicated subject and period and topic of his current book *Politics and Culture in the Twentieth Century South: Race, Reason, and Massive Resistance*. It was an outstanding presentation to a small but very appreciative audience.

We currently have one intern Matthew Exline, a sophomore at Patrick Henry College, and two high school volunteers, Emily Hershman, a senior at Loudoun County and Louis Lalire, a junior at Loudoun Valley. We are pleased to have these students working with us.

For information on internships at Thomas Balch Library please see our guidelines at <http://www.leesburgva.com/services/library/interns/>. With the assistance of interns and volunteers we continue to post collection guides to newly processed collections on our webpage. With over 60 guides posted I encourage you to visit our website on a recurring basis: <http://www.leesburgva.com/services/library/online/special/collections/>

I am pleased to announce we are providing access to Footnote.com. Access, as with AncestryLibrary.com, is limited to use within the library itself. Footnote is in partnership with The National Archives, Family Search and Allen County Library. You will find it is user-friendly and filled with an amazing number of historical documents from all eras of the United States. Collection management software PastPerfect arrived and has been installed. Beth Schuster is entering data. This software package will be used initially to manage our visual collections and later other portions of our collection such as manuscripts and maps will be integrated into it.

Thomas Balch Library applied to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a Preservation Assistance Grant (\$4260) for developing a disaster plan, obtaining disaster supplies and for staff training. Regrettably we did not receive the grant. Subsequently the Friends recognizing the critical need for a disaster plan graciously agreed to share the cost funding \$2600 of this project with Thomas Balch Library.

The January exhibit in the Margaret Mercer Room was *Picturing the Past through Postcards* curated by Stephanie Adams Hunter and Beth Schuster. It was very well received. For the month of February the exhibit cases include some of Louis Jett's research on Loudoun County African Americans and a section on Martin L. Cook, who grew up in Purcellville and became a Tuskegee Airman. Cook's daughter, Doreen Cook Hope, and his wife, Evelyn Cook, generously loaned artifacts for the exhibit including photographs, yearbook, and the Congressional Gold Medal awarded by President Bush a few years ago.

Jim Hanna's exhibit of Loudoun images will be up in the meeting room through April 30 and Judith Lillis will be the next artist to exhibit - May through June. Please take time to stop in and see our exhibits.

Beth Schuster and Mary Fishback were recognized February 12 by the Town of Purcellville at Council for their assistance with the Purcellville Centennial Calendar. LaVonne Markham, Stephanie Adams-Hunter and Beth Schuster designed a new magnet for us. They are now available for distribution.

On February 1, Advent Film Group used TBL for filming "Come What May" a feature film - Moot Court - check out <http://www.bbppix.com/> and click on the Come What May.

It is never too early to be thinking about nominations for the Loudoun History Awards. Sponsored by Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission these are given annually each November in recognition of contributions to the preservation of Loudoun's history. Guidelines for submission may be found on the library website or you may request a copy of our brochure by contacting the library.

As always it will be my pleasure to see you when visiting Thomas Balch Library or when attending our programs.

Alexandra S. Gressitt, Library Director

New and Renewing Members

Gail Ann Adams
John L. Barnhard, Jr.
Beth Balch Benckart
Elizabeth Pierpoint Bradley
George and Mary Bradley
Roberto Costantino
John S. Dooney, Sr.
Eleonora O. Florance
Robert C. Gleason
Alexandra S. Gressitt
Mrs. John Gressitt
Louisa S. Hutchison
Lori and John Kimball
Carty and Rennee Lawson
Deborah A. Lee
Phil and Patricia Lo Presti
James and Mary Grace Lucier
Gayle Lovato
George and Judy McDonnell
Ken and Susan Parks

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