



1922-2009

**Friends of the
Thomas Balch
Library, Inc.**

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The Thomas Balch Chronicle

The Newsletter of Friends of the Thomas Balch Library of the Town of Leesburg, Virginia

208 WEST MARKET STREET, LEESBURG, VIRGINIA 20176

A Library for History and Genealogy

Volume 13 Issue 3

Fall 2009

Recently Renovated Historic Estate Site of Friends' Event "An Evening at Morven Park".

Plans for the Sunday, September 27 "An Evening at Morven Park" are coming together quite nicely. The event will be held from 5:00 to 8:00 PM on the grounds of historic Morven Park, home of Governor and Mrs. Westmoreland Davis. Guests will enter via the main gate and park below the Mansion. From there, they may either walk through the gardens or partake of the trolley shuttle service to get to the top of the hill. Governor and Mrs. Davis are looking forward to greeting their guests. The Mansion and gardens will be open for self-guided tours through the evening.

Historian Brent Tarter of the Library of Virginia is the keynote speaker and plans to discuss the fascinating life of Governor Davis in general and specifically Davis' interactions with the powerful "Byrd" machine in 1917. Mr. Tarter promises a fascinating journey into the politics of the early twentieth century.

Tickets are available at \$125 per person. All proceeds will go toward the Friends' continuing commitment to endow Thomas Balch Library. Space is limited so please contact the Friends immediately at 703-737-2166 if you wish to reserve tickets or have questions. Leave a message and your call will be promptly returned.

This is also an opportunity to see the Mansion following its \$8 million renovation to correct massive failure of the stucco, the foundation, and the



MORVEN PARK

roof. Executive Director Will O'Keefe says "It was in shambles."

O'Keefe has been through every step of the restoration project. He says, "I've been walking up here twice a day for four years. It wasn't until about January when they put the first coat of paint and there was a reason to smile."

Only four out of the 22 rooms have been completed. Visitors won't notice a lot of the major changes because ninety percent of the restoration happened underground.

Taking a look underneath the mansion are endless tubes and gauges. It's the Mansion's attempt to go green. The geothermal HVAC system allows for a high energy efficient cooling and heating system. A new fire suppression system has also been installed.

Dear Husband...

On August 8 the Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County provided the venue for the Black History Committee's spectacular event, "Dear Husband," which commemorated the 150th anniversary of Harriet Newby's letters to her husband and John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry.

Vocalist Jasmine Muhammad, accompanied by Robert Stratham, performed the aria "Dear Husband," from the opera, *John Brown* written by Kirke Mechem, and based on the words Harriet Newby had written to her husband, Dangerfield Newby, the first man to die in the raid. Ms. Muhammad also sang the moving and appropriate spiritual, "Steal Away."

Sherrie Carter, using family documents, photographs and original drawings, told of her journey

researching her family ties with Harriet and Dangerfield Newby.

Dr. Deborah Lee, scholar and historian, gave an inspiring talk, "Communications on the Underground Railroad."

There was time for a lively question and answer period conducted by program co-chairs Donna Bohanon and Phyllis Cook-Taylor.

This event was sponsored by the Black History Committee, Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, The Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County and The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, with added financial support by the Fauquier County Department of Economic Development and the Prince William County/Manassas Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

Sherry Zvares Sanabria

Sanabria Honored with Special Award

In April, Sherry Zvares Sanabria, longtime member of FTBL's Black History Committee, received the Arts and Humanities award given by the Phenomenal Women's Alliance at their annual Leadership Awards Luncheon. The award honors and recognizes her achievements in her painting career and in making a difference in the lives of others.

Ms. Sanabria's luminous and haunting painting series, *Slave Quarters and other African American Sites*, depict the living space of African Americans at the time of slavery as well as during the Jim Crow era. The spaces are predominately dark, yet the glimpses of light through the windows instill a kind of faith and hope. The intention of the works, as Sanabria states, is to "remember and honor those who lived, worked and gathered together in these buildings."

Born in Washington DC, Ms. Sanabria now resides in Leesburg. She received her BA from George Washington University and her MFA from American University. She has had 27 one-person exhibitions and participated in over 40 group exhibitions. She has exhibited at the Phillips Collection, the Corcoran Museum, the American Institute of Architects, The Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York City, as well as galleries in Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, New Jersey and New York City.

Her work is included in the permanent collection of the Phillips Collection, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, American University, George Washington University, the Washington County (MD) Museum, the United States Vice Presidents Foundation as well as private and corporate collections in the United States, England, France and Austria.

Ms. Sanabria has generously donated a set of six 8 x 10 prints from the *Slave Quarters* series to be raffled at the upcoming "An Evening at Morven Park" Sept. 27th.



HERB DUVAL

Black History Committee Chair Herbert DuVall presents the BHC award to Allison Balik, Park View High School freshman, for her winning entry in the annual Loudoun County Public School Social Science Fair. Her project was in the category Local History: How Did the Civil War Affect the Citizens of Loudoun County? She performed all of her research at TBL, and was awarded a prize of \$100.00 and copies of three Black History Committee publications. Congratulations to Allison and to the BHC for fostering interest in local history research.

Book Review

Honoring Their Paths: African American Contributions Along the Journey Through Hallowed Ground

Deborah A. Lee, PhD

This book shines a light on the realities of slave life, freemen, nationally acclaimed artists and civil rights leaders, revealing three hundred years of untold contributions to our American heritage.

Robert K. Sutton, PhD, Chief Historian for the National Park Service said, "After three years of extensive research, this remarkable book brings to the public a rich and complex component of our American narrative by looking beyond the bricks and mortar of historic sites to the people who—through courage, creativity and conviction—helped shape our nation."

Written by Dr. Deborah Lee, *Honoring Their Paths: African American Contributions Along the Journey Through Hallowed Ground*, is a 248-page book that was produced with the keen insight and expertise of 34 historians and academicians. It includes fifteen easy-to-use maps, fascinating profiles as well as archival images depicting many of the indelible contributions made by African Americans who lived within the four-state Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area that runs from Gettysburg, PA to Monticello, VA.

"Generation after generation, the people of this amazing region have been called upon to define what it means to be an American," said Cate Magennis Wyatt, president of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership. "Yet we found many of these extraordinary stories were untold. Accordingly, we sought and fortunately secured funding to ensure we had the finest scholars and the most dedicated team to more fully uncover this history"

Dr. Lee said, "Understanding the African American experience lends new dimensions to the phrase 'hallowed ground.' We owe gratitude to the many African Americans, famous and anonymous, who have enriched our world in so many ways. Through their lives and work, their struggles and achievements, they hallowed this ground. Through this project, and through visits to the places they knew, we seek to honor their paths."

Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership

Loudoun County Sesquicentennial of the Civil War

On Saturday, October 17, 2009, from 9AM to 4:30 PM, the Loudoun County Civil War Round Table will conduct a day long program recognizing the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War. Included in the event at Thomas Balch Library and at the Leesburg Presbyterian Church directly across the street, will be author book signings, lectures, re-enactments, raffles, and exhibits related to the Civil War.

Sons of the Confederate Veterans, Sons of the Union Veterans, and United Daughters of the Confederacy will present their Color Guards to recognize the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War. Reproductions of Loudoun County Civil War era records will be on display, courtesy of the Archives of the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Loudoun County.

Friends of Thomas Balch Library will have a booth. Join us for a day of fun and a taste of history.

Did you know . . .

Thomas Balch Library provides patron access and research opportunities though a total of *nine* digital research products, available on site?

These include: *Access Newspaper Archives.com; America: History and Life; America's Genealogy Bank; AncestryLibrary Edition; Digital Sanborn Maps 1867-1970 (Virginia); Footnotes.com; HeritageQuest Online; JSTOR; and New England Historic Genealogical Society.*

Through the Town of Leesburg's website, additional access is available for: Microforms; the Family File; Bible Records; Historic Property records; Lewis-Edwards file, Loudoun County historic properties supplement index, African American survey index, and Leesburg historic district index; The Map Collection; Newspaper holdings; Newspaper index (Births, Deaths and Marriages); Vertical Files (Biographical, Church and general), and *Exploring Leesburg.*

And more! All of this new information supplements all that was already available at Thomas Balch Library. Come discover the vast resources available here.

REPRINTED FROM THE SECOND ISSUE OF THE *THOMAS BALCH CHRONICLE*, APRIL 1996, AND APPROPRIATE TO THE SEASON, WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS VIEW OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN THE 1920s.

BACK ISSUES OF THE *CHRONICLE* ARE ARCHIVED AND AVAILABLE FOR READING AT THE LIBRARY.

SCHOOL DAYS IN THE TWENTIES: TWO PERSPECTIVES *Extracts from the Oral History Collection at Thomas Balch Library*

THE TEACHERS

Miss Rose Carter taught black students in Aldie and Middleburg.

Powell's Grove School, 1926-27

"...those were the quietest children – I mean they – you couldn't hear a pin drop—you see they didn't go anywhere. They didn't have radios [or] television. And they were anxious to learn. I taught the first five grades. And I think I had 22 children. And they were very good, very quiet. I even taught them how to sew—the girls, rather, not the boys. The boys didn't want to. I had one little boy—I stayed with the parents that [lived] right close to the school. And one little boy wasn't old enough to go to school. But his mother had to go to work. She asked me if I'd let him come to school. So I did—and you know that little boy learned. I didn't teach him; I just let him sit there, but he was learning from the others."

Grant School, late twenties

"...I had 3 grades—really 4 grades, because they had primer—you had to go a whole year at primer—and then the 1st grade, then the 2nd, 3rd, and so on. So I really had four. I did have 2 pupils who finished the primer and 1st in one year—Harold Hall and Arthur Douglass; those were the only two that did it; the others had to go a whole year. And one year I had 65, I didn't have enough room for them, so I wrote to Mr. Emerick, and asked if some of them could come part of the day—and part—you know half a day...and he said, "Well, well, the 3rd grade can come all day, the 1st grade in the morning

and the 2nd grade in the afternoon." And that worked out pretty well.

But I had one 1st grade pupil who lived 5 miles from the school. And she had to come with her brothers and sisters. But she was much younger, you see, and she had to wait until they got out of school before she could go home. And I found out that...she was doing the 2nd grade work along with the 2nd. But she did her 1st grade work in the morning...and she passed to 3rd grade...she went on to college, Virginia Union University and was on the dean's list, and became a very good teacher..[her name was] Nellie Stewart."

Airmont and Middleburg

"The parents at the school in Middleburg were very good. Anything the teacher said do, they'd cooperate with you... And we used to have programs to raise money. I know the first year, it rained in the school like it rained outdoors. And we had to put pans and things every time, so we asked the school board to put a new roof on. Do you know what they told us... "You [pay] half of it and we'll pay the other half" So we had plays, and the parents had to, you know, raise money. And they would bring food to sell after the play. And they had food galore...I don't remember how much [the roof] cost, but they wouldn't put it on unless we raised half the money. And we shouldn't have done it; we didn't have very good black leadership back then. When Dr. [Maurice} Edmead came along it was different...[Then] they fought for a new school; That's when they got Banneker [1948]."

THE STUDENT

Asa Moore Janney attended the Quaker school in Lincoln.

Lincoln School, 1921-22

"We had our first Intramural or whatever they called, interschool baseball game and I was in the 7th grade and those kids at Purcellville had been polishing up their baseball, Little League had just come in... They came down here and they clobbered us, 72-1. That afternoon I came up to get our mail, up here when I stopped at the mailbox I took the mail up to the house, going home at the farm, we had to walk then, we didn't have buses. I went home after that disastrous baseball game with this book very similar to *Boy's Life*, called *Friends*, no, I think the *Intelligence Boy's*, I can't remember now, anyway it was a little boy's magazine which came once a week, a little cheap job, and it said how to throw a curve. All during the next week we practiced. I practiced with the biggest boy in the seventh grade, I'd throw a curve, so he practiced pitching and we went up and played Purcellville the next game and they only beat us 8-0, so we had improved, hadn't we?"

...Anyway, we had good teachers, we had nice teachers, they would rap you on the knuckles with the ruler then, course you don't dare touch them now. I don't believe I ever got spanked, well [when] Miss East had a certain look in her eye and her face colored, why, you'd march a very straight line."

The Director's Letter

As the final days of summer approach we begin to look forward to fall activities. Fall programs will start September 20 with author Bob O'Connor's discussion of his book, *The Perfect Steel Trap: Harpers Ferry, 1859*. A wide variety of lectures, classes, and exhibits will be available – a bit of something for everyone to enjoy. A listing of events is on page 6, or visit the Events Calendar on the Town website www.leesburgva.gov or call the library.

Collections and resource materials at Thomas Balch Library provide citizens, researchers, students and the merely curious an opportunity to study and understand the history of businesses, communities, individuals and families, local government and public leaders, and organizations in Leesburg, Loudoun County, and Northern Virginia. Our collections open doors to understanding not only the local arena but also that of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States and provide an entrée to the world. Public records and private papers in our library reveal personal and public experiences and reflect cultural, economic, political, religious and social values of the community. To visit an historical and genealogical research library enables one to put a human face on history – to bring history alive – to know the past to understand the present and to be alive for the future. Thomas Balch Library provides opportunities to experience history in action. Without question we are only able to fulfill our mission through the generosity of donors from the immediate community and from across the country. Manuscript materials donated by individuals and families become an integral part of our holdings and to be shared with researchers. Collection Guides, indices, and other access materials are available online at www.leesburgva.gov/ThomasBalchLibrary.

Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission presented its second annual award for excellence in local history research in June to Allison Balik of Sterling's Park View High School in the category "Local History" for How did the Civil War Affect the Citizens of Loudoun County.

Following ten years with the Town of Leesburg as Library Specialist at Thomas Balch Library, LaVonne Markham has retired. While many patrons will miss her, we wish her well and many happy experiences to come.

The Thomas Balch Library resource brochure has been updated and is available on request. This information is also available on our website:

www.leesburgva.gov/ThomasBalchLibrary.

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

Alexandra S. Gressitt, Library Director

Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission meets at the Library, at 7 PM, the second Wednesday of every month. 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 9:15 AM. The public is always welcome. For more information call 703-737-2166 or visit www.balchfriends.org.

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

Maximize Your Time at TBL

Don't miss this opportunity to learn the best ways to use Thomas Balch Library in your research. This series of classes, presented by professional and skilled library staff will enable you to make the best use of your time at Thomas Balch Library. All classes are held in the library's downstairs meeting room and are free and open to the public. However, pre-registration is recommended because of limited seating. Call 703-737-7195.

Introduction to Digital Resources at TBL-Thurs.Oct.1,10-11:30 AM

Learn about digital resources available at the library. Alexandra S. Gressitt, Library Director, and Stephanie Adams Hunter, Library Archives Specialist, will demonstrate databases and other online tools available for researchers, showing types of information to be found and suggesting research strategies. Resources to be demonstrated include *JSTOR*, *America's GenealogyBank*, *HeritageQuest*, and *America: History and Life*.

Loudoun County Historic Building Files, Assessment and Parcel Database - Thurs. Nov. 5, 10-11:30 AM - Recommended

as a companion to the Leesburg Historic District presentation, this program will demonstrate various Loudoun County land records and mapping systems available to the public and how to use them in researching historic properties. Conducted by Mary A. Pender and John Berfield, the program will include a brief overview of the library's Lewis/Edwards and Historic Leesburg files, tax records and maps.

Leesburg's Historic District Files and Sanborn Maps-Thurs.

Dec. 3, 10-11:30 AM - Preservation Planner Annie McDonald will demonstrate resources available at TBL for researching a property's history. Focusing on the Leesburg historic district, 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.

General Introduction to TBL - Thurs, Feb. 4, 2010, 10-11:30 AM

Alexandra S. Gressitt, Library Director, will provide a general overview of the library, its history, organization and collections with emphasis on digital collections, services, programs, and volunteer and intern opportunities.

Information Seeking Strategies, Thurs. Mar. 4, 2010, 10-11:30 AM

Beth Schuster, Library Reference Specialist, will demonstrate methods for developing and implementing effective search techniques. While the techniques discussed are applicable in a wide variety of environments, specific attention will be paid to TBL's subscription databases, including *America: History and Life* and *Access Newspaper Archive*.

NEW THIS YEAR: Researching Court Records - Thurs.

April 1, 2010, 10-11:30 AM - Jeanette Irby, Town Attorney, Town of Leesburg, will discuss using court records and other resources for data that are frequently overlooked in genealogical and historical research.

Manuscript and Archives Research at TBL - Thurs., May 6, 2010, 10-11:30 AM

Traditional Genealogical Resources at TBL - Thurs. June 3, 2010, 10-11:30 AM

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Carolyn and John Beck
 Huntt Frederick Benton
 Charles D. Binns
 John Lancaster & Daria D'Arienzo
 Doug and Ann Foard
 Sally Balch Hurme
 Deborah and Miles Lee
 Fred and Betty Morefield
 G. Shirley Myers, Jr.
 Jane G. Packard
 Brian and Barbara Petrov
 Gerald and Genevieve Rhodes
 Murray and Barbara Rose
 Alfred P. Van Huyck

Don't Miss
"An Evening at Morven Park"
 Please join us at the newly restored
 Morven Park
 September 27, 2009 for an evening of
 good food, libations, and to hear
 Brent Tarter speak about
 Governor Westmoreland Davis and
 Virginia's early 20th Century politics.

A REMINDER

Be sure to renew your Friends' membership. Check your label for your renewal date, and use the membership form below 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 part in supporting the collections and programs of Thomas Balch Library.

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PO Box 2184 Leesburg, VA 20177

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 by Lemoine D. Pierce \$ 10.00
- Journey Through Time**
 by Black History Committee of Friends of the Thomas Balch Library \$ 5.00
- "The Imperious Laird": John Campbell, Fourth Earl of Loudoun**
 by Douglas W. Foard, Ph.D. \$ 15.00
- Billy Pierce: Dance Master, Son of Purcellville**
 by Lemoine D. Pierce \$ 15.00
- Loudoun 1757: On the Border of Mayhem Loudoun County 250th Anniversary Lecture Series** \$ 15.00

Thank You

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The Thomas Balch
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Friends of the
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P. O. Box 2184
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

Sunday, Sept. 20, 2009 - 2PM - The Perfect Steel Trap: Harpers Ferry, 1859 -- Author Bob O'Connor will discuss his historical novel, *The Perfect Steel Trap: Harpers Ferry, 1859* about John Brown's famous and fateful raid at Harpers Ferry, told by eye-witnesses as varied as Brown's own family and General Robert E. Lee. Books will be available for purchase on-site.

Sunday, Sept. 27, 2009 - 2 PM - Presence and Prejudice: Jewish Settlement in Loudoun County and the Virginia Piedmont - Eugene Scheel will explore the history of Jewish peoples in Loudoun County and environs from the 1750s to the present using personal experiences woven together with historical events.

Sunday, Sept. 27, 2009 - 5-8PM - An Evening at Morven Park - See Page 1 for details.

Sunday, October 4, 2009 - 2PM - Mosby's Keydet Rangers - Author Eric W. Buckland's new book uses previously unpublished material providing insight into young men who attended VMI and rode with Mosby's Rangers during the Civil War. Including biographical sketches, personal letters, accounts of raids and other incidents, Buckland exposes us to the effect these young men had on the Rangers' operations during the War as well as their post-war careers. Books will be available for purchase on-site.

Monday, Oct. 5, 2009 - 7PM - Clerk's Office Tour, Loudoun County Courthouse Historic Records - John Fishback, Historic Records Manager for Loudoun County will lead the tour and discuss the extent of the County's record holdings of births, deaths, marriages and deeds and how to use these records in research. (Meet in the parking lot at TBL by 6:30PM)

Saturday, Oct. 17, 2009 - 9AM-4:30PM - Civil War Sesquicentennial Event - see page 3 for details.

Saturday, Oct. 24, 2009 - 9AM-12 - Walking Tour of Leesburg. Led by James Roberts, Leesburg native and TBL Advisory Commission member, the tour provides factual, historical and anecdotal information of local people, places and points of interest, intertwined and presented in storytelling fashion by one who has lived through it and thoughtfully observed it. Not to be missed.

Saturday, October 24, 2009 - 2PM - Archaeological & Evolutionary Perspectives on the Origins & Spread of Plant Domestication by Humans - Jeffrey Alvey, formerly with Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES), will discuss recent archaeological research on plant dispersion, with special emphasis on the history of these events in North America. This event is part of BRCS's celebration of Virginia Archaeology Month.

Sunday, October 25, 2009 - 2pm - Advocates for Destruction: The Inconvenience & Deformity of the Green Spring Mansion in the Late 18th Century. Architectural historian Virginia Price looks at the house, demolished in 1797, from the advantage point of an inventory taken in 1767 and through the architectural drawings done by Benjamin Henry Latrobe to suggest room use and the redistribution of domestic space, in order to prevent its eventual destruction.

Sunday, November 8, 2009 - 2PM - Loudoun History Awards -

Sunday, December 6, 2009 - 2PM - Revisiting John Brown in the Age of Obama - Hannah Giffert, author and expert on John Brown, will discuss *John Brown Mysteries*, a book on which she and a group of educators and community activists collaborated to present the events at Harpers Ferry in 1859 from an African American perspective.

Programs sponsored by Thomas Balch Library are held in the downstairs meeting room and are free unless otherwise noted. Because of limited seating, we recommend registering in advance by calling 703-737-7195.