



1922-2010

# 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 14 Issue 2

Summer 2010

## Thomas Balch Library and George Mason University Set Agreement for Academic Partnership

On March 31, 2010, a Memorandum of Agreement for academic cooperation was signed by Leesburg Town Manager John Wells and Thomas Balch Library Director Alexandra S. Gressitt, on behalf of the Town of Leesburg, and by George Mason University Dean Jack R. Censer and Associate Professor Brian Platt, chair of the Department of History and Art History at the University. The agreement makes possible, as the University moves into Loudoun County, opportunities for connections with established and developing scholars by providing educational programs for the community.



L to R: GMU Dean Jack R. Censer, GMU Assoc. Prof. Brian Platt, TBL Director Alexandra S. Gressitt, Leesburg Town Manager John Wells

The agreement also establishes cooperative benefits with regard to internships through professional experiences for students in processing collections at the library that will be made available for researcher use.

"This is a great opportunity for an academic institution and a public history institution to forge mutually beneficial relations to the advantage of the community by developing rewarding and meaningful educational experience for students and faculty," said Library Director Alexandra S. Gressitt.

### Save the Date: September 19, 2010

Mark your calendars now, for another outstanding evening of entertainment, plus wonderful food and fellowship. On September 19, 2010 at 5:30 PM, the Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc. will host their annual Evening with History. This year's venue: Historic Oatlands Plantation near Leesburg. Come stroll the historic gardens, some still under restoration to their former glory at the time of the Carters and Eustis families. And learn more about the rich heritage and history of this area from a very special speaker.



Oatlands Plantation House

WIKIPEDIA IMAGE

Catered by Karen Harper-Fuog, you will enjoy her 'made from scratch' specialties wine from one of Loudoun County's premier vineyards. Committee co-chairpersons, Patty Rogers-Renner and Suzi Worsham promise it will be a delightful and entertaining evening. Make your reservations now to enjoy the evening and display your support for Thomas Balch Library. All monies raised will continue to create a permanent endowment for the library.

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

P.O. Box 2184  
Leesburg, VA 20177

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[info@balchfriends.org](mailto:info@balchfriends.org)

#### Website:

[www.balchfriends.org](http://www.balchfriends.org)

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**Ten Years ago, the headline read:**

## ***Balch Supporters Launch Fund Drive, \$400,000 Sought to Add Finishing Touches to Renovation.***

The front page article, written by Margaret Morton and actually reprinted with permission from *Leesburg Today* went on: "Enthusiastic supporters packed a meeting room at the Leesburg Methodist Church Friday evening to hear plans for moving back into the renovated Thomas Balch Library.

The occasion marked the kick-off of a \$400,000 fundraising campaign by the Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc. At the end of the meeting, Friends Chairman Karen Jones presented Mayor Clem with an initial installment of \$25,000 for the library. "Although the group had been driven inside by rain, spirits were high as Jones reminded her audience of the dark days in the early 1990s when Balch, then owned by Loudoun County, was destined to be used for storage. In 1994, the Town of Leesburg came to the rescue, she said, and took over the library, raising funds through a bond issue of \$1.9 million to make Balch a genealogy and history center and carry out needed expansion." . . .

"Jones then got to the meat of the program as she introduced Fred Morefield, Chairman of the fundraising committee . . . Jones praised him and his committee for efforts so far in achieving major gift pledges. The committee seeks to raise monies for things that the bond issue did not cover, said Morefield, such as furnishings and equipment, grounds enhancement, educational, outreach, technology, and service programs. "The Town has been very generous, but with these wonderful new facilities it seemed a pity not to do more," Morefield said. In addition to Morefield, members of the committee include Jane Bogle, Karen Jones, Jim Lucier, Wynne Saffer and Susan Webber.

Morefield announced a number of major gifts that have already been identified or pledged in support of the library. The Friends of Balch hope that the town council will consider naming principal rooms in honor of the major donors."

*From the Thomas Balch Chronicle for June, 2000*

### **SPREADING THE WORD**

**Thomas Balch Library and the Friends of Thomas Balch Library manned a booth at the Sixth Annual Genealogy Fair at the National Archives Building in Washington DC on April 14 & 15.**

This year's two-day program showcased the diversity of Federal records located at the National Archives as resources for family history research and speakers addressed various areas of genealogic research. The fair, which was free to the public, was presented in partnership with the Foundation for the National Archives and with support from Ancestry.com. The Balch contingent, as a guest exhibitor, displayed our publications and information about the resources at Thomas Balch Library.

**Black History Committee represented Thomas Balch Library at the Third Annual Purcellville Heritage Day Celebration.**

The BHC was active on May 15, at the highly successful event celebrating Purcellville's long heritage and its present day role as an active and lively modern town, but one that cherishes and celebrates its past with this Annual Event. The committee reported considerable interest in the publications and made a number of sales. It's understood that they are becoming a 'fixture' at this event, and thanks are due to them all.

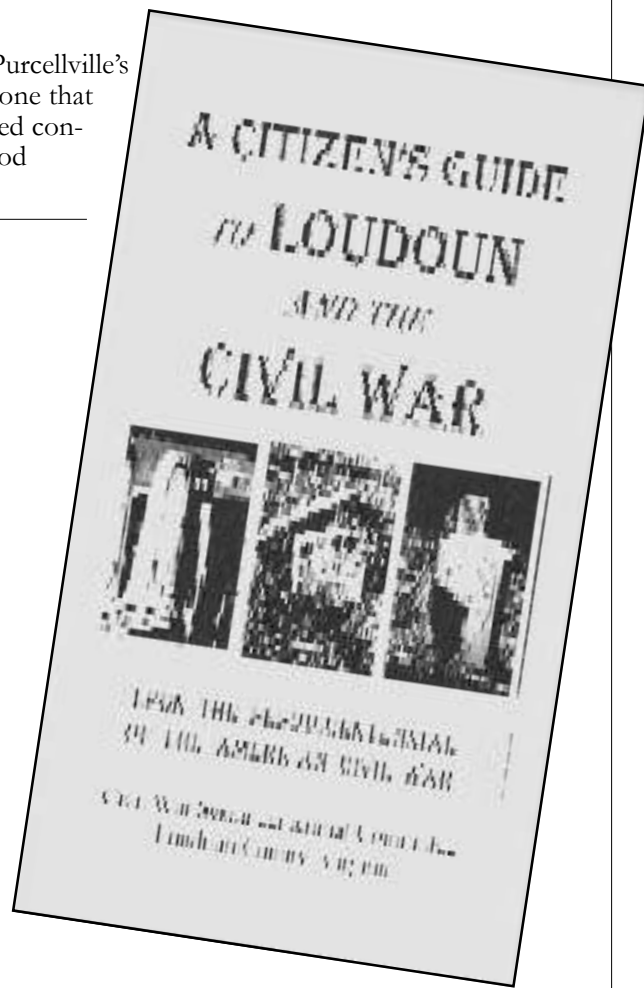
## ***New! A Citizen's Guide to Loudoun and the Civil War***

Available at Thomas Balch Library is a newly published *Citizen's Guide to Loudoun and the Civil War*. Produced by The Education Workgroup of the Loudoun Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee, it is an introduction for Loudoun's teachers, students and families to Virginia's Sesquicentennial Observation of the American Civil War.

A comprehensive work, couched in questions about the events, with corresponding answers, it also displays photos and background information about Civil War personalities who impacted Loudoun County at that time, along with a brief chronology of Loudoun and the Civil War.

The Education Workgroup is chaired by Richard Gillespie, Mosby Heritage Area Association. Other members include Marilyn Bos, Loudoun County Schools, ret.; Stevan F. Meserve, Eastern Loudoun Civil War Round Table; James A. Morgan, Loudoun County Civil War Round Table; and John Souders, The Waterford Foundation. The group expresses its thanks to Deborah Lee of Journey through Hallowed Ground, and to Jeremy Harvey, Loudoun Convention & Visitors Association.

The booklet was printed with grants from the Loudoun County Historical Society, Loudoun County Civil War Round Table, and the Mosby Heritage Area Association.



## ***Thomas Balch Library Sponsored Classes are Designed to Enhance Your Balch Experience and Enrich Your Life. Sign Up Today!***

### **USING VISUAL COLLECTIONS AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY**

**Thursday, 3 June 2010, 10-12AM**

Beth Schuster, Library Reference Specialist, will introduce users to visual collections at Thomas Balch Library. Types of images available and how they may be accessed will be discussed.

### **TRADITIONAL GENEALOGICAL RESOURCES AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY**

**Thursday, 5 August 2010, 10-12AM**

Mary Fishback, Library Assistant, will introduce participants to basic genealogical research utilizing materials in the collections of Thomas Balch Library and how to organize their research.

### **INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL RESOURCES AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY**

**Thursday, 7 October 2010, 10-12AM**

In this session, participants will learn about digital resources available at Thomas Balch 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**

**Thursday, 4 November 2010, 10-12AM**

This class, recommended as a companion to the Leesburg Historic District presentation, will demonstrate various Loudoun County land records and mapping systems available to the public

and how to use them in researching historic properties. Included will be a brief overview of the library's Lewis/Edwards and Historic Leesburg files, tax records, and maps available for researching historic properties and early Loudoun settlers.

Mary A. Pender, a part-time librarian and cataloger at Thomas Balch Library received her BA from the College of William & Mary and MLIS from University of Texas at Austin. A Project Manager for Loudoun County's Land Records System, she has been employed with the Building and Development Department since 1998. She is currently part of a development team working on the county's first online permitting system. John Berfield, a Library Assistant, earned his BA in Geography from Virginia Tech. He retired from a Planner position with the Loudoun County Department of Building and Development in 2005. His work at the county included contributing toward the addition of several historic structure files, including chain of title information, in the Lewis/Edwards Files.

### **LEESBURG'S HISTORIC DISTRICT FILES AND SANBORN MAPS**

**Thursday, 2 December 2010, 10-12AM**

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. The talk focuses only on the area covered by the Sanborn Maps, which is limited to the Leesburg historic district, and this session is recommended as a companion to the county records presentation. Previously employed by a DC-based preservation consulting firm and by a regional NGO based in Chattanooga, Tennessee, she has been with the Town of Leesburg since September 2005.

## ***Thomas Balch Library New Items***

### **Recently catalogued books:**

*Guide to Manuscript and Microfilm Collections of the Research*

*Library of the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies*

by Monique Bourque and R. Joseph Anderson

*Lost Promise of Civil Rights* by Risa L. Goluboff

*Origin of the Fighter Aircraft* by Jon Guttman

*Root and Branch: Charles Hamilton Houston, Thurgood*

*Marshall, and the Struggle to End Segregation*

by Rawn James

*John Brown Photo Chronology: Catalog of the Exhibition at*

*Harpers Ferry 2009* by Jean Libby

*Walking Tour of Leesburg, Virginia* by Melvin Steadman

### **Other materials:**

*Locked Out: The Fall of Massive Resistance*

by UVA Center for Politics (DVD)

*Afro American* Washington DC edition

*America's Newspapers* – electronic editions of record for local, regional and national US newspapers (1591sources)

1977-present dates depending on specific newspapers. A

product of Newsbank, Inc.

## ***Sanabria Exhibit***

Good news for those who may have missed Black History Committee member and outstanding artist Sherry Sanabria's exhibit last Fall.

From September 10 through October 2, Art Square Gallery in Leesburg will be hosting her latest series of paintings, "French Suite." These images of historical structures in the villages and towns of southwest France display once again, her focus on the luminous light and mysterious and lingering presence of past lives, much as she has done with her esteemed series depicting slave quarters in the past. Don't miss it.



*Cabors Steps, from "French Suite"*

## ***The Director's Letter***

Greetings:

Our spring lecture series concluded with two outstanding tours. There are two classes upcoming – one on using visual collections at the library and the other an introduction to traditional genealogical resources at the library. Our fall program lecture series will start in September and include tours, genealogical and historical topics. Jim Hanna's photographic exhibit of the historic house, Selma, will conclude in June to be followed by Virginia Flowers in Bloom by Gary Mester. In the exhibit cases in the Mercer Room, there will be an exhibit curated by Stephanie Adams Hunter and Beth Schuster on Women in Loudoun County and during July and August John Creamer will be displaying Civil War Relics from northern Virginia. We are pleased to continue hosting a special exhibit: Patriot Project – to honor the founding patriots – the Loudoun Revolutionary War Memorial Committee is displaying the maquette by sculptor Jay Hall Carpenter. It is on display in the John Divine Room. Please take time to view these exhibits.

Elsewhere in the newsletter you will find a list of newly catalogued materials. With the support of the Friends, the library has been able to add to its digital subscription offerings *America's Newspapers* - electronic editions of record for local, regional and national US newspapers (1591sources) 1977-present dates depending on specific newspapers. The Friends are also underwriting our subscription to *America's Genealogy Bank*. Both of these products are published by Newsbank, Inc. We are also now providing access to the Washington DC edition of *Afro American*.

During the summer months the library will be hosting two interns: Victoria Venne from Shenandoah University started on May 11 and Carolyn Jackson from Wellesley will start June 1. These students will be processing some of our historical manuscript and visual collections, preparing them for researchers to use. Our collections are utilized by a variety of researchers including doctoral students, historians and novelists, architects, genealogists, and publishers.

Recently we have been working with Scholastic Inc. on a request for an image for publication. One of our images of Belmont will grace the cover of a forthcoming young adult historical novel: *Dear America: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl* by Patricia C. McKissack.

Thomas Balch Library with the assistance of members of the Friends (Ron Rust and Robert Patton) and the Black History Committee (Mary Randolph) participated in the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) Sixth Annual Genealogy Fair April 14 & 15. It was such a successful experience that we have agreed to participate next year.

Over the course of the last year, Thomas Balch Library and George Mason have been working to create an agreement of academic cooperation. Paul Bice, former president of Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc., helped by arranging our initial meeting. A Memorandum of Understanding between TBL and GMU was signed by GMU Provost Peter Sterns, Dean Jack R. Censer, Professor Brian Platt, Town Manager John Wells, and myself on March 31.

Throughout there year there are many opportunities for us to share with the public information about our mission. Working with Town Council two proclamations were issued: one for National Library Week (April 11-17) and for National Preservation Week (May 9-15). For National Preservation Week Stephanie Adams Hunter created a small preservation display. In addition for both events the library has distributed specially themed bookmarks.

In an effort to reduce cost and enhance our marketing with the creative assistance of Bob Farkas of Custom Graphics, we now have a new color rack card for distribution at events and sites. These are available on site or by request via mail.

Working with Francis Fera, Becky Ottinger, and Martha Schonberger a class, introducing teachers to the TBL resources, has been scheduled at TBL for Monday, August 30, to provide recertification credits.

For those who like to explore our website, Beth Schuster working with volunteers and staff completed indices (by name and address) to *Exploring Leesburg: guide to history and architecture*. This helpful research document is available on the TBL Special Collections webpage.

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*

## ***Monthly Exhibits Add to Your Thomas Balch Library Experience***

### **Exhibits in the Margaret Mercer Room**

**June** Women in Loudoun County's History by  
Thomas Balch Library

**July-August** Civil War Relics - John Creamer

**September** George C. Marshall - Dodona Manor

**October** American Archives Month - Thomas Balch Library

**November** Loudoun History Awards - Thomas Balch Library

**December** Loudoun Arts Council

### **Exhibit: Lower Level Meeting Room**

**July-September** Gary Mester - Virginia Flowers in Bloom

**October-December** Fran Poston - Morven Park: A unique look at the Old Mansion

**BE SURE TO RENEW YOUR FRIENDS' MEMBERSHIP. CHECK YOUR LABEL FOR YOUR RENEWAL DATE.  
AND USE THE FORM ON PAGE FIVE TO ENLIST YOUR FRIENDS TO BECOME MEMBERS.**

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**Loudoun Discovered: Communities, Corners & Crossroads**

- Volume 1 **Eastern Loudoun: Goin' Down the Country**
- Volume 2 **Leesburg and the Old Carolina Road**
- Volume 3 **The Hunt Country and Middleburg**
- Volume 4 **Quaker Country and the Loudoun Valley**
- Volume 5 **Waterford, the German Settlement and Between the Hills**  
 each volume: \$ 20.00

Set of all 5 volumes plus Eugene Scheel's  
**New Historical Map of Loudoun County** \$100.00

Individual copies of the **Historical Map** \$ 10.00

**The Essence of A People:  
 Portraits of African Americans Who Made a  
 Difference in Loudoun County, Virginia** \$ 15.00

**The Essence of A People II: African Americans Who Made  
 Their World Anew in Loudoun County, Virginia and Beyond** \$ 15.00

**Loudoun County's African American Communities  
 A Tour Map and Guide** \$ 5.00

**A Taste of Loudoun County:  
 Our Favorite Recipes 1903-1951  
 Home Interest Club Cookbook - Centennial Edition** \$ 10.00

**A Story of Round Hill, Loudoun County, Virginia**  
 by Ann W. Thomas \$ 20.00

**In the Watchfires: The Loudoun County  
 Emancipation Association, 1890-1971**  
 by Elaine E. Thompson \$ 20.00

**George Washington Carver: Scientist, Artist, & Musician**  
 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

**Leesburg 250th Anniversary Lecture Series (2008)**  
 Hosted by Thomas Balch Library, includes booklet & 2 DVDs \$ 15.00

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The Thomas Balch  
**Chronicle**  
*Friends of the  
Thomas Balch Library*  
P. O. Box 2184  
Leesburg, VA 20177

*5:30 PM  
Sept. 19, 2010  
Come to the Party!*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

*September 19, 2010 at 5:30 PM*

*An Evening with History*

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

*Oatlands Historic Plantation, Leesburg, Virginia.*

BE SURE TO CHECK THIS SPACE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE *THOMAS BALCH CHRONICLE* FOR A FULL SCHEDULE OF EXCITING AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THE FALL AND WINTER MONTHS.

OTHER ACTIVITIES AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

**Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission** sponsors the annual Loudoun History Awards and an award for excellence in historical research at the annual Loudoun County Public School Social Science Fair. It meets at the Library the second Wednesday of each month at 7 PM. The public is always welcome.

**Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc.**, a 501c3 organized to provide support for Thomas Balch Library, meets at the Library every other month. The public is always welcome. For more information call 703/737-2166 or visit [www.balchfriends.org](http://www.balchfriends.org).

**Black History Committee of Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc.**, meets at the Library the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7 PM. The public is always welcome. For information visit: [www.balchfriends.org](http://www.balchfriends.org).