



Shenandoah
County
Historical
Society

Fall 2025

Newsletter

40th Anniversary

New Life Members

Rebecca Ebert
Donna Crabill
Karl & Suzanne Roulston
Clemmitt Sigler

ATTENTION

ARE YOUR DUES DUE??

The date beside the name on your mailing label is the month and year your membership is due. Thank you for staying current. Rates on Page 6.

Please note new amounts.

Archives Month Exhibit to open at County Govt. Building Oct. 1st

On October 1, the Truban Archives, SCHS, and the Woodstock Museum will host a special program highlighting the Morrison Studio Collection at the county government building in Woodstock.

Part of National Archives Month Celebrations, this event will feature a presentation discussing the history of Morrison Studios and surviving images, an exhibit of Morrison's cameras, and select Morrison prints. The presentation begins at 7:00PM with doors opening at 6:30. Utilize the main entrance (under the clock tower).



SAVE THE DATE

June 20, 2026

**"Shenandoah County
Celebrates 1776"**

The Shenandoah County Historical Society will host a day of celebration for America 250 in downtown Woodstock, focusing on the nation's history and heritage. The event will take place in the central Woodstock area, around the Court Square and Historic Courthouse. While event times and details will be announced at a later date, attendees are encouraged to plan for an all-day experience.

Confirmed speakers and exhibitors include:

- Dr. Emily Sneff, guest curator at the American Revolution Museum at Historic Trappe, will discuss the Declaration of Independence & July 4th celebrations from years past.
- Lisa Minardi, executive director of Historic Trappe, will offer a virtual tour of the site and discuss her book *Pastors and Patriots*. A professional reenactment of Peter Muhlenberg's "plea for soldiers" sermon is also planned.
- John C. Settle, author of *The Virginia Continental Line in the Revolution's Southern Campaign*, will present on the role of Virginia troops in the Revolutionary War.
- Gabe Neville, author of *The Last Men Standing: The 8th Virginia Regiment in the American Revolution*, will discuss the Dunmore Resolves.
- Patrick Henry Jolly, great-grandson of Patrick Henry, will reenact the famous "Give me Liberty, or Give me Death" speech and explore Patrick Henry's legacy in Virginia.
- Nick Powers, from the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, will speak on the Revolutionary War's impact on the valley's political, social, and civil rights movements.
- Heart Strings Dulcimer Group will perform a concert of patriotic songs.
- Paul Parish will display his living history exhibit of an 18th-century surveyor.
- Elissa Parish will demonstrate the art of tape loom weaving.
- Michael Cecere, author of *General Peter Muhlenberg: A Virginia Officer of the Continental Line*, will speak on General Muhlenberg's contributions.
- Clyde Jenkins will showcase period basketry techniques.
- Ian MacDougall, a drummer, will provide a roaming performance with a fifer.

(Continued on Page 4)

November Program to Feature Local Archeology

"Traces of a Thousand Years Left in the Fields and Woods of the Valley" is the title of a program to be presented on Tuesday, Nov. 18th by Mike Kehoe, avocational archeologist and Shenandoah Valley historian.

Using a power point, he will discuss prehistoric sites in Shenandoah County and nearby, and today's understanding of the collecting of artifacts versus earlier practices. He will give an overview of where prehistoric sites are likely to be found and will share some information about the village site on land he now owns and it's connections to historian Samuel Kercheval's work.

The Program begins at 7:00 PM at the St. Paul's Heritage Center on High St. in Edinburg. Refreshments follow.



From the: Shenandoah County Archives

By Zach Hottel, Archivist

Asa Sheetz's Orchard

This ca. 1918 photograph shows workers picking and packaging apples at Asa Sheetz's Orchard.

The orchard was located west of Woodstock along Narrow Passage Creek near the community of Calvary. Along with owning the orchard Asa Allen Sheetz was a taxidermist, farm implement salesperson, and inventor. He and his wife Mary Dirting had ten children, Elon, Bessie, Luther, Lydia, Noah, Virginia, John, Jacob, Harry, and William. He died of heart failure in 1927.

At the time this picture was taken, Shenandoah County had numerous orchards for apples and other fruits. The Shenandoah Valley had become a major producer of apples in the mid-19th century and would continue to do so through the late 20th century.

The presence of easy transportation via the railroad and a spike in food prices as a result of the First World War would have meant Sheetz's profit off the harvest pictured would have been substantial. Once this crew picked the apples, they were packed into barrels, taken to Woodstock's freight depot on Court Street, and then sent to processing plants.

(Continued on Page 3)



Asa A. Sheetz Orchard, Image 002233, Morrison Studio Collection, Truban Archives/Shenandoah County Library, Edinburg, Virginia.

This Newsletter can be
sent to you
electronically.
Many photos will
appear in color, and it
saves postage !

Notify us at:

ShenandoahHistory.org

The Shenandoah County Historical Society, Inc.

is a
501 (c)(3) non-profit
organization.

Pres.: Barbara Adamson
Vice-Pres: Rick Lytton
Secretary: Susan Walls
Treasurer: Laura Zimmerman

Board Members:

Dennis Atwood
Anne Dellinger
Kenna Fansler
Floyd Heater
Suzanne McIlwee
Mary Redmon
Janet Wagniere
Karen Whetzel
Hank Zimmerman

Newsletter Editor:
Janet Wagniere

Message from the President



Barbara Adamson

Rain...no rain...rain...no rain. It's hard to know what we want, isn't it? And what we want and what we need aren't necessarily the same thing! Anyway, happy autumn.

We have much to look forward to in 2026. In this newsletter we're getting a taste of things to come in the article about Shenandoah County's big day in June celebrating 1776 and our rich history. You'll hear much more in the coming months. Remember to frequently check our excellent website, shenandoahhistory.org, for all area events.

Every October is Archives Month, a statewide program. This year the theme is historic photography. That's right up our alley given the work that SCHS has accomplished with the Hugh Morrison, Jr. photographic collection and the wonderful project that the SC Library Archives, led by Zach Hottel, and his volunteers, have done to make the collection available to the public via the library website. We hope you'll receive this newsletter in time to attend the Oct. 1 event at the Shenandoah County Government Center where Zach will lecture at 7pm about the Morrison Collection. The Woodstock Museum will also bring Morrison's own camera. And SCHS will have some of Morrison's glass plate negatives and explain a bit about the Morrison Collection project, which began in 1999. Also, twenty framed photographs taken by Hugh Morrison, Jr. will be on display at the Government Center where they will remain for several months. Our thanks go to Shenandoah County Government staff members who've helped with this event.

In March 2025 we lost a wonderful local historian with the passing of Robert Mowery. He was the author of *A History of Calvary, Virginia*, and was an early inspiration to me about the value of saving and sharing Shenandoah County history. He recently attended our D-Day Omaha Beach exhibit in October 2024 and never lost his interest in history.

In April, Allen D. Johnson passed. Mr. Johnson was a man of many accomplishments, only one that I will mention here. He enlisted in the US Merchant Marine at age 17 and served in WWII from 1945-1946.

(Continued on Page 3)

SCHS By-Laws Amendment Adopted at 2024 Annual Meeting

At the 2025 SCHS Annual Dinner on May 20, an amendment to the Society's By-Laws was presented. The previous wording of Article II, Directors and Officers, Section 2.6 is as follows: "The Board of Directors shall meet within ten (10) days of the Annual Meeting of the Society to elect the Board officers."

The change to this wording, which was voted on at the Annual Meeting, is as follows: "The Board of Directors shall elect Board officers at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board following the Annual Meeting." The reason for this proposed amendment is that in order to fulfill the current requirement, the Board must conduct an ad hoc meeting to elect officers.

The Board elects officers from its membership and believes it to be much more reasonable to conduct this election at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting following the Annual Meeting. The present officers will continue until the next Board meeting.

Apples - (Continued from Page 2)

Today, almost all of Shenandoah County's fruit industry has disappeared as changing economics led to a decline in prices and increased profitability for other crops, while increased land values meant many of the former orchards have been redeveloped as housing.

If you would like to learn more about Asa Sheetz, local orchards, agriculture, and/or our communities, visit the Shenandoah County Library's Truban Archives. Visit countylib.org/local-history for our hours, information on making research appointments, and links to our digital collections.

President's Letter - (From Pg. 1)

He received the WWII Victory Medal, the Atlantic War Zone Medal and the Congressional Gold Medal for his service. Mr. Johnson was one of three remaining WWII veterans who were feted at the D-Day Omaha Beach exhibit at the Woodstock Armory. He clearly leaves fond memories and many thanks for his WWII service and his community service in Shenandoah County.

Strasburg Ghost Walking Tours

Family-friendly event! Learn about our haunted history and mysterious tales!



Hosted by
**The Strasburg Heritage
Association**



and the
Town of Strasburg
at the

**Strasburg Visitor and Information Center
at Hupp's Hill**

33229 Old Valley Pike, Strasburg, VA 22657

October 18 & 19, 2025

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

One-hour tours of up to 15 people leaving every 15 minutes

Last tour leaves at 8:00 pm

Rain or Shine Event (unless the rain is just ridiculous!)

Cost is a free-will donation to the Strasburg Heritage Association

Visit: www.strasburgvaheritage.org or call 540-325-4397 for more information!



Mount Jackson Museum To Publish Book

MOUNT JACKSON, VIRGINIA
Celebrating 200 Years of History



A Mount Jackson Museum Publication

This new book is filled with historical photographs and information about Mount Jackson that was collected through research, archives and interviews with local residents. It should be available for the Bicentennial Celebration in January of 2026. A pre-order price is \$50. will ensure your copy by signing up at the Town office, the Museum or by mailing a check payable, to the Museum, 5901 Main St., Mount Jackson, VA 22824

Holiday Candlelight Tour

Abram's Delight, the oldest house in Winchester, at 1340 S. Pleasant Valley Rd., built in 1754, will be open for their annual Candlelight Tour on **Friday, Dec. 6th from 6 - 8 pm and Dec. 7th from 3 - 7 pm.** The Winchester - Frederick County Historical Society invites guests to walk the museum grounds and view the beautiful holiday decorations that will be created by local garden clubs. Free Admission Info: 540.662.6550



★ Lecture ★ Smart & Brave:

Death of a Civil War General at Belle Grove



At one point the youngest General in the Confederate Army, Stephen Dodson Ramseur saw action in many of the major battles of the Civil War. He had horses shot out from under him and was wounded seriously at Malvern Hill, Chancellorsville, and Cedar Creek. However, at Cedar Creek, he received a fatal chest wound.

Dr. Dianne Murphy will recount General Ramseur's life and career, and will focus in on the medical advances made during the Civil War.

Dr. Murphy is a pediatric infectious disease physician who retired from the Food and Drug Administration where she established and directed the Office of Pediatric Therapeutics. She earned her medical degree at the Medical College of Virginia, completed residency at the University of VA, served as a pediatrician at the National Naval Medical Center, and taught at the University of Tennessee and the University of Florida.

She has volunteered as a docent and Board Member at the Lee Fendall House in Alexandria, at the Carlyle House and she is now a docent at Belle Grove Plantation in Middletown.

This lecture is **Saturday, October 4, 10:30-11:30 am** and is free of charge. It will take place on the lower level of the Belle Grove Manor House at 336 Belle Grove Road, Middletown, VA 22645.



✦ Continuing Series on Building History in Shenandoah County ✦

The Jordan House - 6028 Main Street, Mt. Jackson VA



The Jordan house, located at 6028 Main Street in Mt. Jackson, is probably one of the oldest homes in Mt. Jackson. It is unknown who built the house, but in the current dining room, which was the original house, is etched on a window pane "Wm M Billing t F Billing 1800". This room has a large door facing south which was typical of dwellings built in pioneer times. The room has a large fireplace which is now closed-up on the east side. The front, 2 story brick section was built in the 1820s of a Flemish bond style. At both gable-ends are stepped parapets with exterior chimneys which are not seen in any other house in Mt. Jackson. The house has a 2-story front porch which, during the widening of Route 11 during the 1930s, was the only house on Main Street that did not lose its front porch when the road was widened.

The house has a floored attic and probably was used as living quarters during various times of the year. This is because the attic door latch is backward. Also,

the chimney has been finished with plaster.

The building was purchased shortly after the Civil War by Dewitt Clinton Jordan, a Captain in the war. He was a town businessman who owned the frame building next door at 6024 Main Street and where he operated a general merchandise business with his brother L. H. Jordan. In 1869, he married Lelia Payne Sigler, daughter of William Sigler who lived at Shenstone just south of this house. They had 2 children, a son – Dewitt Clinton, and daughter – Margaret Virginia. Their son died on Aug. 4, 1874 shortly after the death of Lelia, who died July 2, 1874. Dewitt Clinton died June 15, 1878, leaving their daughter Margaret Virginia, (known as Little Mag), as an orphan. Dewitt Clinton's sister – also named Margaret Virginia (known as Big Mag), raised her niece. Little Mag was educated at Hollins Institute, now Hollins University, in Roanoke, Va. and died Sept. 1, 1905 at the age of 33. Big Mag lived in the house until her death in 1917. Due to the many deaths of the Jordans in the house, a ghost story began. People walking up the street claimed to see "Little Mag" standing on the second-floor porch in a white dress and crossed the street to avoid walking in front of the house. Dewitt, Lelia, son and daughter are buried in the Union Church Cemetery.

The house was witness to the marching of both Confederate and Union armies during the Civil War. Stories of the house, told by Julia Funkhouser and Anna Tisinger, is that toward the end of the War, a Union soldier came through looking for spoils. So as not for someone to steal his horse while he raided the family meat house and garden, he led the horse up the front steps, through the front door and tied the horse to a piano leg in the parlor while he went looking for food. Another version is that a Confederate soldier who was in town, heard that Union soldiers were close by, so he also took his horse into the house and led him up the steps to the second floor. You choose which version you like.

The house has only had 4 owners since the Jordan family. Lena & Josephine Cooper – 1917 to 1928, H. O. & Ursula Ferguson 1928 to 1939, Anna M. Tisinger 1939 to 1984, Kenna Fansler, great nephew of Anna Tisinger, 1984 to the present. In the next issue we will tell you about the house next door at 6024 Main St., which is on the same deed.



(Continued from Page 1)

- ✦ A children's activity center with crafts and 18th-century games is being planned.
- ✦ Tom and Leslie Mack of Shenandoah Valley Dancers will lead a demonstration of colonial-era dances, encouraging audience participation.
- ✦ Drew Alexander, a blacksmith, will demonstrate cold forging and period tools.
- ✦ Shea Alexander will demonstrate 18th-century wood tooling and carving.
- ✦ Jo Alexander will showcase leatherworking techniques.
- ✦ Kathy K. Rivers will present the Family Bible Project, featuring pages from a Colonial-era family Bible.

Discussions are underway with several Revolutionary War reenactment groups. Updates will be provided as plans develop.

Local businesses, including the Presbyterian, Emanuel Lutheran, and Emmanuel Episcopal churches, are also participating, as well as the Bonfire Bookstore, with lectures and demonstrations scheduled at their locations. Periodic updates will be posted at ShenandoahHistory.org where there will be a dedicated website landing page with additional exhibitors and any schedule changes.

Plans for an opening ceremony at the Historic Courthouse are in development, with several invited guests, including the Hufford family, descendants of Caroline Muhlenberg Hufford Anderson, the artist behind the Muhlenberg bust at the Courthouse.

The SCHS America 250 committee - [Suzanne McIlwee (co-chair), Kim Yeck (co-chair), Hank Zimmerman, Dennis Atwood, Mary Redmon, Floyd Heater, Jennifer Dufner (Town of Woodstock), and Barbara Adamson] - has been meeting monthly since May to coordinate this event. For further details or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Kim Yeck at kimyeck@mac.com or Suzanne McIlwee at sartz@shentel.net.

[Story by Suzanne McIlwee, Co-Chair, SCHS America 250 2026 Committee]

Colonial Whiskey at the Burwell - Morgan Mill



Wednesday, Oct. 8th - 2 P.M.

Two Revolutionaries were behind the creation of the Burwell Morgan Mill: Lieutenant Colonel Nathaniel Burwell and General Daniel Morgan. *Burwell* was an enterprising planter-distiller deeply involved in commerce of the day, opening his own distillery in Frederick County and contributing to the growing whiskey trade. Morgan, on the other hand, was a true military man, who was sent to quell the Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania sparked by post-war taxes shortly after the Revolution.

Join us as we discuss whiskey's impact on the lives of these revolutionaries, how it became America's favorite spirit, and learn just what happened during the Whiskey Rebellion. We will be sampling two of Eight Shires Colonial Distillery's recipes, crafted with heritage ingredients using the same methods as our colonial forefathers.

There will be tastings of two different whiskeys: Charles River Shire, a single malt aged in charred barrels, and Warroquoyake Shire, a straight bourbon made with heritage Indian Maize corn, Red Winter Wheat, and Malted Barley.

Clarke County Historical Society members: \$30 - Non-Members: \$40

Event is at the Burwell-Morgan Mill, 15 Tannery Lane, Millwood, VA 540-837-1799

<https://www.clarkehistory.org/>

SCHS COMPLETE BOOK LIST

Is available on web site:

www.ShenandoahHistory.org

New Books Available - Great Holiday Gifts



THE LAST MEN STANDING

The 8th Virginia Regiment in the American Revolution

GABRIEL NEVILLE

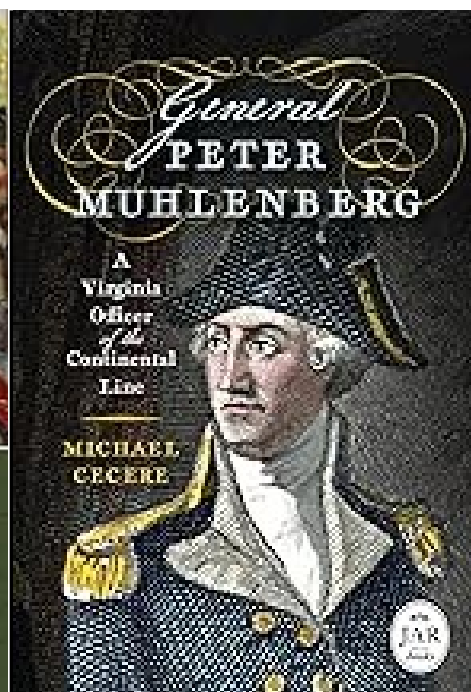


The strong survived. Nearly 800 men followed the famous 'fighting parson,' Colonel Peter Muhlenberg, into the Continental Army in 1776. Few of them remained at the end of the war. Meticulously researched and accurately told, this is the story of these men.

In colonial times, thousands of German and Irish immigrants settled in Virginia's western reaches. The 8th Virginia Regiment was conceived as a way to recruit them. Men from Pittsburgh to Tennessee were collected into ten rifle companies and sent into some of the hardest service of the war. Only a few remained for the victory at Yorktown.

Historians once said *The Last Men Standing* could not be written. Neville was challenged by a librarian at the David Library of the American Revolution to uncover the story. 'It's out there,' the librarian said. 'You just have to find it.' *The Last Men Standing* is the result of many years of research in distant archives, small museums, private collections, and other sources. Neville likens the project to a jigsaw puzzle or a treasure hunt. *The Last Men Standing* traces the lives of immigrant children from the terrors of the French and Indian War, through the Revolution, to the settlement of the American frontier. Historians will appreciate Neville's use of little-known sources, attention to neglected incidents, and reinterpretation of major events at Sullivan's Island, Germantown, and Monmouth. Every reader will enjoy the story.

SCHS Price: \$55 Members: \$50



This book is part of a series of 13 books known as the Journal of the American Revolution. It is the Story of the Legendary Clergyman-Turned-Soldier for the American Cause.

Standing at the pulpit in his church in the Shenandoah Valley, the preacher borrowed from Ecclesiastes, declaring in a firm voice that "To every thing there is a season . . ." He then announced, "that there is a time to fight, and that time had now come," and abruptly removed his clerical robe to reveal his colonel's uniform. There is little doubt that this clergyman-turned-soldier uttered words to this effect, but whether he threw off his robe to reveal a gleaming uniform may be embellishment. In *General Peter Muhlenberg: A Virginia Officer of the Continental Line*, historian Michael Cecere cuts away the romanticism surrounding this fascinating character to present him as a highly capable and dedicated officer who served for seven long years in America's War for Independence; a man of faith who held the high ideals of that office in his conduct with fellow officers and regular soldiers alike.

SCHS Price: \$26 Members: \$25



SCHS is on FACBOOK

Visit our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/SCHSVA or simply click on the Facebook icon at the bottom of our website main page: www.ShenandoahHistory.org



P.O. Box 506
Edinburg VA 22824
Phone: 540-459-1795
E-Mail: SCHS.VA@Gmail.com
Website: www.ShenandoahHistory.org

Join the SCHS

New Yearly Dues:

Member: \$15 (Newsletter by E-mail)

Member: \$20 (Mailed newsletter)

Lifetime \$250

Send Fee to address above.

Renewal Date is beside name on
mailing label →

Upcoming Events - More Events on www.ShenandoahHistory.org

Saturday, October 11th at 6 to 8 PM

Annual "Spirits of New Market" Tour explores the battlefield after hours and steps back in time with the annual lantern tour program, which celebrates the indomitable spirit of those whose lives were impacted by the Battle of New Market. Fee: \$10 for 13 yrs. & older. Less for children and New Market residents (with proof). Appx.45 minutes. Info: P: 540-740-3101

Saturday, October 18th - (9 am - 5pm)

International Archaeology Day at the Frontier Culture Museum, 1290 Richmond Rd. in Staunton, VA. The Museum is offering archaeological activities all day. Archaeology is the study of patterns of material culture, the tangible things that people made and used. Things that are still around, just in the ground beneath us. Archaeology gives us a snapshot of the past. Objects enter the ground, a house decays leaving only the foundation. We only get to see the remnants, not the activity. History, on the other hand, studies the human behavior of the past, based on the records people themselves have left behind. Info: 540) 332-7850

Saturday & Sunday, Oct. 18 & 19

Battle of Cedar Creek Anniversary

The Battle of Cedar Creek (October 19, 1864) will be commemorated at Belle Grove Plantation, in Middletown, with interpretation of the Civil War history of the site and free admission. The weekend will include reenactments hosted by Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, and programs hosted by Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.

Thursday, Nov. 20th - 7 PM

Tour of Historic Henkel House in New Market VA by owner, Joe Tusing. The brick part of this historic house on New Market's original Lot 15 was built in 1802 by Dr. Solomon Henkel, a physician and druggist, and served as his home and place to practice his trade. The wooden front part and two rooms upstairs were added by his son, Dr. Solomon P.C. Henkel in 1855 who took over the building with his wife, Maria. Though Solomon sold medicines as early as 1795, he probably established the apothecary located behind the house in 1793. Info: (540) 740-2740

December 5 - December 30

Belle Grove Plantation Holiday Tours In the historic Manor House is a 12-foot Christmas tree in the Parlor and area Garden Clubs decorated each room with a "Let Freedom Ring" theme to mark the beginning of America's 250th Anniversary in 2026.

Guided Tours:

Monday - Saturday 10 am- 4 pm
(last tour 3:15 pm)

Sundays, 1-5 pm (last tour 4:15 pm)

Christmas by Candlelight (self-guided tours and live music):
Friday and Saturdays 4-8 pm

Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Tours FREE for members (with card),
\$15 charge for non-members.
540-869-2028

336 Belle Grove Road
Middletown, Virginia

