

Summer 2026



Shenandoah
County
Historical
Society

Newsletter

Annual Preservation Awards Announced



L-R Mt. Jackson Museum Board Pres., Greg Beam; Book Committee Members: Ann Wallinger & Kenna Fansler



L-R: Keith Rocco, and Presidential Awards Committee Chairman Karen Whetzel.

The Shenandoah County Historical Society announced the recipients of the 2026 John H. Adamson Excellence in Historic Preservation Awards at the SCHS Annual Meeting in Edinburg, Va. on May 19th. Award recipients are recognized for their outstanding contributions to local heritage. The Mount Jackson Museum received an award for its comprehensive book, *Mount Jackson, Virginia: Celebrating 200 Years of History*, a deeply researched commemorative volume detailing the town's history from pre-European settlement to the modern era. Also honored was artist and historian Keith Rocco, who served as the designer and coordinator for the 2024 D-Day Omaha Beach Exhibit at the John O. Marsh National Guard Armory in Woodstock. The exhibit commemorated the D-Day battle through artistry, dioramas, and educational outreach. It also preserved the legacy of local World War II hero, Edward M. Gearing.

Photo Credit: Andrew Thayer

New Life Members

Philip & Judith Fravel

New Members

Marilyn Boese

Don & Carmen Conrad

Scott & Lisa Currie

Annual Meeting Report Board Members Elected

SCHS celebrated with its annual dinner on June 19 at the historic VFW in Edinburg. A record 69 people were in attendance.

President Barbara Adamson reviewed the past year's events, offered a brief acknowledgement of the passing and the accomplishments of former Treasurer C.F. Wagniere, and conducted the re-election of the Board of Directors. Re-elected to the board for a two-year term were Dennis Atwood, Anne Dellinger, Suzanne McIlwee, Mary Redmon, Janet Wagniere, and Karen Whetzel.

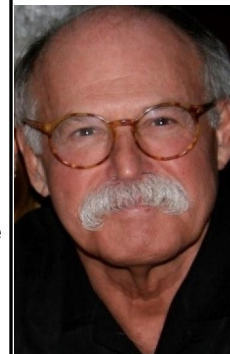
Two deserving recipients received the John H. Adamson Excellence in Preservation Award. Awardees Keith Rocco and the Mt. Jackson Museum are mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter.

[Continued on Page 3]

Professional Archaeologist

Mark Ludlow

To speak at September 15th
Program Meeting



Mark is a Registered Professional Archaeologist with c. 50 years of archaeological studies and practice. Recently much of his work is in the sub-field of Mortuary Archaeology. In particular using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to find and document

old graveyards, particularly those of slaves, as well as rural and remote old family graveyards.

Recently he has completed five (5) GPR Surveys in the area:

- 1) Mt. Jackson Colored Cemetery;
- 2) An expanded Mt. Jackson Colored Cemetery Survey on to an adjacent parcel which was part of the original cemetery;
- 3) The Benjamin Allen 18 th Century Vernacular Cemetery in the Massanutten Traylor Park in Mt. Jackson;
- 4) A Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey of the Union Cemetery in Mt. Jackson.
- 5) A Small GPR Survey of the Green Family Cemetery plot in the St. Mary's 'Pine' Lutheran Church Cemetery near Mt. Jackson.

Mark will share interesting details and findings at each cemetery. He will also explain how Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) works and what to expect if you think you need those services.

The program will take place at 7:00 PM at the St Paul's Heritage Center at 106 South High Street in Edinburg.

Refreshments will follow the program. Ample parking is available in the lot across the street from the Center.

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.



This Newsletter can be
sent to you
electronically.
Many photos will
appear in color, and it
saves postage !
Notify us at:
ShenandoahHistory.org

From the: Shenandoah County Archives

By Zach Hottel, Archivist

Mark B. Getz Teacher

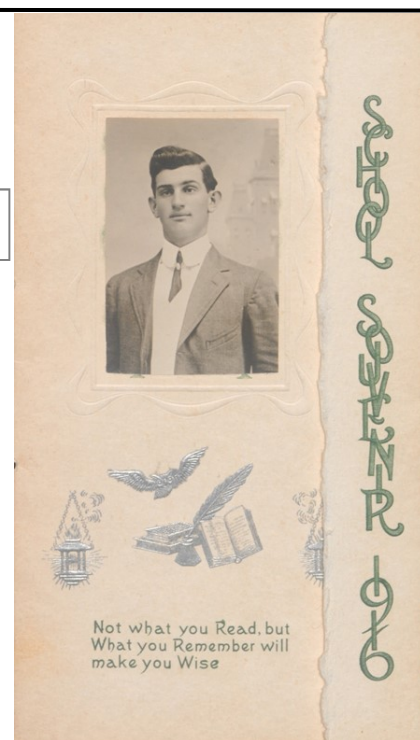
This scan shows the front page of a 1916 pamphlet celebrating the end of the academic year at Millers School in Shenandoah County's Lee District. In a time before yearbooks, these mass produced pamphlets were distributed by local schools for students and families to commemorate their scholastic accomplishments and the end of another school session.

This specific pamphlet is five pages long. The cover features a picture of the teacher Mark B. Getz (1891 -1981) who was teacher at the school for the 1915 -1916 year. Born in the community of Getz near the Rockingham County line, Mark served as a teacher at Millers School and the Williamson School before he and his family moved to Edinburg when he became a mail carrier in that town.

Listed on page three of the pamphlet are the names of all 43 students who were officially "pupils" of Millers School along with the county school superintendent and members of the Lee District School Board.

The other pages of the pamphlet include generic quotes, sayings, and sketches about schools and memory.

[Continued on Page 5]



Millers School Souvenir, Mark B. Getz Teacher, Lee District, Shenandoah County Virginia, 1916, Edward Williams Collection, 1885-1999, Truban Archives, Shenandoah County Library, Edinburg, Virginia

The Shenandoah County Historical Society, Inc.

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

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Karen Whetzel
Hank Zimmerman

Newsletter Editor:
Janet Wagniere

Message from the President



Barbara Adamson

Not sure that you'll receive this newsletter before the big event, Shenandoah County Celebrates 1776, on June 20th in Woodstock. If you do, we hope that you attend the festival and have a great time. [If you still have our Spring newsletter, it featured a lengthy report on all of the activities scheduled to take place throughout this day-long celebration. You can also go to our website: www.shenandoahhistory.org, to learn more.] If not, my apologies since you may miss a wonderful day!

I want to take this opportunity to thank Shenandoah County Celebrates 1776 Committee members Suzanne McIlwee (chair), Kim Yeck (co-chair), Mary Redmon, Floyd Heater, Dennis Atwood and Hank Zimmerman. They've done a wonderful job.

We had a terrific and very well attended annual dinner on May 19th in Edinburg. You'll read about it elsewhere in the newsletter but want to thank Anne Dellinger for heading up the committee again this year and all the board members who also helped to make the evening a success.

A highlight of the evening is the selection of those receiving a John H. Adamson Excellence in Preservation Award. You'll read about those deserving folks who received an award elsewhere in the newsletter as well but I want to thank the selection committee that has the job of making the choices. Many thanks to committee chair, Karen Whetzel, and members Brenda Rawlings, Anne Dellinger and Dennis Atwood.

After the dinner we enjoyed a great program given by Keith Rocco that shared old photos and details about Woodstock WWII Hero, Edward M. Gearing. A good program to have had so close to Memorial Day.

I hope that during this year, when we're directing much of our attention to the Revolutionary War era, that we remember that the history of the United States only began then. Actually, it began earlier than 1776. And it continues today.

Please be sure to visit all of our wonderful Shenandoah County museums as they share their own story of our country's past.



SHENANDOAH VALLEY RADIO PROGRAM.COM



June marks the six month launch anniversary of The Shenandoah Valley Radio Program, which began offering monthly episodes in January, 2026. Our interviews with history authors and experts, as well as well-researched history story not only cover topics about Shenandoah County history, but across the entire Valley as well.

Produced and hosted by Hank Zimmerman, with historical research by fellow SCHS board member Dennis Atwood, the monthly podcast blends a classic radio narrative style, complete with authentic "old time radio" voices, historical accuracy and compelling storytelling. We talk on location with history experts from up and down the Valley, as well as right here in Shenandoah County.

Every episode frames our unique regional heritage within the broader context of American history, making it an engaging and educational for both lifelong residents and history enthusiasts far beyond the Valley.

You can stream all episodes directly on your smartphone, tablet, or computer by visiting our podcast website at ShenandoahValleyRadioProgram.com. Or, search for "Shenandoah Valley" on many of the popular podcast streaming services, where you can also become a subscriber. New episodes land at the beginning of each month. We hope you'll be joining us for the Shenandoah Valley Radio Program!



Ceremony Held In Commemoration of Revolutionary War Patriot John Ignatius Effinger

On Sunday, May 31, 2026 a solemn ceremony was held to honor the grave of Revolutionary War Soldier and Woodstock resident John Ignatius Effinger. Effinger was buried in the cemetery of St. Paul's Reformed Church on South Church St. in Woodstock after his death on September 18, 1839.

The ceremony was hosted by the Narrow Passage Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution with the participation of the Col. James Wood II Chapter, National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. Also in attendance was Elizabeth Thomas Wallace, a descendant of Effinger.

Excellent biographical remarks were made by Strasburg resident and Belle Grove volunteer and board member, Scott Terndrup. They are quoted here: "John was born in Mannheim, Baden-Wurtemberg on December 4, 1756. According to the Johannes Schwal Historical Association Journal (1986), he was a younger son not to inherit from the family business. He traveled to London and joined the 17th Regiment of Foot or the Royal Leicestershire Regiment of the British army.

The 17th landed in Boston on New Years Day of 1776. They helped rout Washington at the Battle of Long Island, and were commemorated for their bravery during the British defeat at Princeton. Records show he was with General Howe wintering in Philadelphia in 1777. On December 3, General Howe attempted to lure Washington into a fight by sending regiments, including the 17th, on a northward march. Washington refused to engage. On December 7, the regiments returned to Philadelphia minus three missing soldiers, including Effinger.

One can only speculate as to when and why Effinger decided to desert from the British army and join Washington. Valley forge does not break camp until June.

There were other German soldiers with Washington and Von Steuben would begin his instrumental training of the Continentals into a true fighting force." "The records next show Effinger as a member of Bartholomew Von Heer's Light Dragoons, in August of 1778, with the rank of Corporal. In eight months, Effinger clearly demonstrated his loyalty both to the cause and perhaps to Washington personally, as he is part of Washington's Life Guard, and remained so until war's end.

John Effinger was one of twelve elite soldiers who escorted their Commander-in-Chief to his home at Mount Vernon on Christmas Eve of 1783. He is promoted then to Captain. Possibly, he spent Christmas Day at Mount Vernon before heading to Reading PA to join his bride, Catherine Spatzer, whom he had married on July 9, 1782. Their first son, George Michael, was born in 1784. At some point between then and 1786, they moved to Woodstock where a second son, John Frederick, is born on June 5. The young family became members of the St. Paul's German Reformed Church in their new home in Woodstock. John Frederick will marry Mary Polly Hite, the granddaughter of Colonel John Hite of Springdale (the estate in Kernstown) and great-granddaughter of Jost Hite, who originally settled Frederick County in 1731. Major Hite, of Belle Grove, is the nephew of Colonel Hite of Springdale. There would be two more boys and two girls born to the couple. Following Catherine's death in 1794, John would marry Betty Cook and have six more children. John Effinger was buried here, in this cemetery of his St. Paul's Church, on September 18, 1839, at 83 years old. His obituary celebrates his distinguished service – "full of years and full of honor". "

By: Barbara Adamson

Strasburg Museum Events

July 11, 2026 - 10:00-4:00
Pottery Day: Heritage/History/
Traditions

August 15, 2026 - 10:00 – 2
Strasburg Pickers/Antique Roadshow
Identification / Unofficial Appraisals

More Info: 540-465-5281 /3728 / 3175
Museum Open: Fri. - Sun.



Annual Meeting - [From Page 1]

The meeting concluded with a program presented by artist Keith Rocco. Rocco has done extensive research about Woodstock's Forgotten D-Day Hero, Edward M. Gearing and presented an excellent program that included old photographs and information about Gearing's service during WWII. He also engaged Gearing family members who were present in the audience.

✦ Continuing Series on History in Shenandoah County ✦

William Frederick Rupp — New Market Artist



Lady Justice - Photo by Andy Thayer

Have you heard of William Frederick Rupp? He was born in Germany on January 3, 1834. Rupp did apprenticeships for three years in his native Germany, where he learned “methods of graining, stippling, glass staining, lettering, pattern-making, and frescoing” according to Elmer Smith and John Stewart in Article #21 which was published in Pennsylvania. (The New Market Area Library Archives has many articles by Smith and Stewart written for the Shenandoah Valley Folklife Society including the one on Rupp.)

In 1854, Rupp migrated to America with his father and brother. William came to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia when he obtained a commission to paint and decorate the Mansion Inn at Luray. By the summer of 1855, he had settled permanently in New Market. Not much is known of his work until after the Civil War. Beginning in 1867, Rupp kept a handwritten account book that he continued until his death in early 1900, according to Smith and Stewart.

Rupp was described as “a man of small stature with slim face featuring a black mustache and beard” by Smith and Stewart.

In 1862, he married New Market native Mary Catherine Spitzer in 1862. Her ancestors made rifles in the log house that still stands beside Reformation Lutheran Church. Rupp purchased the log house in 1866.

To make a living, Rupp painted houses (inside and out), barns and outbuildings, tin roofs, wagons, furniture and more. But it is for his skilled artistic work that he is remembered today. His account book shows many familiar local names for whom he did work.

Rupp decorated the halls and parlor of Colonel Pifer’s home in

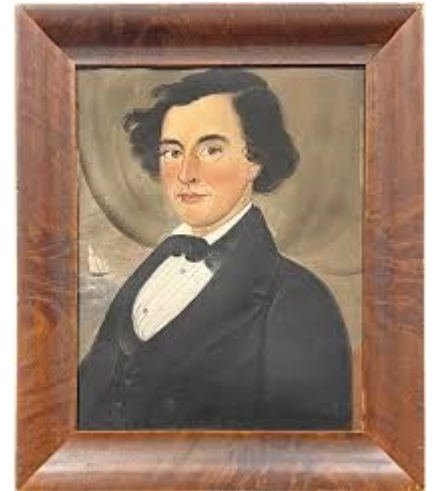


Photo courtesy of Instagram.com

Strasburg in 1868, using “fresco” painting, in which a picture is painted in watercolor on a wall or ceiling on fresh plaster. In 1870, Rupp did fresco painting in the Methodist Church in Edinburg (he charged \$175) which was the beginning of a rise in demand for this style of decoration in churches in the Shenandoah Valley. The United Methodist Church at Hawkinstown visited the Methodist Church in Edinburg and contracted his services for their church. Between 1870 and 1902, Rupp did fresco painting in 43 Valley churches.

Few examples of Rupp’s work remain today; it was often painted over. However, his fresco work remains on the wall and ceiling of the Henkel House in New Market (first home of the New Market Area Library.) His fresco paintings in Emmanuel Lutheran Church in New Market were unfortunately scraped and painted over when mold was found, according to Bob Moore, a trustee of the Gideon Koener Trust (established in 1912) which owns the church. The Apostles Creed, which Rupp hand lettered in black and gold at the front of Emmanuel, is still there. (Emmanuel Church was built by followers of the Rev. Paul Henkel in 1848; it is situated on Lee Street across from the current library; services there were discontinued in 1955 when Reformation opened and Emmanuel was deeded to the Koener Trust. It is still used occasionally for special services.)

In October, 1879, Rupp frescoed the 1871 Court Room in the 1871 Courthouse in Woodstock with a painting of Lady Justice on the wall behind the Judge’s chair; and refreshed the painting in 1900. A pencil drawing made by Rupp to use for painting Lady Justice, is now the only evidence of the fresco. In 2024, the Shenandoah County Historical Society commissioned Paper and Art Conservator Maria Pukownik and her staff to conserve the drawing which is now framed and proudly hung in the original place of the fresco in the Court Room of the Shenandoah County Historic Courthouse Museum.

The Court Room is part of the Shenandoah County Historic Courthouse Museum which is open Friday and Saturday from 11 am to 4 pm, and Sunday from 1 pm to 5 pm from March 1 through December 31 with free admission. Volunteers from the Shenandoah County Historical Society have partnered with Shenandoah County Government to welcome the community and guests to the iconic building, which is the oldest continually used Court House in Virginia, and possibly the first two-story courthouse built in the state. Come see Lady Justice and remember William Rupp, famous painter who lived in New Market, Virginia!

[Adapted from an article by Karen Whetzel published in the *The Chimney Rock Chronicle*, July 2025 "]

Did you Know....?

Archaeologists have found 3,000-year-old pots of honey that are still edible

Ancient Egyptian royals were often buried with objects they believed were needed for a harmonious transition to the afterlife. Items such as jewelry and games were common inclusions in their tombs, as were everyday staples such as clothing and food. And while we might expect any ancient food to decompose past the point of recognition, archaeologists have actually uncovered 3,000-year-old pots of honey that were, remarkably, intact — and it is still edible.

Honey's extraordinary shelf life is the result of several factors. Its low water content and high sugar levels create an environment that's inhospitable to bacterial growth, and it also contains trace amounts of hydrogen peroxide, which acts as a natural microbial inhibitor. While other foods with similar sugar makeup tend to spoil faster, honey has its sophisticated alchemists to thank for its resilience: Bees use their rapidly flapping wings to evaporate most of the honey's water, and an enzyme in their stomachs contributes to honey's unique antibacterial property. Egyptians were some of the earliest known organized beekeepers, and along with sending honey into the next life with the deceased, they also offered the sweet substance to their deities.

[Source: [HistoryFacts.com](https://www.historyfacts.com)]

Getz -

[Continued from Page 2]

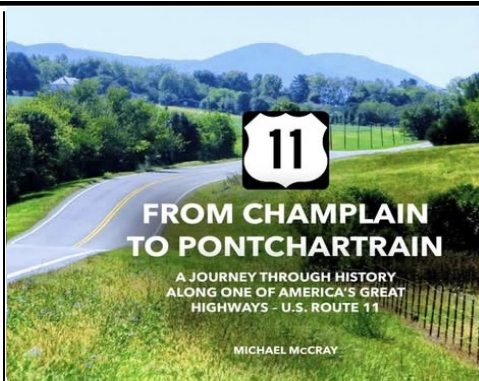
The other pages of the pamphlet include generic quotes, sayings, and sketches about schools and memory. You can view the entire item at <https://archives.countylib.org/items/show/79188>.

Miller's School was located one mile north of the community of Moore's Store on Flat Rock Road. It dates to 1873 when a one acre lot was purchased by Lee District School Trustees to construct a school. It operated until 1922 when a new Moore's Store School was built to accommodate students from Miller's School and Flat Rock School.

You can learn more about the history of Shenandoah County, the people who lived here, and the communities they built by visiting the Shenandoah County Library's Trubian Archives. To schedule an appointment email zhottel@countylib.org or call (540) 984-8200.

New Courthouse Exhibit

Starts July 3rd: "Early Public Schools of Mt. Jackson - the Mt. Jackson Graded School and Triplett High School." will be the new exhibit.



From Champlain to Pontchartrain: A Journey Through History Along One of America's Great Highways — U.S. Route 11

by Michael McCray.

There are over 4,000,000 miles of public roads in the United States, 164,000 of which make up the federal highway system. With its nearly 1,800 miles, U.S. Route 11 doesn't make the top ten. It has no ocean vistas like the Pacific Coast Highway. There is no association of enthusiasts holding yearly reunions in its honor as has the Lincoln Highway. Unlike Route 66, there are no songs or television series immortalizing its history. Route 11 is an overlooked, under-appreciated, misunderstood, and sometimes disrespected old road. Most sources cheat it out of more than 100 miles when recording its length. Still, for many,

Route 11 is like an old friend who helps them remember a different time in America. For everyone, it is a road through the ever-changing landscape of history. On its run from the Canadian border in New York, to Lake Pontchartrain, within sight of New Orleans, Route 11 passes through ten states, nearly sixty counties and townships, three hundred villages, towns, and cities, and some of the most beautiful landscapes in America. The path's history begins before humans reached this continent more than 15,000 years ago and spans every era since.

Despite its decline as a major artery after the building of the interstates, Route 11 remained relevant, and has even experienced a rebirth in recent years. Lined with great roadside attractions, historic sites, beautiful farms, and some of America's most important cities, the highway offers one of the nation's great road trip options. But even for those who will never cover its miles, traveling through its history is nevertheless worthwhile. It is the story of America, and a story long overdue. SCHS Price: \$44. Members: \$41.

The Battle of Cool Spring 162nd Anniversary Commemoration

On Saturday, July 18, 2026, Shenandoah University's McCormick Civil War Institute will commemorate the 162nd anniversary of the Battle of Cool Spring at the Shenandoah University's River Campus at Cool Spring Battlefield located at 1400 Parker Lane, Bluemont, Virginia.

9:00 a.m.: Site opens, including exhibition area in the Lodge. The exhibition area and Lodge will be open throughout the day.

9:30-11:15 a.m.—"Coming Like a Meteor": Artillery at Cool Spring with Jonathan A. Noyalas (Hugh & Virginia McCormick Chair in Civil War History and Director, Shenandoah University's MCWI). This program will also include an immersive learning experience about field artillery during the Civil War with historian Alan Robertson.

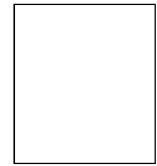
11:30 a.m.—Noon: Copies of "The Blood-Tinted Waters of the Shenandoah": The 1864 Valley Campaign's Battle of Cool Spring and A Civil War Journey at Cool Spring: A History for Young Readers available for purchase and signing.

No pre-registration required. It is free and open to the public. For any questions about this event, contact the McCormick Civil War Institute Director, Jonathan Noyalas, at 540-665-4501 or jnoyalas01@su.edu.

[Take I-81 North to the Winchester Rte. 7 exit. Follow Rte. 7 east approximately 13.5 miles until you cross the bridge over the Shenandoah River. After crossing the bridge take a left on Parker Lane. Follow this 1 ¼ miles and you will arrive at the clubhouse]



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Events	Events	Bulletin Board.....
July 4th Open House - 10:00 am - 4:00 pm George Washington's Office Museum 32 W. Cork Street, Winchester, VA In honor of America's 250th birthday, George Washington Office Museum will be hosting an open house. Free admission all day. + Stonewall Jackson's Headquarters 415 N Braddock Street, Winchester, VA Join us in celebrating America's 250th birthday! Free Admission all day. + Abram's Delight Museum 1340 S. Pleasant Valley Road, Winchester, VA Join us in celebrating America's 250th birthday! Free Admission all day.	SCHS will be at EDINBURG OLE TIME FESTIVAL Society Board Members and Volunteers will once again have a booth at the annual festival on September 19th & 20th from 9-4 on Saturday and noon to 4 on Sunday. There will be lots of books for sale and several notebooks of photos from the Morrison Collection will be available for visitors to look through and hopefully identify some of the photos. The booth will be located directly across the street from Sal's Bistro. Stop by and say hello. If you're not already a member, you can sign up!	July 13th - 17th ☼ 9AM to 12 Noon Youth Program at New Market Battlefield State Historical Park The Virginia Museum of the Civil War at New Market Battlefield State Historical Park in New Market, Va. will host a Civil War Day Camp from Monday, July 13 through Friday, July 17, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. each day. Designed for children ages 7 to 12, the camp offers hands-on activities exploring the lives of soldiers, cadets, and civilians during the Civil War, including drills, games, and daily themes.
Fort Valley Museum Ice Cream Social Saturday, August 1st 1 - 5 PM Fort Valley Rd. & Dry Run Road, FV	Visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SCHSVA More Upcoming Events Are posted on the website: www.ShenandoahHistory.org	Space is limited to 30 participants. Cost is \$25 per day, with discounts available for multi-day registration. For more information, call (540) 740-3101 or email: nmbshp@vmi.edu.