

# THE BALCH COLUMN

THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY • 208 W. MARKET ST. • LEESBURG, VA 20176 • 703-737-7195 • FAX: 703-737-7150 • EMAIL: balchlib@leesburgva.gov

## QUAKERS, AFRICAN AMERICANS, ANTISLAVERY, AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION

Saturday, 4 February 2006, 2-4PM



In recent years, historians have found that a significant number of Quakers, African Americans, and others in the mid-Atlantic region were actively working to end slavery

through a variety of strategies and tactics. Their findings shed new light on abolitionism and the coming of the Civil War. This informal conference will allow historians from several states to collaborate further and discuss their research and interpretations with the public. Presenters will include Glenn Crothers, University of Louisville and The Filson Historical Society; Christopher Densmore, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College; Deborah Lee, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities; Jenny Masur, National Park Service, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program; and Bronwen Souders, Waterford Foundation. For further information, call Jenny Masur at 202/619-7136.

*Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg, Virginia, is the sponsor and location of the conference. The library is a research facility in the National Park Service National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program.*

## CAVALIER HERITAGE OF COLONIAL VIRGINIA

Dana Huntley

Wednesday, 15 February 2006, 7PM

With the 400th anniversary celebrations of the founding of Jamestown only a year away, we can justly expect to find Virginia's colonial roots attracting a good deal of worldwide attention. The major motion picture *The New World* has started the buzz already. While Jamestown itself struggled along for 20 years, it was Governor William Berkeley and his vision of Virginia as a sanctuary for besieged Royalists in Puritan England that created the prosperous and successful 17th-century colony. Who were these Cavaliers, and what kind of a world did they bring with them? It is a fascinating story, and tells us much of what we are today. Dana Huntley has a Ph.D. in British Literature from Drew University. He was president of Lord Addison Travel from 1989-2004, where he designed and operated theme itineraries in Britain for many organizations, including the Biltmore House and Arizona PBS. Since 2003, Huntley has served as editor of "British Heritage", which is published in Leesburg.

## FRIENDS OF THE THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY, INC. ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, 5 March 2006, 2PM

Beginning in January 2003 at Monticello in Charlottesville Virginia and ending in St Louis, Missouri, September 2006, the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial celebration is a forty-five-month-long commemorative event celebrating one of the most historic events in the history of this country. Come join the Board of Directors and membership of Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc. as they celebrate their accomplishments and commemorate those of the Corps of Discovery. There will be an exhibit on the Lewis and Clark Expedition created by Annie Hulen, a collateral descendant of Meriwether Lewis and past president of The Meriwether Society, Inc. Participants will hear Dr. Ken Wallenborn, a retired physician and historian from the Charlottesville and past president of the Home Front Chapter of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation talk about the expedition and its impact on American Society and the Corps of Discovery and the courageous men who accomplished this incredible feat and left a legacy for all Americans to remember. Six exhibitions have been held throughout the United States since the Bicentennial Commemoration began.

The last two exhibitions will be open to the public at the following locations: Oregon Historical Society, Portland, OR - November 2005-March 2006 and National Museum of Natural History Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, May 2006-September 2006.

## MANAGER'S MUSING GREETINGS AND TO ALL A HAPPY NEW YEAR --



Since my last column many exciting events and developments have transpired at Thomas Balch Library. We have recently welcomed two new staff members - Margaret Larsen, part-time reference staff with an MLS from UNC Chapel Hill and Stephanie Adams, archives specialist with an MLS from UNC Chapel Hill.

On November 13, Patricia B. Duncan, genealogist; Betty Whiting Flemming, textile historian; The Honorable Thomas D. Home, leader and advocate in the preservation of courthouse square; and Pauline Singletary, leader and advocate for the preservation of African American history, received the 2005 Loudoun History Awards at the Thirteenth annual awards ceremony sponsored by Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission.

These individuals have made significant contributions to preserving Loudoun's past through collection of county documents and memorabilia, preservation of historic landmarks, visual arts, writing, and long time commitment to local history organizations.

In December, through the efforts of Bruce Dewar and Julie Overman, the Historic District Residence Association donated two Princeton American Elm trees to the Town of Leesburg. These trees, planted on the front lawn, serve to restore a lost piece of American history and will enhance the beauty and architecture of Thomas Balch Library for generations to come.



Town Plants Elm Trees

One of our primary activities is the collection and preservation of printed, manuscript, photographic, cartographic and genealogical documentation of Leesburg, Loudoun County and the surrounding region. We actively seek and welcome donations of original business records, diaries, correspondence and photographs (with identification) documenting the life, culture and history of Leesburg and Loudoun County. Catalogue records for original materials are available on the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC) accessible through the Library of Congress website, and collection guides will soon begin being available on The Virtual Library of Virginia website (VIVA) <http://www.viva.lib.va.us/>. We also purchase and accept by donation published works relating to local and regional history and genealogy. Catalogue records of our printed materials are accessible on "Horizon" from a link on our website or through the Loudoun County Public Library website.

We look forward to seeing you at some of our many exciting programs this Winter and Spring or simply when dropping in to research your home, family or some tantalizing community event.

Thanks to all - friends, patrons, donors, Library Advisory Commissioners and Friends of Thomas Balch Library - who continue to make Thomas Balch Library a special place in the Leesburg community.

Alexandra S. Gressitt  
01/09/06

## RECOGNITION

During a meeting of the Kectoctin Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution on Sunday 21 May 2006, 2PM a plaque will be installed and dedicated to Thomas Balch Library in recognition of its contribution to the preservation of historic records. The plaque reads: Kectoctin Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Honors Thomas Balch Library for the Preservation of Our American Heritage.

## DONATIONS AND GIFTS IN KIND

Heartfelt thanks to the many individuals, organizations and volunteers who have so kindly donated materials and services. It is with the addition of generous gifts that our collection continues to grow.

## PLANNING A RESEARCH TRIP?



For information on our holdings, visit our website <http://www.leesburgva.gov/services/library/> or request copies of our new and revised informational brochures by contacting the Library at [balchlib@leesburgva.gov](mailto:balchlib@leesburgva.gov)



## CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN THE ALSACE REGION OF FRANCE

Roland Loison  
Saturday, 11 March 2006, 1PM

For the past 5 years Roland Loison has been researching genealogy in his native Alsace and collected over 23,000 names. Genealogical research in Europe is very different from that in the United States and even varies significantly from one region to the next within a country. Loison will talk about how to overcome some of the road blocks people may encounter doing research in this region. His presentation will give participants an understanding about how eight centuries of troubled history, four languages, and two religious faiths have molded this province of France.



## CLERK'S OFFICE TOUR, LOUDOUN COUNTY COURTHOUSE HISTORICAL RECORDS



John Fishback  
Monday, 13 March 2006, 7PM  
Meet in the parking lot of  
Thomas Balch Library at 6:45PM

John Fishback, Historic Records Manager for Loudoun County, will lead a tour of the Clerk's Office. He will discuss the extent of Loudoun County's records holdings, where to look for records of births, deaths, marriages, and deeds and how to use these records in research. Please meet at Thomas Balch Library at 6:45PM. No one is permitted to enter restricted areas of the Clerk's Office after 7:00PM, so the group will leave the library promptly at 6:45PM.

## DESPERATE WOMEN: FIGHTING SLAVERY IN VIRGINIA'S POTOMAC HINTERLAND

Deborah A. Lee, PhD  
Wednesday, March 22, 2006, 7PM

In honor of Women's History Month, Deborah Lee, a research fellow at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, will recount the stories of women who opposed slavery in the counties of Fairfax, Loudoun, Clarke, Frederick, Jefferson, and Berkeley. Both white and black women found it socially and legally hazardous to act upon their antislavery convictions, so they sometimes resorted to desperate measures including freedom flights, legal emigration, African colonization, slave purchases, and murder. This presentation will draw from Dr. Lee's larger research project and manuscript entitled "Trouble the Water: Opposition to Slavery in Virginia's Potomac Hinterland." She will also discuss the challenges and rewards of investigating women's history.



## THE SCOTCH IRISH: WHO ARE WE?

Maureen Hutchinson Mercker  
Sunday, 2 April 2006, 2PM

Maureen Mercker will speak about the history of the Scotch Irish in America and their pivotal roll in the development of American education, politics and culture. Mercker was born in Belfast in the United Kingdom and educated in Northern Ireland and Saigon, South Viet-Nam. She is a resident of Loudoun County and has been President of the Scotch-Irish Society of Virginia for 43 years.

## COPYING AND PRESERVING FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS

Steven Spring  
Sunday, 30 April 2006, 2PM

People, places and things - nothing lasts forever. Some things change, others deteriorate, and some disappear altogether. Photographs are a way to preserve fleeting images for posterity. Old family photographs draw our thoughts back to the past, providing a glimpse into the lives of our ancestors. Proper care and handling ensures the longevity of these precious mementoes for future generations. After several years as a serious hobbyist, Spring began his photographic career as a U.S. Navy bio-medical photographer ultimately attaining the position of Head, Medical Photography School and Senior Instructor at the School of Naval Health Sciences, Bethesda Naval Regional Medical Center. Upon his retirement he went to work for the U.S. Army Technical Support Coordination Activity in Alexandria as a Photo-technologist and Training Officer. He has been certified by the Navy and Army as a senior instructor and taught courses in medical, forensic and general, industrial, and digital photography. Spring received his AFA in photography from NOVA and has completed numerous additional photography courses. An active member in many organizations, he prepared a mill tour booklet for the TIMS 2000 Symposium at Stratford Hall Plantation. A current project is documenting old water-powered gristmills in Virginia, Loudoun County and surrounding states. He is a contributing writer and photographer to Old Mill News and a volunteer at Aldie Mill.

## CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Meets 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:30PM

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in Loudoun County history during the Civil War period. For information: 540/822-4480

- February 14: Members' Meeting
- March 14: Carroll Gibbs - Black, Copper, and Bright: The District of Columbia's Black Civil War Regiment
- April 11: Jim Morgan - A More Faithful Soldier: Brig. Gen Charles P. Stone
- May 9: William Marvel - Mr. Lincoln Goes to War
- June 13: Chip Langston - Men of Iron: The Blacksmiths and Farriers of the War Between the States



## DONATION

Thomas Balch Library is honored to have recently received by donation from Isaac Lyumkis a portrait of Thomas Willing Balch. The portrait is a 40" x 32" oil on canvas painted in 1909 by Lazar Raditz, a popular portrait artist in Philadelphia in the early 20th century. Thomas Willing Balch and Edwin Swift Balch, sons of Thomas Balch (1821-1877), established the library and dedicated it 13 May 1922 as a memorial tribute to their father, a native of Leesburg. Thomas Willing Balch (1866-1927) practiced law in Philadelphia, PA devoting much of his time to writing and research in genealogy and international arbitration - a topic for which his father gained international renown. Edwin Swift Balch (1856-1927), the elder son, also resided in Philadelphia, and traveled frequently in pursuit of his interest in mountain climbing, the study of glaciers, and polar and Antarctic exploration.

## AUTHOR READING AND BOOK SIGNING

Claire Kincannon ■ Sunday, 7 May 2006, 2PM

Local author/editor will read from and sign copies of her books. Kincannon's professional career has evolved from interior architect to WAGE Radio journalist, theatre critic, commercial artist, and owner/operator of Woodengate Confectionary/Café in Leesburg and Academy Music in Purcellville. An eight-year interval living in Paris inspired her to design, edit and write books. Publications include two international poetry and short story anthologies, *Sheets to the Wind*, and *Sheets for Men Only*, which include two Loudoun-connected poets, Henry Taylor and Steve Scafidi. She designed and edited *Rockin' with Porch Memories* for a project originating with Loudoun Valley High School students. *Paeonian to Paris* is about the funny side of her Paris experience. A sequel describing what it was like to return to a very different Loudoun County after the turn of the century, *Paris to Paeonian with Fresh Eyes*, is forthcoming. A current book project, *Vive la Soupe!*, will include French and English soup recipes collected from friends, family and the famous around the world. All books are available through Dancingink Press: dancingink@aol.com

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