

# BALCH COLUMN

Thomas Balch Library ■ 208 W. Market Street ■ Leesburg, Virginia 20176  
703-737-7195 ■ Fax: 703-737-7150 ■ Email: balchlib@leesburgva.gov



## News FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Since the last issue of the *Balch Column* many changes have taken place. In response to ongoing requests, the library is now open three evenings during the week. Starting in August the Library extended its Thursday hours to 8PM.

In a special collection library like ours where the majority of the staff is part time there comes a point when staff moves on and we must, with some regret, share in the joy of their career moves. This summer two staff members accepted full-time employment. Stephanie Seal Walters, who had been working on her PhD at George Mason while working here, accepted a digital history position at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, MS and George E. Best accepted full time employment with the National Park Service at Harpers Ferry. While Stephanie has moved out of the area and will no longer be with us, George, we are pleased to say, will be staying on with the Library, though with reduced hours. Two new staff members joined the Library in early Summer: Joanna C. Lee and Tahari Johnson. Joanna received her MLIS from the University of Iowa and her BA from the University of Rochester. Previously she has worked as a freelance digital projects staff member and a Digital Projects Librarian at George Mason University; Adjunct Instructor, School of Library and Information Science, The University of Iowa; a Digital Library Fellow at the University of Iowa, and an Associate editor, *Bedford/St. Martin's*. Joanna works reference, cataloguing, and digital projects. You will most likely see her Sunday through Tuesday. Tahari joins the library with a background in advocating for preservation of historical and culturally significant sites in Northern Virginia including fundraising for the rehabilitation of the Jennie Dean Memorial, Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth. In addition to reference he serves as the Library's liaison to the Black History Committee. Please join me in welcoming Joanna and Tahari to the Town of Leesburg and Thomas Balch Library.

There are now four vacancies at the Library which we are working to fill. We would like to thank members of the Friends and other volunteers who have helped us through this staffing shortage including Richard and Diana Routman, Judy Gerow, Wynne Saffer, John Berfield, and Deborah Hershman.

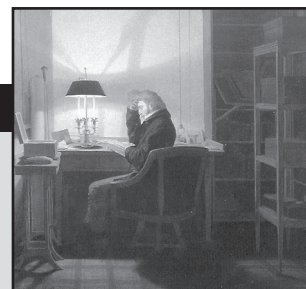


We were all saddened when long time Library Associate, Mary Bettis Fishback (1954-2019) suddenly passed away. Mary was the face of the library for many years and was active in the rejuvenation of the library in the late 1990s when The Town of Leesburg assumed ownership of Thomas Balch Library. Mary spent many years sharing her knowledge of local history and her love of genealogy with patrons far and wide. She published several local history books and in 2001 received the Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission's Loudoun History Award. In 2012 she became a Certified Genealogist. Mary, always a dynamic presence, is greatly missed by all those who knew and worked with her. A celebration of her life was held at the library on June 15th. A dedication of a pink dogwood and bench in her memory will be held in October in the Agnes and B. Powell Harrison Garden at Thomas Balch Library.

On the not too distant horizon, the Library is making plans to host its fifth annual Genealogical Seminar in May.

The library is a destination for local residents and visitors from across the country and around the globe. It is a gathering place for local historians, genealogists, and researchers. Programs for this upcoming season offer a variety of exciting opportunities. I look forward to welcoming you when visiting the Library or when attending programs and exhibits.

Alexandra S. Gressitt  
Library Director



### NEW LIBRARY HOURS:

**10am-5pm** Monday & Friday

**10am-8pm** Tuesday & Thursday

**2pm-8pm** Wednesday

**11am-4pm** Saturday

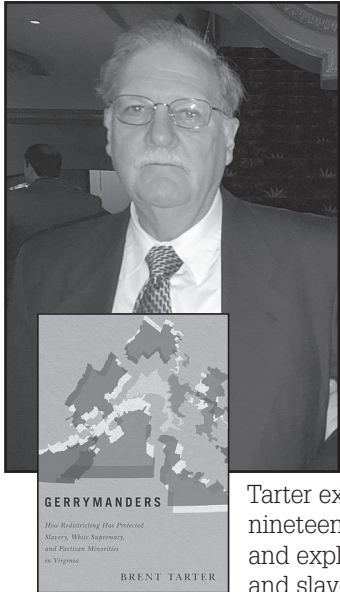
**1pm-5pm** Sunday

Programs sponsored by Thomas Balch Library are held in the lower level meeting room and are free unless otherwise noted. Due to limited seating, we recommend registering in advance by calling 703/737-7195. For updated news on events, visit our website at: [www.leesburgva.gov/ThomasBalchLibrary/publications](http://www.leesburgva.gov/ThomasBalchLibrary/publications) or find us on Facebook. Books are available for purchase at book talks.

## GERRYMANDERING

Brent Tarter

Sunday, 22 September 2019, 2PM



Many are aware that gerrymandering exists and suspect it plays a role in our elections, but its history goes far deeper, and its impact far greater, than most realize. In his latest book, Brent Tarter focuses on Virginia's long history of gerrymandering to uncover its immense influence on the state's politics and to provide perspective on how the practice impacts politics nationally. Offering the first in-depth historical study of gerrymanders in Virginia,

Tarter exposes practices going back to nineteenth century and colonial times and explains how they protected land and slave owners' interests. The conse-

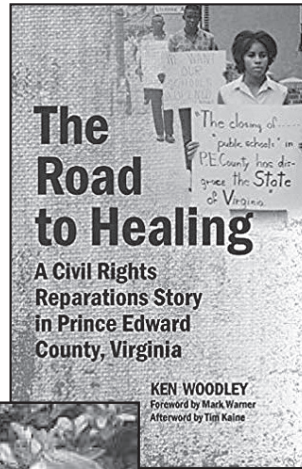
quences of redistricting and reapportionment in modern Virginia become much clearer in light of this history. On the eve of the 2021 session of the General Assembly, which will redraw district lines for Virginia's state Senate and House of Delegates, as well as for the US House of Representatives, Tarter's book provides an eye-opening investigation of gerrymandering and its pervasive effect on our local, state, and national politics and government.

Brent Tarter did his graduate work in American history at the University of Virginia and for many years served as senior editor at the Library of Virginia. During his career he edited numerous publications, served as an editor of the Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission's seven-volume *Revolutionary Virginia, the Road to Independence*, published articles on Virginia history in a variety of academic and historical journals, and authored numerous books including *The Grandees of Government* and *Gerrymanders: How Redistricting Has Protected Slavery, White Supremacy, and Political Minorities in Virginia* and a forthcoming book *Virginians and Their Histories*, a new history of Virginia to be published in 2020. He is a founding editor of the Library of Virginia's *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* project and a co-founder of the annual Virginia Forum of which he is currently President.

## THE ROAD TO HEALING: A CIVIL RIGHTS REPARATIONS STORY IN PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Ken Woodley

Sunday, 29 September 2019, 2PM

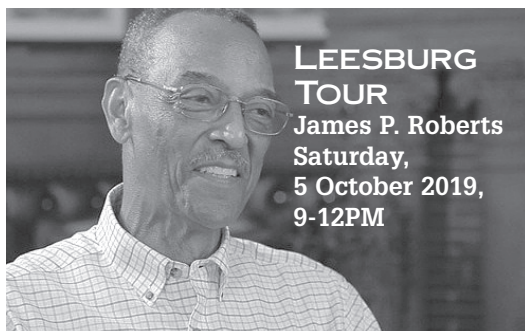


This is the story of massive resistance in Prince Edward County, Virginia, and reparations won in its wake. In 1959, in an act of massive resistance to the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision, public schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia closed rather than admit black students. While white students continued their education in private schools, black students were left without a formal education for five years until schools were

finally forced to integrate. A local newspaper, the family-owned *The Farmville Herald*, led the 1959 fight to close the schools rather than integrate them. *The Road to Healing: A Civil Rights Reparations Story in Prince Edward County, Virginia* by retired *Herald* editor Ken Woodley is his first-person account of efforts to heal the

wound experienced by the African American community. *The Road to Healing* centers on Woodley's efforts, finally realized in 2004, to establish reparations in the form of state-funded scholarships for African American students. Julian Bond called this the first Civil Rights-era reparation in US history. Filled with political twists and turns, the story follows Woodley's advocacy in the form of newspaper columns, written for the very paper that had advocated the closures, and in personal dialogue with elected officials, philanthropists, and power brokers at the local, state, and national levels. Through his unceasing efforts, the conscience of the community was awakened to understand the extent of the injustices of the past, and to unite in making amends.

Ken Woodley was a journalist for 36 years at *The Farmville Herald*, the final 24 years as editor. In 2006, the Society of Professional Journalists, Virginia Pro Chapter, presented Woodley with its prestigious George Mason Award for lasting contributions to journalism.



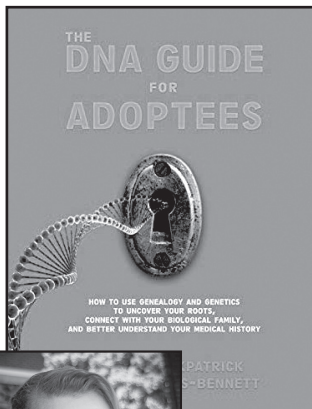
**LEESBURG TOUR**  
James P. Roberts  
Saturday,  
5 October 2019,  
9-12PM

James Roberts, a native of Leesburg, former member of Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission, 2008 recipient of a Loudoun History Award, and recognized in 2011 by Loudoun Laurels, will lead a walking tour of Leesburg. The tour is an insider's commentary of local people, places, and points of interest both in and around Leesburg. Roberts highlights the ways in which Leesburg has undergone changes in its architecture, economics, and race relations. Factual, historical, and anecdotal information is intertwined and presented in storytelling fashion as only someone who lived through it and thoughtfully observed it can do. This unique tour will leave from Thomas Balch Library parking lot at 9AM; *sturdy walking shoes are recommended.*

## THE DNA GUIDE FOR ADOPTEES

Shannon Combs Bennett

Sunday, 6 October 2019, 2PM



Co-authors, Brianne Kirkpatrick and Shannon Combs-Bennett have worked with family, friends, and clients using DNA testing in family searches. The melding of their minds as a genetic counselor and a genealogist led to a book covering a wide range of DNA topics for the audience of people using DNA for family searches and medical reasons. And, if you are an adoptee, there is likely to be missing information about your past you



hope to learn. *The DNA Guide for Adoptees: How to use genealogy and genetics to uncover your roots, connect with your biological family and better understand your medical history* is a go-to reference guide for adoptees to uncover their roots, connect with their biological family, and better understand

their medical history. This book will also help others in search of their genetic origins.

Brianne Kirkpatrick, MS, LCGC, is a licensed and certified genetic counselor with a medical genetics background specializing in the area of ancestry testing. She is the founder of Watershed DNA and has worked with clients who are impacted by adoption, donor conception, and NPE (not the parent expected) discoveries. Presenter, Shannon Combs-Bennett, OQ, PLCGS, is an author and lecturer within the genealogical community. She writes and speaks nationally and internationally on a variety of traditional genealogy topics and genetic genealogy and is founder and owner of Trials and Tribulations (T2) Family History where she works with clients to solve their genealogical, and genetic, questions. She earned her BS in biology and is currently earning her MSc in Genealogic, Heraldic, and Paleographic Studies. Shannon's book *Genealogy Basics in 30 Minutes* won the IBPA Benjamin Franklin Silver Award and the Mother's Choice Award for hobby books in 2017.

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

Eric S. Larson

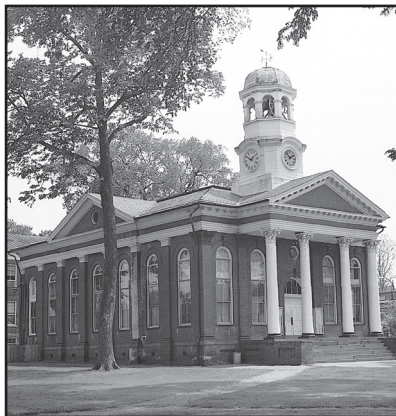
Tuesday,

22 October 2019, 2-4PM

Meet in the parking lot of Thomas Balch Library by 1:45PM. Eric S. Larson,

Historic Records Manager for the Clerk of the Circuit Court, will lead a tour of the Clerk's Office and the Historic Court building. He will discuss the extent of Loudoun County's records

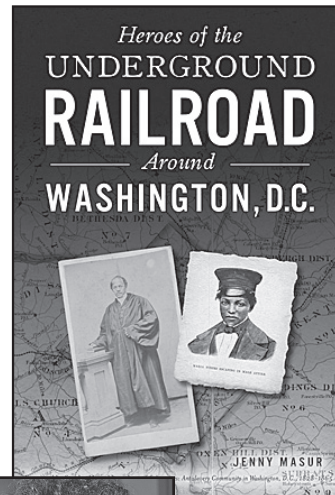
holdings, where to look for records of births, deaths, marriages, and deeds, and how to use these records in research. You will need to pass through security so the group will leave the library promptly at 1:45PM. *Reminder: Cell phones and cameras are not allowed in the Court House.*



## HEROES OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Jenny Masur

Sunday, 27 October 2019, 2PM



Many of the unsung heroes of the Underground Railroad lived and worked in Washington, DC. Men and women, black and white, operatives and freedom seekers – all demonstrated courage, resourcefulness, and initiative. Enslaved people engineered escapes, individually and in groups, with and without the assistance of an organized network. Some ended up back in slavery or in jail, but some escaped to freedom.

Anthropologist and author Jenny Masur tells their stories.



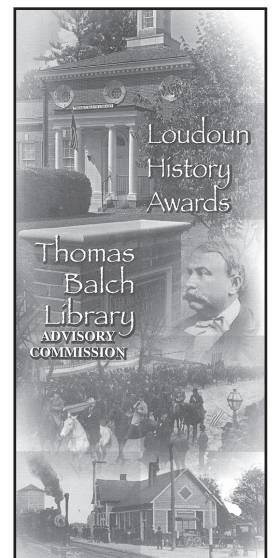
Jenny Masur, a proud Washingtonian, has been pursuing her interest in the Underground Railroad in the Washington area for almost twenty years. After graduating from Mount Holyoke College, she received her doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Chicago. Her doctoral research was conducted in southern Spain on rural women's concepts of work and leisure. Her fascination with

people's life stories grew out of her background in Anthropology. She and a colleague interviewed Jewish women who immigrated to this country from Russ-Poland and turned these interviews into a co-edited oral history, *Jewish Grandmothers*. Since retiring from the National Park Service she has devoted herself to her passions, the histories of the Underground Railroad, Washington, DC, and the Cultural Anthropology of women in rural Andalusia. It is her hope that this effort to disseminate stories based on historical evidence about the Underground Railroad in the Washington, DC area will stimulate discovery of new details of unsung heroes who resisted slavery in the DC area, and more coordination of such research across the greater Washington metropolitan area and beyond. She regards this book as a tribute to the local and independent historians upon whose research this book is based.

## LOUDOUN HISTORY AWARDS

Sunday, 3 November 2019, 2PM

Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commissioners will present the twenty-seventh annual Loudoun History Awards. This event honors individuals who 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. For a brochure or information on nominating individuals, contact the Library Director at 703/737-7195.



## PAUPERS AND LUNATICS: CARING FOR VIRGINIA'S POOR

Lynn Rainville

Sunday, 1 December 2019, 2PM



For over two centuries, rural Virginian communities sponsored "town farms" that housed a wide range of dependent people. The goal was to provide room and board for individuals who were deemed socially or morally "unworthy" by their peers.

Most of these facilities were closed by World War II; today the remains of these poorhouses are hard to find. This talk illustrates primary sources revealing the original distribution and function of poor farms throughout the Commonwealth, and concludes with an analysis of everyday lives of the Overseers of the poor and of inmates of this public institution.

Lynn Rainville is an author, speaker, and public historian who studies ordinary Virginians doing extraordinary things in the past. After earning a PhD in Near Eastern Archaeology, she spent two decades studying historic cemeteries, gravestones, enslaved communities and their descendants, town poor farms, and Virginia's role in World War I. Today, Lynn tells the stories of exceptional Virginians whose names never made it to the history books. By combining archaeological, ethnographic, and historical sources, she uncovers lost sites and forgotten heroes from hometowns across the state. Her talks, articles, and exhibits have been featured in dozens of national newspapers, local publications, and television and radio shows. Her most recent books include, *Hidden History: African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia*; *Sweet Briar College*; *Virginia and the Great War*, and *Invisible Founders: How Two Centuries of African American Families Transformed a Plantation into a College*. During the summer of 2019, she began a new position as the inaugural director of Institutional History at Washington and Lee University.

### EXHIBITS 2019-2020

#### MARGARET MERCER ROOM

**SEPTEMBER** – Loudoun Artisans Showcase – Loudoun Arts Council

**OCTOBER** – Edwin Washington Project: Loudoun County School's Record Project presented by Larry Roeder

**NOVEMBER** – Illustrated Letters from the Rust Archives by Laura Christiansen

**DECEMBER** – David Norton Pottery

**JANUARY** – Friends of Leesburg Arts – Mary Pender

**FEBRUARY** – History of African American Voting Rights - Black History Committee/Alicia Cohen

**MARCH** – Friends of Leesburg Arts – Mary Pender

**APRIL** – George C. Marshall Foundation – Cody Youngblood

**MAY** – Leesburg Memorabilia- Judy & Billy Fisher

**JUNE** – Loudoun Preservation Society Retrospective

**JULY – AUGUST** – Loudoun County Civil War Artifacts by John Creamer

#### LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM

**JULY – MID OCTOBER** – Loudoun in Transition an Exhibit by Jim Hanna

**MID OCTOBER – DECEMBER** – Art Works by Friends of Leesburg Arts by Mary Pender

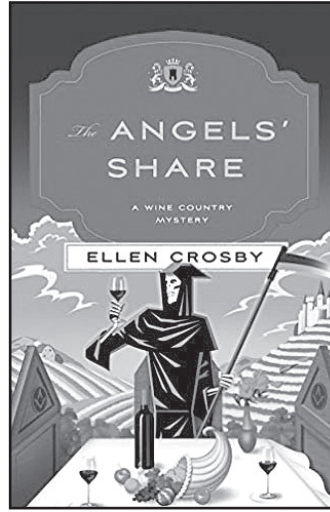
**JANUARY – MARCH** – Watercolor, Pen & Ink – C M Taylor

**APRIL – JUNE** – Spring Flowers Loudoun Photography Club

## THE ANGELS' SHARE: A WINE COUNTRY MYSTERY WINE COUNTRY MYSTERY SERIES BOOK # 10

Ellen Crosby

Sunday, 8 December 2019, 2PM



When Lucie Montgomery attends a Thanksgiving weekend party for friends and neighbors at Hawthorne Castle, owned by the Avery family, America's last great newspaper dynasty and owners of the *Washington Tribune*, she doesn't expect the festive occasion to end in death.

During the party, Prescott Avery, the 95-year-old family patriarch, invites Lucie to his fabulous wine cellar where he offers to pay any price for a cache of 200-year-old Madeira that her great-great-uncle, a Prohibition bootlegger, discovered hidden in the US Capitol in the 1920s. Lucie knows nothing about the valuable wine, believing her late father, a notorious gambler and spendthrift, probably sold or drank it. By the end of the party Lucie and her fiancé, winemaker Quinn Santori, discover Prescott's body lying

in his wine cellar. Is one of the guests a murderer?

As Lucie searches for the lost Madeira, which she believes links Prescott's death to a cryptic letter her father owned, she learns about Prescott's affiliation with the Freemasons. More investigating hints at a mysterious vault supposedly containing documents hidden by the Founding Fathers and a possible tie to William Shakespeare. If Lucie finds the long-lost documents, the explosive revelations could change history. But will she uncover a three hundred-year-old secret before a determined killer finds her?

Ellen Crosby is author of the Virginia wine country mysteries. Her books have been nominated for the Mary Higgins Clark Award and the Library of Virginia People's Choice Award and *The Riesling Retribution* won the 2009 Gourmand World Cookbook Award for Best US Wine Literature Book. Crosby has also written two mysteries featuring international photojournalist Sophie Medina and *Moscow Nights*, a standalone mystery. Previously she worked as a freelance reporter for *The Washington Post*, Moscow correspondent for ABC Radio News, and as an economist at the US Senate. After living overseas for many years— England, France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and the former Soviet Union— Crosby, who has an undergraduate degree in political science from Catholic University and a masters in international affairs from The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, now lives in the DC suburbs of northern Virginia.

# THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

## 2019-20 Classes

### RESEARCHING HISTORY AND GENEALOGY AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

#### INFORMATION SEEKING STRATEGIES

**Thursday, 3 October 2019, 10AM**

Under the direction of **Laura E.**

**Christiansen**, Curator of Manuscripts and Archives, participants will learn techniques 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 digital resources, including Thomas Balch Library's sound and moving image kiosk. Participants will leave the workshop with new skills for smarter, faster, and more wide-reaching searches.

#### PRESERVATION FOR HOME ARCHIVES

**Thursday, 7 November 2019, 10AM**

**Gabrielle Sanchez**, Contract Archivist and former Library Reference Associate at Thomas Balch Library, will introduce participants to the basics of preservation and discuss the best ways to house and protect personal archives. Topics will include proper ways to handle letters, books, photographs, and other media; common conservation needs; threats to paper and electronic media; and the dangers of non-archival storage products.

#### HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN LEESBURG

**Thursday, 5 December 2019, 10AM**

The Leesburg Old and Historic District was first established in 1964, making it the oldest historic district in Loudoun County. Since that time, the Town has grown exponentially but the character and quality of the District remains. This introductory session to Historic Preservation in Leesburg will discuss what it means to own property in the District; identify the responsibilities of historic property owners; and share what the benefits are. Join **Lauren Murphy**, Preservation Planner, Town of Leesburg, for an introduction to the Leesburg Historic District, the Board of Architectural Review Process, and owning property in the historic downtown. This class is ideal for residents and owners of property in the H1-Old

and Historic District and may also be of interest to owners of property in the H-2 Historic Corridor District, or anyone curious about tools available to local governments for protecting historic buildings. Lauren Murphy, Preservation Planner for the Town of Leesburg, works with residents and business owners in the Old and Historic District, as well as the Historic Corridor District, to preserve the unique architectural character and historic fabric of Leesburg. Prior to joining the Town in December of 2018, Murphy worked with many historic communities across Northern Virginia including previous positions as manager of Historic District programs for Loudoun County and the Town of Purcellville. During her tenure with Loudoun County, she was recognized by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions for her work on the Joint Architectural Review Board Awards program.

#### CARE AND PRESERVATION OF TEXTILES

**Thursday, 6 February 2020, 10AM**

**MC Mairena**, Library Associate, Thomas Balch Library. Do you have old family dresses, uniforms, quilts, or baby clothes and you're unsure how to take care of them? Join us for a workshop to go over basic techniques for caring and storing your family textile heirlooms.

#### DIGITIZING FAMILY PHOTOS 101

**Thursday, 5 March 2020, 10AM**

**Gina McNeely**, owner of Gina McNeely Picture Research, photo editor, and volunteer at Thomas Balch Library

#### RESEARCHING USING COURT RECORDS

**Thursday, 2 April 2020, 10AM**

**Jeanette Irby**, Loudoun County Circuit Court Judge and former Leesburg Town Attorney will discuss how to use court records and other resources for data that are frequently overlooked in genealogical and historical research. Irby will demonstrate how to mine court records for clues that can be used to collect information for genealogical

research. Examples of these records include real estate records, chancery suits, estates, and indexes. Jeanette Irby has researched land records dating from the 1700s and participated in genealogical seminars sponsored by the Warrenton Court House Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution of which she is past Regent. Irby currently serves as secretary of District VI of the Virginia DAR Chapters. She holds a BS from Central Michigan University and a JD from Thomas Cooley Law School in Lansing, MI.

#### HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**Thursday, 7 May 2020, 10AM**

**Lauren Murphy**, Preservation Planner, Town of Leesburg

#### DIGITAL HISTORY

**Thursday, 4 June 2020, 10AM**

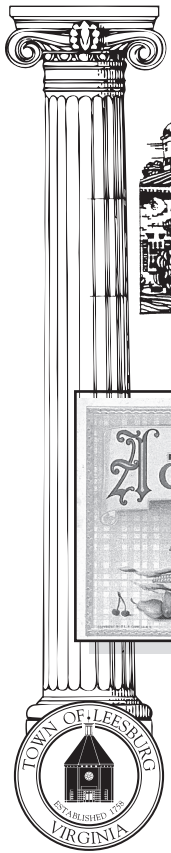
What new digital tools are available to help access and understand historic documents and data? Library Associate **Joanna C. Lee** will introduce the digital side of historical research. Whether you are a "digital native" or technology-wary, this workshop will explore different digital humanities methodologies that are accessible and friendly to all users.

#### SAVE THE DATES

**Too Much For Human Endurance: The George Spangler Farm Hospitals and the Battle of Gettysburg**  
Ronald D. Kirkwood  
Sunday, 15 March 2020, 2PM

**Railroads in NOVA: Why They Went, Where They Went, and When They Went There**  
Charlie Grymes  
Sunday, 22 March 2020, 2PM

**Murder, Inc.: The CIA Under John F. Kennedy**  
James H. Johnston  
Sunday, 19 April 2020, 2PM

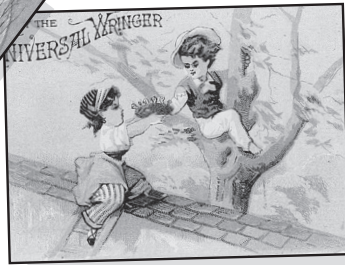
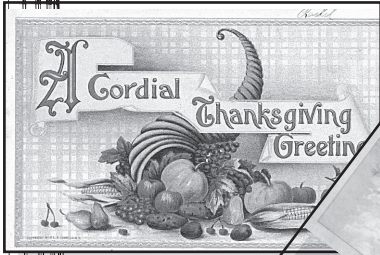


## THE BALCH COLUMN

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208 W. Market Street  
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703-737-7195  
Fax: 703-737-7150

Email: [balchlib@leesburgva.gov](mailto:balchlib@leesburgva.gov)



## FALL 2019 LECTURES AND EVENTS

### *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 7PM. The public is always welcome.

**Thomas Balch Library Endowment Foundation** a 501c3 established in 2015 to receive, maintain, and administer assets in perpetuity to support programs and outreach services of the Thomas Balch Library.

**Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc.**, a 501c3 organized to provide support for Thomas Balch Library, meets at the library every other month, sponsors an annual fundraiser, and publishes a quarterly newsletter *The Chronicle*. For more information, visit [www.balchfriends.org](http://www.balchfriends.org) or call 540/579-2825.

Friends of the Thomas Balch Library will hold its 12th Annual Fall fundraising event at Selma Mansion, 29 September 2019.

**Black History Committee of Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc.**, meets at the library the first Saturday of every month at 10AM. The public is always welcome. For more information, visit [www.balchfriends.org](http://www.balchfriends.org) or call 540/579-2825.

**Loudoun County Civil War Round Table** meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30PM except January and February. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in Loudoun County's history during the American Civil War. Guests are welcome to attend two meetings without charge. Annual family dues are \$25. Meetings are held at Thomas Balch Library unless otherwise noted. For further information visit: <http://lccwrt.wordpress.com>

**The Virginia Forum** will hold its fifteenth annual conference March 26-28, 2020, focused on Crafting History, at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond. The Virginia Forum, an interdisciplinary conference, offers an opportunity for scholars, teachers, writers, museum curators, historic site interpreters, archivists, librarians, and all those interested in Virginia history and culture to share their knowledge, research, and experiences. Customary panel and paper proposals on all such topics are invited, as are ones for creative presentation formats such as posters, roundtables, workshops, and demonstration. The Virginia Forum welcomes proposals from teachers, students, and professionals outside of the academy, as well as from scholars in the early stages of their academic careers. The deadline for submissions is October 1, 2019. Acceptances should be forthcoming by December with a tentative schedule being announced in January 2020. Direct further inquiries about this meeting to: [virginiaforum@gmail.com](mailto:virginiaforum@gmail.com). Additional information, including previous conference programs, is available online at [www.virginiaforum.org](http://www.virginiaforum.org).