



BALCH COLUMN

Thomas Balch Library ■ 208 W. Market Street ■ Leesburg, Virginia 20176
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News FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Who would have thought a year on I would be writing my second pandemic era newsletter? Certainly not I. The impact of the pandemic continues to be felt by staff, volunteers, and patrons alike with the transfer of some events to virtual platforms; the continued postponement of some group activities; and access to research and exhibits by appointment only. Although with the vaccine, the timeline looks more hopeful, we are still uncertain when we will be able to resume in person events. To meet this ongoing situation we have added a class to our roster in September and are looking to add in virtual pop-up events throughout the year and a shortened genealogical seminar. These events will be posted to our website, on social media, and in press releases in time for people to register.

TOPICS FOR POP UP EVENTS INCLUDE:

Archives Un-boxing – What happens after a donation is received? See what happens when a new collection is received and walk through the donation and accessioning process with our archivist.

Collections of Interest - Women's History – An overview of collections from Thomas Balch Library's Rust Archives related to Women's Organizations in Loudoun County history.

Finding Archival Collections – A mini-tutorial about finding collections in our Archives. Learn how to find, read, and use our Collection Guides to find great stuff.

Collections of Interest - Family Trees and Genealogical Charts – Curious about different ways genealogical information can be shared? See examples of interesting charts and trees from our Special Collections.

Basic Photo Digitization – Just getting started with scanning your photograph collections? We'll walk through the basic steps of scanning a photo and answer some of the most regularly asked questions about digitization.

Collections of Interest - Growing Things – Dig into some of Thomas Balch Library's archival materials related to gardens and gardening.

FamilySearch Research Wiki – Learn how to use FamilySearch Research Wiki – whether researching a new geographic location or somewhere you've researched before, the Research Wiki provides historical information as well as where to find genealogical records.

Research Questions & Research Inquiries – Need to submit a research inquiry to a repository, but don't know what information to include in the research question and what information to leave out? Learn some helpful tips on how to best frame a research question when contacting repositories for research assistance.

For the **Genealogical Seminar** we hope to host a panel with speakers talking about their real life experiences with traditional and genetic research.

The library has always been a destination for local residents as well as visitors from across the country and even from around the globe and a gathering place for local historians, genealogists, and researchers. During the pandemic, as we were forced to close our physical doors, we opened our virtual gates to researchers, for which we have been hugely rewarded with overwhelming responses from across the United States. We thank you all for your ongoing interest in and support of the Library's mission. It is immensely rewarding to have our efforts so profoundly reinforced and supported.

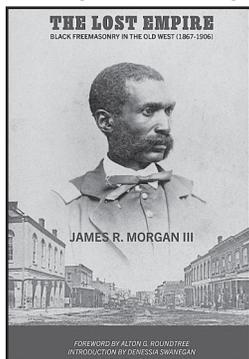
We at the library look forward to welcoming you when once again we are all able to visit in person the Library or attend lectures and participate in tours.

Alexandra S. Gressitt, *Library Director*

Some Activities DURING THE PANDEMIC INCLUDE:

THE LOST EMPIRE: BLACK FREEMASONRY IN THE OLD WEST (1867-1906)

James R. Morgan, III
Sunday, 28 February 2021, 2PM



James R. Morgan III is a graduate of Howard University where he studied

Mass Communications and African American History. He is a Prince Hall Freemason and currently serves as the Grand Historian & Archivist of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia. Mr. Morgan's research primarily focuses on the African American fraternal experience in the nineteenth century and genealogy. He is a member of the African American Genealogical and Historical Society (AAHGS) and serves on the Advisory Board of the Bishop Henry McNeal Turner Project. He has penned and contributed to several published works including his debut book *The Lost Empire: Black Freemasonry in the Old West (1867-1906)* which was awarded the 2019 Dr. Charles H. Wesley Medal of History and the 2020 Phillis Wheatley Book Award for Non-Fiction Biography. This program is being brought to you jointly by Loudoun County NAACP, Black History Committee of Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, and Thomas Bach Library. Appreciation is expressed to the NAACP for providing virtual access. Register in advance for this meeting by visiting:

<https://tinyurl.com/BlackFreemasonryOldWest>

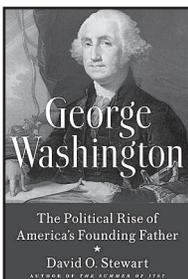
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

GEORGE WASHINGTON: THE POLITICAL RISE OF AMERICA'S FOUNDING FATHER

Greg May in conversation with
David O. Stewart
Wednesday, 3 March 2021, 1PM



Join Greg May in a conversation with award-winning author David O. Stewart as he

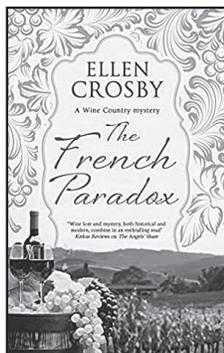


shares his thoughts on how George Washington became the single most dominant force in the creation of the United States. David O. Stewart turned to writing after a career practicing law in Washington, DC, defending accused criminals and challenging government actions as unconstitutional. He is a national bestselling and award-winning author of four previous books on American history. He is formerly the president of the Washington Independent Review of Books. Greg May is a historian of the Early Republic who recently published a political biography of Albert Gallatin, Treasury secretary for Jefferson and Madison. He is now writing about John Randolph of Roanoke's emancipation of his 400 slaves in the 1840s. Greg graduated from the College of William and Mary and the Harvard Law School. He clerked for Justice Powell on the Supreme Court, and then practiced law for thirty years. Register in advance for this program: <https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents>

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THE FRENCH PARADOX (A WINE COUNTY MYSTERY)

Ellen Crosby
Wednesday, 28 April 2021, 1PM



Join Ellen Crosby in a virtual conversation with Thomas Balch Library Director, Alexandra S. Gressitt,

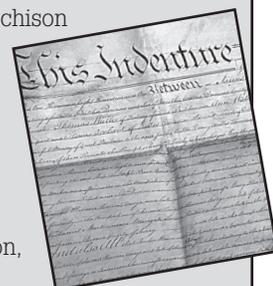
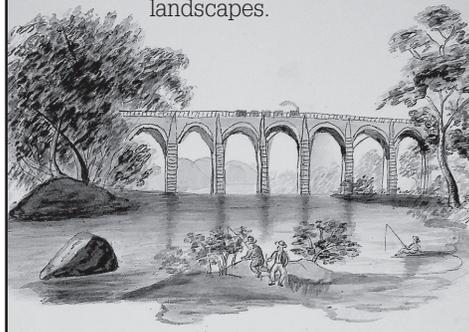
about the art of writing and her latest Wine County Mystery: *The French Paradox*. In this volume Lucie Montgomery's discovery of her grandfather's Parisian romance unlocks a series of shocking secrets in a gripping new Wine Country mystery. Ellen Crosby is the author of the Virginia wine country mystery series; her latest book, *The French Paradox* will be released in the US this spring. Her books have been nominated for the Mary Higgins Clark Award and the Library of Virginia People's Choice Award; *The Riesling Retribution* won the 2009 Gourmand World Cookbook Award for Best US Wine Literature Book. Previously she worked as a freelance reporter for *The Washington Post*, Moscow correspondent for ABC Radio News, and as an economist at the U.S. Senate. Register in advance for this program: <https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents>

NEWS ABOUT Collections

You may be wondering what we are doing at the library during these unusual times. Laura Christiansen, Curator of Manuscripts and Archives shares with you some recent additions to our research collections:

The Louisa Hutchison Collection (M 0135), 1959-2017 consists of research files compiled by Louisa Skinner Hutchison (1922-2017) relating to local history and genealogy. Hutchison, a Loudoun County native and life-long resident worked in the Loudoun County Clerk's office from 1959 until 1972. You may be familiar with many of her books indexing Loudoun County records including *Apprentices, Poor Children and Bastards: Loudoun County, Virginia 1757-1850* and *Index to Loudoun County, Virginia Wills, 1757-1850*. Processed by Library Volunteer Becky Ottinger in 2019-2020, Hutchison's extensive files stretch to 10 boxes of compiled research, notes and correspondence relating to local families, notably the Hutchison and Skinner family lines, and sites of local interest.

Additions to the Constance Williams deBordenave Collection, 1795-1935 (M 102): In October, Thomas Balch Library received two sketchbooks belonging to Chloe Chinn (1840-1919) donated by Constance Williams deBordenave. The daughter of Frances Chinn (1796-1892) and Mary Ann Adams Chinn (1811-1871), Chloe lived in Loudoun County near Gilbert's Corner on her family's farm. The earliest sketches included in this collection date to around 1850, when, as a 10 year old, she began sketching and show her continued progress as a developing artist throughout her life. Chinn's sketches include animals such as horses, sheep and cows, as well as real and imaginary landscapes.



THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

2021 Classes

RESEARCHING HISTORY AND GENEALOGY AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

Register in advance for these classes: <https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents>

CARE AND PRESERVATION OF TEXTILES

Thursday, 4 February 2021, 10AM



MC Mairena, Senior 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.

WRITING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

Thursday, 4 March 2021, 10AM

Writing your family history is a great way to preserve your research and share what you've found with your family members. Norah Schneider, Library Genealogy Associate at the Thomas Balch Library, will go over the different parts to writing your family history and answer your questions on the writing process.

RESEARCHING USING COURT RECORDS

Thursday, 15 April 2021, 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. Jeanette Irby has 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.

RESCHEDULED

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Thursday, 6 May 2021, 10AM

In celebration of National Preservation Month – Historic Preservation in Leesburg and Loudoun County: Panel Discussion with Lauren Murphy, Preservation Planner, Town of Leesburg, Heidi Siebentritt, Loudoun County Preservation Planner, and Steve Thompson, Loudoun County Archaeologist.

RESEARCHING AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGY

Thursday, 3 June 2021, 10AM

In this class Steve Hammond and Lori Kimball will be using case studies and examples from their research. Lori Kimball, a member of the Black History Committee of Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, co-researcher of the Enslaved Community of President James Monroe, and researcher of the enslaved community at Oatlands, will discuss use of online resources, resources available at Thomas Balch Library, Loudoun County Courthouse, and repositories throughout the country. Steve Hammond, a 7th generation member of the Syphax family of Washington, DC: a line moved by force to New Orleans and then by choice to Denver, will share his efforts to make the field more relatable and relevant to the public at large, particularly as interest in and access to DNA/ancestry/genealogy data becomes more available.

GENEALOGY RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

Thursday, 5 August 2021, 10AM

In this course, Norah Schneider, Library Genealogy Associate at the Thomas Balch Library, will cover intermediate genealogy research techniques. The course will move past basic genealogical research and explore research methods, record types, and genealogical sources for those who have already started researching their family history.



DIGITAL HISTORY

Thursday, 9 September 2021, 10AM

What new digital tools are available to help access and understand historic documents and data? Stephanie Seal Walters, PhD, former Senior Library Associate at Thomas Balch Library, will introduce the digital side of historical research and explore different digital humanities' methodologies that are accessible and friendly to all users. Dr. Walters, Digital Liaison in the Humanities at the University of Southern Mississippi where she advises faculty and graduate students on digital humanities technology and projects, also teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on digital methods for producing online museums and exhibits.

PRESERVATION FOR HOME ARCHIVES

Thursday, 7 October 2021, 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.

IDENTIFICATION AND CARE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Thursday, 4 November 2021, 10AM

Laura E. Christiansen, Curator of Manuscripts and Archives, will guide participants through a practical approach to the identification and preservation of photographs from the daguerreotype to the inkjet print. The workshop will include an overview of the history and technology of photographic materials, identification and dating techniques, and best practices to care for and preserve your photograph collections.



RESEARCHING USING DEEDS

Thursday, 2 December 2021, 10AM

Wynne Saffer, author of *Loudoun County, Virginia 1860 Land Tax Map*, will use a case study to demonstrate how to establish chain of title using deed indexes and other types of land ownership changes such as wills, marriages, old advertisements, and chancery cases.

We're Still Virtual

During the pandemic, Thomas Balch Library has moved its classes to a virtual platform.

Pre-registration for all events is required: <https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents>

The library is open by appointment only, **Tuesdays & Thursdays 10am-12pm & 1-3pm.**

To view exhibits and request a research appointment, please complete the research appointment request form: <https://tinyurl.com/TBLAppointment>

Please contact us before traveling to the library.



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WINTER/SPRING 2021 EVENTS · *We're Still Virtual*

Other Activities AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission sponsors the annual Loudoun History Awards. 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 or call 540/579-2825.

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 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 - Due to the pandemic the Virginia Forum will not hold the annual conference previously scheduled for March 25-27, 2021. 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. Additional information, including previous conference programs, is available online at www.virginiaforum.org.

Exhibits 2021

MARGARET MERCER ROOM

- January** The Waxpool General Store
Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum
- February** Black History Committee - The Black Family:
Representation, Identity and Diversity
- March** Beth Wilson - The Barefoot Weaver
- April** Gallivanting Around the World: Trinkets and
Souvenirs from the Morven Park Collection
- May** Loudoun Preservation Society Retrospective
- June** Leesburg Garden Club
- July-August** John Creamer
Loudoun County Civil War Artifacts
- September** Loudoun County Clerk of the Circuit
Court, Historic Records Department
- October** Jeff Thomas - 1781 Siege of Yorktown:
The 240th Anniversary
- November** Laura Christiansen - Selections from the
Collections in the Rust Archives
- December** Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association

LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM

- January-March** Local Artists Anne Marie Chirieleison,
Forrest Holbert, Linda Kreingold, and
Megan Kud - Friends of Leesburg Arts
- April-June** Loudoun Photography Club
- July-September** Loudoun Sketch Club
- October-December** Jim Hanna - Photography