

# 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



Here it is 2022 and we are still finding our way through the pandemic tunnel. Although the Library continues to be impacted by the pandemic in the number of researchers and their points of origin we have weathered the storm providing in person research opportunities, exhibits, and virtual programs – many of which are available on our YouTube Channel. During spring 2022 and as pandemic conditions permit, we will be easing into in-person events. We will continue to require pre-registration for all events so that should we need to pivot to virtual everyone will still have the opportunity to participate. To register for these events visit <https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents>. Always be sure to check the library website for the latest information on hours and events. Currently our hours are Monday & Friday 10AM-5PM (Closed 12-1 for lunch); Tuesday & Thursday 10AM-8PM (closed 12-1 for lunch); Wednesday 2-8PM; Saturday 11AM-4PM and Sunday 1-5PM.



Although 2021 Loudoun History Award recipients were selected, we were unable, due to the pandemic, to recognize them in person. Thomas Balch Library Advisory commissioners will recognize the 2021 Loudoun History Award recipients during the Loudoun History Awards ceremony in November 2022. The recipients of this year's Loudoun History Awards, based on contributions to preserving Loudoun's past, are Michael R. Napper and The Family and Friends of the Mount Sinai Cemetery. In addition, The Black History Committee of Friends of the Thomas Balch Library was given special recognition for their commemorative efforts in connection with Frederick Douglass Elementary School.

Mark your calendars. After a pandemic hiatus of two years, we are planning our next genealogical seminar, sponsored by Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, for March 2023. Fintan Mullen and Gillian Hunt will be here on an Ulster Historical Foundation Tour.

Since my last letter, there has been a change in staffing. Victoria Summers, Library Administrator, left the end of December to pursue other adventures. Mary Frye has returned from retirement to assist us until a new Library Administrator is on board.

We thank you all for your ongoing interest in and support of the Library's mission. As always, we at the library look forward to welcoming you when next you are able to visit the Library.

Alexandra S. Gressitt  
Library Director

## THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY ANNIVERSARY EXHIBIT *Thomas Balch Library is turning 100!*

To celebrate the centenary of the dedication of the Library building in 1922 a special exhibit will be on view in the Margaret Mercer room throughout May 2022 featuring artifacts, photographs, and documents from the history of the library.



### SEASON TICKET PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Announcing a \*NEW\* easy way to reserve a seat in all of Thomas Balch Library's upcoming classes and programs: sign up for a season ticket. Visit our Event registration page (<https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents>) and select "Season Ticket" in the drop-down box. Fill out the rest of the form with your contact information, and you are done – it's that easy.

Information about each program will be sent to your inbox when it is available.

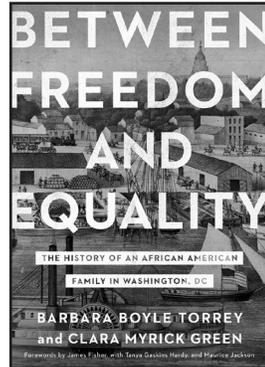
Although Thomas Balch Library has resumed its pre-pandemic hours, unless otherwise noted, programs at Thomas Balch Library will be conducted on a virtual platform as long as conditions dictate. Be sure to check the library website for the latest information on events. Pre-registration for all events, virtual or in-person, is required: <https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents>

V I R T U A L

**BETWEEN FREEDOM AND EQUALITY**  
**Panel discussion with authors Barbara Boyle Torrey and Clara Myrick Green and family members James Fisher and Tanya Gaskins Hardy**  
**Wednesday, 16 February 2022, 1PM**

*Between Freedom and Equality* begins with the life of Capt. George Pointer, an enslaved African who purchased his freedom in 1793 while working for George Washington's Potomac Company. It follows six generations of his descendants as they lived and worked on the banks of the Potomac, in the port of Georgetown, and in a rural corner of the nation's capital. By tracing the story of one family and their experiences, *Between Freedom and Equality* offers a moving and inspiring look at challenges free African Americans have faced in Washington, DC, since the District's founding. The Pointer family faced many challenges—fragility of freedom in a slaveholding society, racism, wars, floods, and epidemics—but their refuge was a small farm they purchased in what is now Chevy Chase. In the early twentieth century however, the DC government used eminent domain to force the sale of their farm and replaced it with an all-white school. *Between Freedom and Equality* grants Pointer and his descendants their long-overdue place in American history.

Clara Myrick Green is a retired secondary school French teacher. Her thirty-four-year teaching career included a teaching assistantship in the French department at the University of Missouri, and positions in private schools in Brooklyn Heights, NY and in Bethesda, MD. Barbara Boyle Torrey, former executive director of the Division of the Behavioral and Social Sciences at the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, has authored two local histories and edited three books. Along with *Between Freedom and Equality*, Green and Torrey have co-authored two articles and a local history of a neighborhood in Bethesda entitled *Brookmont: A Neighborhood on the Potomac*.



I N P E R S O N

**THE NEW LAND**  
**David O. Stewart**  
**Sunday, 27 March 2022, 2PM**

From bestselling historian and storyteller David O. Stewart, *The New Land* brings the reader back in time to tell uniquely American stories—full of adventure, excitement, heartbreak, and a tapestry of richly developed characters. Lose yourself in the challenges and emotions of eighteenth-century Maine. In 1753, Johann Oberstrasse's wife, Christianne, announces that their infant sons will never soldier for the Landgraf of Hesse like their father, hired out to serve King George of England. In search of a new life, Johann and the family join an expedition to the New World, lured by the promise of land on the Maine coast. A grinding voyage deposits them on the edge of a continent filled with dangers and disease. Expecting to till the soil, Johann finds that opportunity on the rocky coast comes from the forest, not land, so he learns carpentry and trapping. To advance in an English world, Johann adapts their name to Overstreet. But war follows them.

After many years as a trial and appellate lawyer, David O. Stewart became a bestselling writer of history and historical fiction. His first novel, *The Lincoln Deception*, about the John Wilkes Booth conspiracy, was called the best historical novel of 2013 by Bloomberg View. Sequels include *The Paris Deception*, set at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and *The Babe Ruth Deception*, which follows Babe's first two years with the Yankees. Stewart's histories explore the writing of the Constitution, the gifts of James Madison, the western expedition and treason trial of Aaron Burr; and the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson. In February 2021, Stewart published *George Washington: The Political Rise of America's Founding Father*.



I N P E R S O N ~ O U T D O O R T O U R

**CIVIL WAR WALKING TOUR OF LEESBURG**  
**Richard Treat Gillespie • Saturday, 12 March 2022, 10AM**

With its key geographic location just two miles from the Potomac Frontier that divided the Confederate and United States, Leesburg was bound to see a good deal of the Civil War. A Walking Tour of Civil War Leesburg with Rich Gillespie will examine the surviving Civil War townscape and watch the War develop and engulf the county seat of Loudoun. In a circuit of the historic district, the emphasis will be on what the 1,500 residents of the town would have seen at various places and what they would have experienced during 1861-65. The two-hour chronological tour will provide ample spots to sit for the weary and will paint vibrant historic portraits to keep people enthralled. Included in the tour will be three skirmish sites, outside stops at two churches, the courthouse lawn, "the best street in town," Harrison Hall where General Lee stayed, and the Episcopal cemetery.

Richard Treat Gillespie, former Executive Director for Northern Virginia's Mosby Heritage Area (now known as Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association), is a founding member of Loudoun's Civil War Sesquicentennial Steering Committee. Before joining the Mosby Heritage Area Association in 2004, he taught US History and Economics for 30 years at Loudoun Valley High School in Purcellville, VA. A graduate of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, he is a strong believer in melding the classroom, the community, and historic sites through heritage education. The tour leaves from Thomas Balch Library parking lot at 10AM. **Note: This tour requires good walking shoes.**



## IN PERSON

### BITTER ROOTS: THE WINE COUNTRY MYSTERIES #12

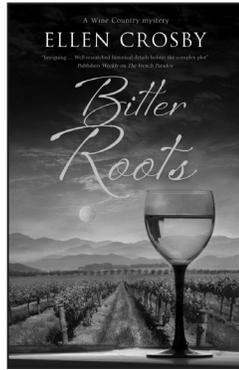
Sunday, 24 April 2022, 2PM

Ellen Crosby

The brutal murder of a beautiful vineyard expert and a devastating storm force Virginia winemaker Lucie Montgomery to confront painful changes on the eve of her wedding.

In just over a week vineyard owner Lucie Montgomery and winemaker Quinn Santori will be married in a ceremony overlooking what should be acres of lush flowering grapevines. Instead they are confronted by an ugly swathe of slowly dying vines and a nursery owner who denies responsibility for selling diseased plants. With neighboring vineyards facing the same problem, accusations fly and the ugly stand-off between supplier and growers looks set to escalate into open warfare.

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.



## IN PERSON

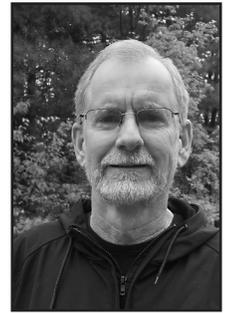
### LOUDOUN COUNTY AND THE W&OD RAILROAD

Paul McCray

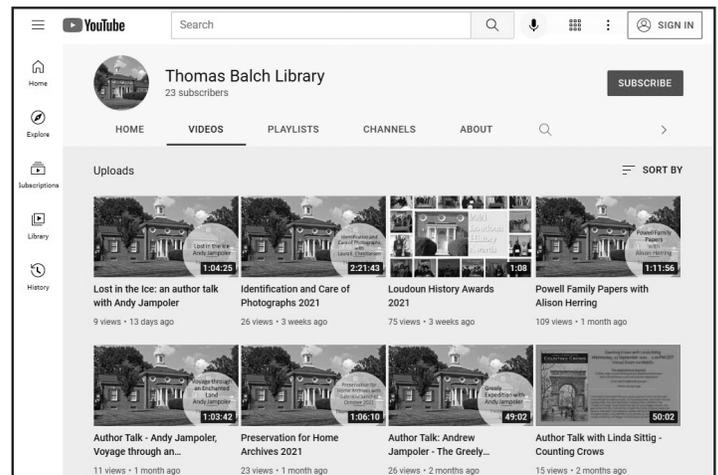
Sunday, 22 May 2022, 2PM

The railroad which became the Washington & Old Dominion had a major impact on how Northern Virginia was developed and the effect on Loudoun was substantial. The railroad influenced the locations of towns, which areas of the county would grow, where roads would be located, the success of farms and where commercial development would take place. This program will explore how the W&OD Railroad came to be, its successes and failures and why it was abandoned in 1968.

Paul McCray is a life-long resident of Northern Virginia and has lived in Loudoun County for 30 years. He managed various Regional Parks in Loudoun for NOVA Parks including Ball's Bluff Battlefield, Temple Hall Farm and oversaw the W&OD Railroad Regional Park for 20 years. While in that position he became interested in preserving the history of the W&OD and collected almost 2,000 images of the railroad as well as hundreds of original documents. Retired, he continues to work part-time for NOVA Parks as a historian researching and telling the stories of park history. McCray is a recipient of Thomas Balch Library's Loudoun History Award.



### THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY YOUTUBE CHANNEL



Did you know? Thomas Balch Library has a YouTube channel. Launched in 2021, you will find lots of great video content on the channel including video of our workshops, author talks, informative short pop-up programs, and Wallace the Bear's video debut. To find the Library's channel online go to <https://tinyurl.com/VideoTBL> or search for "Thomas Balch Library" in the YouTube search bar. You may subscribe to our channel to access new content as it becomes available. We plan to continue adding to our growing archive of programs – stay tuned!

## IN PERSON

### LEESBURG TOUR

James P. Roberts

Saturday, 7 May 2022, 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. Particular detail is paid to how Leesburg has grown and evolved through the years architecturally, economically, and racially. 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. **Note: This tour requires good walking shoes.**

### RECENTLY PROCESSED COLLECTIONS

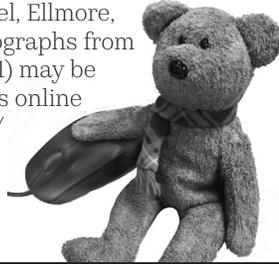
In October 2021 two new archival collections were processed and made available: Leesburg Branch of the Valley Bank Papers (SC 0155) and Leesburg Virginia Telephone Company Stock (SC 0156). Both collections were purchased for the Library by Thomas Balch Library Endowment Foundation in 2020. Leesburg Branch of the Valley Bank Papers (SC 0155) consists of records created by the Leesburg Virginia Branch of the Valley Bank between 1818 and 1859. The Bank of the Valley of Virginia, also known as the Old Valley Bank, was originally established in Winchester, VA on 17 January 1818. Later that year a Leesburg branch building opened for business east of the Loudoun County Courthouse at 20-22 East Market Street. The collection includes papers related to bank business such as reports compiled for the Board Directors of the Leesburg Branch and correspondence related to specific accounts at the bank. Leesburg Virginia Telephone Company Stock (SC 0156) contains Leesburg Virginia Telephone Company Stock Certificates issued between 1908 and 1911 along with correspondence regarding transfers, recall, and liquidation of stock from 1916-1918. An index of stockholders is also available.

**Recently Processed Collections (continued)**

**GOLDIE E. MAFFETT COLLECTION**



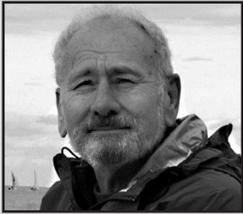
Goldie Estelle Maffett, daughter of Walter Gray Maffett and Estelle Ellmore Maffett, was born 26 September 1897 and died 9 March 1988. During her life, Maffett collected genealogical information and family photographs. In 2021, Thomas Balch Library volunteers and staff completed processing of Maffett's collection, which, along with genealogical research and clippings, includes more than 850 photographs, most clearly and carefully labeled. Along with Maffett information, family names represented in Maffett's collection include Arundel, Ellmore, Flip, Caylor, and many more. Photographs from Goldie E. Maffett Collection (M0131) may be browsed in Thomas Balch Library's online Visual Collections Catalog: <https://thomasbalchlibrary.pastperfectonline.com/photo>.



**V I R T U A L**

**LUNCHEON LECTURES WITH ANDREW JAMPOLER**

**Pre-registration is required: <https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents>**



Andrew Jampoler, who has been writing full time for more than twenty years, is an amazing storyteller who has given illustrated presentations on his books and magazine articles, and other expeditions and adventures at sea, to audiences at the Library of Congress, the National Archives, in museums and embassies, at libraries and book stores, and aboard cruise ships around the world – remember those? He is an alumnus of Columbia College and

of the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, in New York City, and of the US State Department Foreign Service Institute's School of Language Study. During more than twenty years on active duty with the US Navy, Jampoler, a naval aviator who flew Lockheed P-3 airplanes in search of submarines, also commanded a land-based maritime patrol aircraft squadron and an air station. Later he was a senior sales and marketing executive in the international aerospace industry.

**THE SLAVE TRADE AT SEA**

**Wednesday, 26 January 2022, 1PM**

Millions of Africans, forcibly removed from their home continent, were until two centuries ago exported to labor as property in the mines and plantations of the New World. Their forced labor produced the flood of wealth that changed the economies of the Old World, prompted industrialization, and foresaw today's global economy. Determined efforts to outlaw and ultimately to eliminate this criminal business finally succeeded in the early 19th century, thanks in part to policing by the Royal and United States Navies.

**THROUGH THE DARK CONTINENT, HENRY MORTON STANLEY AND THE EXPLORATION OF AFRICA**

**Wednesday, 16 March 2022, 1PM**

Henry Morton Stanley's successful search in 1871 for the Scottish medical missionary, David Livingstone, was a newspaper circulation-building caper funded by the *NY Herald's* publisher. Its brilliant success, Stanley's subsequent bold trek east to west across Central Africa in 1874-77, and his later services to Leopold II made him famous, and thrust Africa indelibly into the consciousness of the western world.

**CONGO, THE MISERABLE EXPEDITIONS AND DREADFUL DEATH OF LT. EMORY TAUNT, USN**

**Wednesday 27 April 2022, 1PM**

Former Navy Lieutenant Emory Taunt's third time in the Congo, as the first resident American diplomat in equatorial Africa, ended in January 1891 with his death along the great river, the familiar fate then of many Europeans in King Leopold's private estate. His life and times at the end of that century open a window today on the tragic history of this deeply troubled nation.

*Exhibits 2022*

**MARGARET MERCER ROOM**

**JANUARY**

Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association – Ashby's Gap Turnpike:  
A Journey through History

**FEBRUARY**

Friends of the Arcola Slave Quarters

**MARCH**

Loudoun County Public Schools  
Student Artwork

**APRIL**

Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum

**MAY**

Thomas Balch Library  
History of Thomas Balch Library

**JUNE**

Charles Johnston  
Granny's Cooking: Meals at  
21 West Loudoun St., 1950s-1970

**JULY – AUGUST**

John Creamer  
Loudoun County Civil War Artifacts

**SEPTEMBER**

Thomas Balch Library  
Elaine Thompson Collection

**OCTOBER**

Morven Park

**NOVEMBER**

Loudoun County Public Schools  
in conjunction with the  
Douglass High School  
Commemorative Committee  
History of Douglass High School

**DECEMBER**

Donna Bohanon  
The 1883 Mass Meeting Delegation



**LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM**

**JANUARY-MARCH**

Forrest Holbert presented by  
Friends of Leesburg Public Arts

**APRIL-JUNE**

Ligia Inra Fine Art

**JULY-SEPTEMBER**

Goose Creek Ruggers

**OCTOBER-DECEMBER**

Friends of Leesburg Public Arts

# THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY 2022 Classes

## RESEARCHING HISTORY AND GENEALOGY AT THOMAS BALCH LIBRARY

Although Thomas Balch Library has resumed its pre-pandemic hours, programs at Thomas Balch Library will be conducted on a virtual platform as long as conditions dictate. Please check the library website for the latest information on library events. Registration for all classes, virtual or in-person, is required: <https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents>

### INTRODUCTION TO GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH (Virtual)

**Thursday, 3 February 2022, 10AM**

**Norah Schneider**, Library Genealogy Associate, will discuss basic genealogical research methods, records, and sources for those just getting started researching their family history. Make sure to bring your questions.

### CENSUS RECORDS (Virtual)

**Thursday, 3 March 2022, 10AM**

In anticipation of the April 2022 release of the 1950 US Federal Census, **Norah Schneider**, Library Genealogy Associate at Thomas Balch Library, will discuss the use of census records in genealogical and historical research. This class will examine important features on US federal censuses from 1790 to 1940, look at the role of state censuses in research, and highlight special population schedules and non-population schedules.

### RESEARCHING COURT RECORDS

**Thursday, 7 April 2022, 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.

### RESEARCHING YOUR HOUSE

**Thursday, 5 May 2022, 10AM**

Architectural Historian, **Maral Kalbian**, walks you through methods and sources for researching the history and architecture of your house, with special focus on Loudoun County and Virginia. Maral S. Kalbian is an historic preservation specialist who has practiced in the Shenandoah Valley and Piedmont areas of Virginia for 35 years. She researches, evaluates, and documents historic architecture. She serves as a contractual architectural historian to several Virginia local governments including Clarke, and Frederick counties, and the City of Charlottesville. Her publications include *Clarke County, Virginia* (2011), *Frederick County: History Through Architecture* (1999), as well as other publications and professional reports.

### MARYLAND PROPERTY RECORDS

~~Thursday, 2 June 2022, 10AM~~

**Rescheduled: Thursday, 9 June 2022, 10AM**

Property research can be a powerful tool for exploring your family tree. Library Associate **Travis Shaw** will be giving a step-by-step introduction to a series of online tools that allow the user to access property records in the state of Maryland. Using these resources you can research deeds, plats, and other records from the 17th century to today from the comfort of the Thomas Balch Library or your own home. Travis Shaw is a public history professional with nearly two decades of experience in historic preservation, archaeology, and museum education. He joined the staff at the Thomas Balch Library in 2015, and also serves as the Director of Education at the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association.

### AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGY

**Thursday, 4 August 2022, 10AM**

In this class **Steve Hammond** and **Lori Kimball** will use 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.

### PRESERVATION OF HOME ARCHIVES

**Thursday, 6 October 2022, 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.

### HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

**Thursday, 3 November 2022, 10AM**

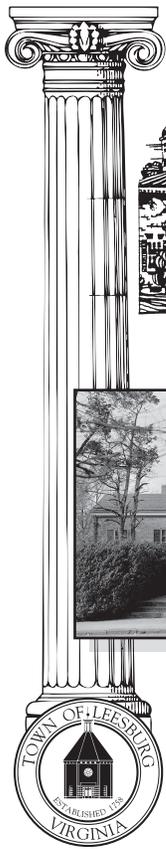
Curious about the history of photography? Join Curator **Laura E. Christiansen** to explore the history and technology of photographic media from daguerreotypes to digital images. This class will focus on tips and tricks for identification and dating of photographs.

### CARE AND PRESERVATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

**Thursday, 1 December 2022, 10AM**

**Laura E. Christiansen**, Curator of Manuscripts and Archives, will guide participants through a practical approach to proper handling, care, and long-term preservation of your photograph collections. Best practices for safely sharing and displaying photographs will be included.





## THE BALCH COLUMN

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## Winter/Spring 2022 Lectures and Events

# 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. Visit their webpage at: <https://tinyurl.com/e9vac4pf>

### 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. It meets the third Tuesday of alternate months commencing January. Visit their webpage at: <https://tinyurl.com/xu55dx6w>

### 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.

Due to the resurgence of COVID 19, Friends of the Thomas Balch Library cancelled its 26th Annual Meeting scheduled for January 2022. This year's program "Oral History Series: Interview with Wynne Saffer" presented by Patty Renner-Rogers, Sarah Huntington, and Rich Gillespie has been rescheduled to January 2023. Election of Officers for 2022 will be conducted by mail.

**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. For further information visit: <http://lccwrt.wordpress.com>

**The Virginia Forum** - The Virginia Forum is scheduled to hold its 2022 annual conference in-person at the Virginia War Memorial April 7-9, 2022. 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](http://www.virginiaforum.org).

### News about Collections and Exhibits Heritage Hub & Early American Newspapers

New to Thomas Balch Library are databases Heritage Hub and Early American Newspapers, replacing America's Genealogy Bank and America's Obituaries and Death Notices. Both databases are available onsite at the library using library computers. Adding 35 million additional historical obituaries and death notices and 30 million additional pages of historical content, Heritage Hub, provided for library patrons by Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc., offers access to US obituaries and death notices from 1824 to the present. A strong research accompaniment to the Black Life in America database, which offers access to newspapers from 1704 to the present, Early American Newspapers includes articles on a wide variety of historical topics and full newspaper issues from 1690 to 1922. Both databases contain newspapers from all fifty states and the District of Columbia.

