

Fort Harrison

335 Main Street, Dayton, Virginia ■ www.fortharrisonva.org

VOLUME 31 Autumn 2016



JMU Digs at Fort Harrison Once Again

This fall, the land surrounding Fort Harrison as well as Fort Harrison property inside the fence, will once again be under excavation by the archaeologist's trowel. JMU archaeology students under the direction of Dr. Dennis Blanton, will conduct a major archaeological dig on the site.

For many decades, the idea of a mystery tunnel to the spring house and a palisade surrounding the house and outbuildings has been a local tradition. Excavating the pasture around the spring house as well as the fields surrounding the house should provide us with a definitive answer – tunnel or no tunnel? This project will also reveal more in-depth information on possible outbuildings that existed during the Harrison era (circa 1748 - 1821).

Daniel Harrison, one of the earliest settlers in the Shenandoah Valley, built his substantial stone house around 1749. He also reportedly built a mill, a distillery and possibly a "chapel of ease" on his vast acreage. Harrison and his sons owned a substantial amount of acreage in the Dayton (at that time Rifeville) community. His stone house would have been a prominent structure here on the edge of the frontier in the 1750s.

Why is Fort Harrison embarking on yet another archaeology project? The discovery last winter of a 1953 Daily News Record article written by Dr. John W. Wayland has led us to this new development.

As many people know, Dr. Wayland was a well known author and historian in the Shenandoah Valley in the early 1900's. In January 1953, Wayland and his friend Joseph K. Ruebush, examined and measured the Daniel Harrison House as well as the remains of the spring house. He kept a record of their findings in his 1953 "Everyday

Book". In May of that year he used his records to write an article for the Daily News Record, one of many history articles he wrote over the years.

"The upper portions of the stone spring house have been removed, but the ground portions, three or four feet high, are still in place. The main part of the spring house was about 8 feet wide and 9 feet long, extending eastward into the hillside, and at the east end, deep in the ground, was an extension of about 4 feet, solidly walled with stone on three sides, but open on the end towards the house on the hill. This was evidently to admit the underground passage, which opened inside the palisade around the house."

*Daily News-Record, May 5, 1953
Dr. John W. Wayland*

JMU will be digging test pits, using ground penetrating radar, and other methods when they begin their project this September. Mrs. Norma Koogler, owner of the acreage surrounding Fort Harrison, has been very supportive in granting permission for the project to be carried out on her property.

The Board of Fort Harrison Inc. is excited to welcome Dr. Blanton's students, as they assist us in learning more about Daniel Harrison, his family, and the history of the Dayton community during the French and Indian War era.

See page 5 for a story about Dr. Dennis Blanton



Photo courtesy Allen Litten

First Colonial Trades Fair Enjoys Enthusiastic Success

On June 18, 2016 Fort Harrison hosted our first Colonial Trades Fair. Talented craftsmen and women from around the Shenandoah Valley demonstrated their trades and educated our visitors.

When Daniel Harrison and his family settled in Rockingham (then Augusta) County in the 1740s, this area was known as the inner frontier in the colony of Virginia. The area was remote, and early settlers needed to know many skills in order to survive.

As time moved on, more people arriving into the community meant more skilled artisans who could provide products that the average person could not make himself. Our tradesmen represented a variety of skills that would be valued on the frontier.



Engraver Mark Thomas of Dayton enthralled young and old alike with flintlock gun demonstrations during Fort Harrison's first Colonial Trades Fair.

Trades and Craftspeople

Basket Maker	Clyde Jenkins, <i>Stanley</i>
Blacksmith	Glen Bryant, <i>Clifton Forge</i>
Broom Maker	Gary Robinson, <i>Warm Springs</i>
Cabinetmaker	Ray Pine, <i>Mt. Crawford</i>
Engraver	Mark Thomas, <i>Dayton</i>
Flintknapper	George Lott, <i>Bridgewater</i>
Hearth Cooking	Sallie Meffert, <i>Bridgewater</i>
Maple Sugar Workers	Tim & Terri Duff, <i>Monterey</i>
Pottery	Cathie Miranda, <i>Luray</i>
Rug Weaving	Harry Harmon, <i>Bridgewater</i>
Spinners	Krista Wardecker, <i>Broadway</i>
	Debbie Forrest, <i>Luray</i>
Weavers	Penny Hollabaugh, <i>Luray</i>
	Vicky Mongold, <i>Fulks Run</i>
Flintlock Rifle	Mark Thomas, <i>Dayton</i>
Musicians	Mel & Karen Lee, Cheryl Tobler



Photo courtesy Rosemarie Palmer

Penny Hollabaugh of Luray uses the Fort Harrison loom over the summer kitchen, while Ray Pine (right) of Mt. Crawford carefully handcarves a motif in walnut.



The Board of Directors of Fort Harrison, Inc. wishes to thank all our participants for donating their time and efforts in making our Trades Fair a success!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The second Colonial Trades Fair is scheduled for Saturday, June 24, 2017. We hope to have additional trades represented next year.!

A steady stream of visitors throughout the day was ideal for the trades people to both work and talk with those attending. The primary focus of the Trades Fair was to acquaint people with the old techniques; some artisans also offered their work for sale.



It's Time for Dinner!

Enjoy a delicious meal that Daniel Harrison would be proud of in his colonial home!

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18
6:30 pm

Cost \$30.00 per person

Chesapeake Bay Crab Soup
Cheddar Cheese Biscuit
Grilled Marinated Chicken Breast
Baked Potato
Butter or Sour Cream
Peas and Pearl Onions
Broccoli Salad
Pumpkin Pie

Hurry! Limited Space!

RESERVE YOUR PLACE

for dinner or tea by mailing back the order forms on the opposite page!

It's Tea Time, Too!

Join us and the ladies for a tasty brunch in the historic house!

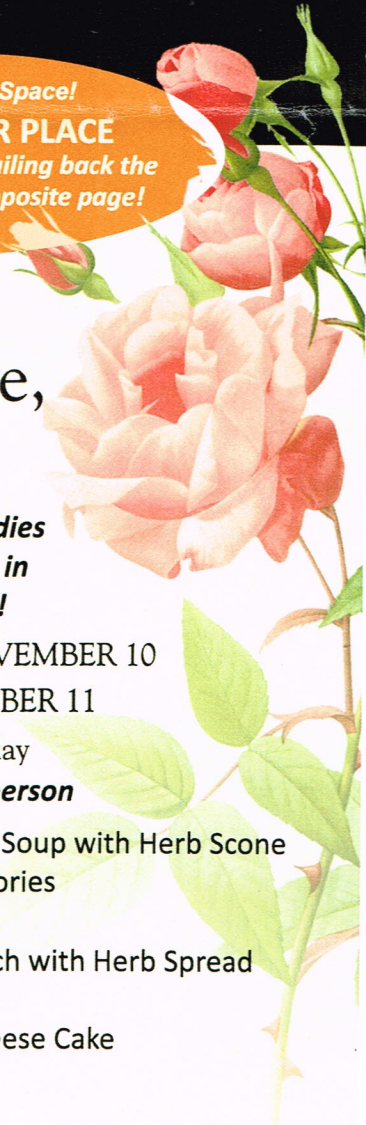
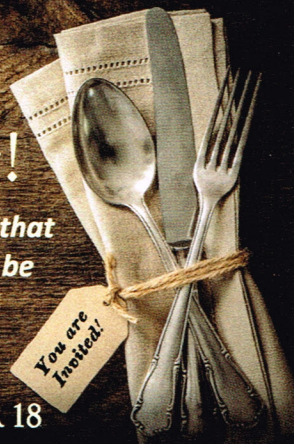
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11

1:00 pm each day

Cost \$17.00 per person

Tomato Florentine Soup with Herb Scone
Assortment of Savories
Ham Salad
Cucumber Sandwich with Herb Spread
Beef Tenderloin
Pumpkin Spice Cheese Cake



Dr. Dennis Blanton Leads the Archaeology Dig

Fort Harrison's Board of Directors is pleased to welcome Dr. Dennis Blanton who will be in charge of the archaeological dig this Fall. Although other JMU professors have been involved in excavations on our site in the past, Dr. Blanton and his crew of archaeology students will also be working in the field next to the house, as well as the pasture behind our fence where the old spring house was located. These areas, owned by our neighbor Mrs. Norma Koogler, have never been examined.

Dr. Blanton received his undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia, a M.A. Degree from Brown University, and his Ph. D. from the University of Virginia. His research areas include Early Colonialism and Cultural Encounters, Historical Climatology and Cultural Research Management and Public Archaeology.

Before joining the JMU faculty in August 2013, Dennis and his wife lived in Costa Rica where he worked with the National Museum of Costa Rica. He also worked as curator of archaeology at the Fernbank Museum of Natural History in Atlanta, and Director of the Center for Archaeological Research at The College of William and Mary.

Please stop by and welcome Dr. Blanton and his students while they are working on our site. Their discoveries will provide us with more information about Daniel Harrison and his family, and improve our knowledge and interpretation of Fort Harrison in the future.



Menno Simons Historical Library

"Serendipity" in Research

Fort Harrison members and friends often do research on various local history subjects and family genealogy. Sometimes these efforts yield rewards for Fort Harrison, such as finding the John Wayland newspaper article that has led to Dr. Blanton conducting archeology digs near the house.

Other serendipitous events may not be so monumental, but can yield nice "finds". One such find is the undated photograph above found by two researchers in a collection at the Menno Simons Historical Library (Eastern Mennonite University).

Fort Harrison Director Pat Early is currently leading a group of volunteers to go through Dr. Wayland's "Everyday Books" in the Bridgewater College archives.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS Fort Harrison, Inc.

President	Jody Meyerhoeffer
1st Vice President	Alex Banks
Treasurer	Chester Bradfield
Assistant Treasurer	Nancy Brubaker
Secretary	Sallie Meffert
Assistant Secretary	Mary Scott
Corresponding Secretary	Betty Campbell
Director	Pat Early

Additional Board Members

Kathryn Boase, Jackie Buchanan, Roger Davis, Paul Gorbea, Clive Hallman, Andrea Miracle, Clifford Rohrer, Jim Sanders, John Sipe, Eric Stephenson, Charles Warren, Carol Yetzer

Honorary Directors

Isabelle Bell, Martha Caldwell, Eleanor Canter, Anna Hildreth, Phillip Stone, Bonnie Lou Wampler, Agnes Weaver

“1749 SOCIETY” MEMBERS

Chester & Nancy Bradfield	Helen Craig Lynch
Dan & Nancy Brubaker	Joseph G. Myers*
John & Jackie Buchanan	Jane Ritchie
Betty Campbell	Joan Harvey Sipe*
Eleanor Canter	Ilene Smith
Jeff & Beverly Evans	William* & Bonnie Lou
Catherine Hildreth	Wampler
Clive Hallman, Jr.	Charles & Judy Warren
Phyllis Weaver Hearn*	

**deceased*

“1749” Pledged Members

Terri Denton

BACK WHEN

While browsing old files, Director Pat Early found this story by Joseph (Jody) Meyerhoeffer in a 1993 Fort Harrison newsletter. Now, more than 20 years later, Dr. Blanton's archeology dig may help to answer some of the questions and traditions surrounding Fort Harrison.

Loop Holes and Tunnels at Fort Harrison

By Jody Meyerhoeffer

Rockingham County is a treasure trove of historic homes and buildings, and of all of them, few surpass the intrigue that longtime residents and visitors feel for the Daniel Harrison house, better known as Fort Harrison. When Daniel Harrison arrived in the Dayton area, vast forests covered much of the land which was to become his home plantation. Harrison probably chose the site for his mansion house because of its proximity to both Cooks Creek and a strong spring just below his house. Tradition says that Dayton was one of several crossroads for Indians traveling from the Eastern to the Western part of Virginia.

The Harrison house was known as a refuge from marauding Indians; and according to numerous historians the house was a fort, possibly with a palisade surrounding it. In “A Centennial History of Allegheny Co. Va” by Morton, Margaret Dyer fled from the Fort Seybert area following the massacre of her husband William Dyer and most of the inhabitants of the fort. Mrs. Dyer came across the mountain to a fort on Beaver Creek near Ottobine and, according to Morton, later to a fort on the site of present day Dayton. Dr. John W. Wayland stated in several of his books that before the stone portion of the house was stuccoed in the late 1890s, loop holes could be seen on the gable ends of the house. When the east and west walls were rebuilt during the restoration, workmen uncovered two openings on the eastern wall of the second floor. The openings on each side of the chimney were about four feet from both the front and back corners of the house. The holes were filled with bits of stones mixed with mortar. The openings were too small for windows so it is certain that they were at least some of the loop holes that Wayland and others had spoken of.

It had also been a traditional belief that an underground tunnel led to the spring house just below the Harrison house. With the restoration of the original stone portion it was proven that the tunnel did not come into the actual house. There are several references to a tunnel which could have been used in case of Indian attacks. When Mrs. Harriet Burtner, widow of Solomon Burtner, died in 1915, the Daily News-Record mentioned that her home was a fortress during Indian times and that there was a tunnel to a nearby spring, which had become filled up. The late Mr. C. Grattan Price, Sr. related as a boy that he had seen the opening to a tunnel several feet from the southeast corner of the summer kitchen. Two of Mr. Burtner's granddaughters stated in the mid-1960s that they remembered an opening in the wall of a cellar or building and that they could go into it for a short distance. They said that this opening was closed for safety reasons by their aunt Stella Burtner.

It is hoped that more information can be obtained on both the fort and tunnel traditions and that another article can be submitted in the future.

FORT HARRISON "TO-DO" LIST

Mail the forms below with your check to Fort Harrison, Inc., P.O. Box 366, Dayton, VA 22821

You're Invited to Join or Renew Your Membership?

Fall promises to be a busy season at Fort Harrison. A Colonial dinner and two teas are scheduled, as well as a Christmas Open House for our members. The JMU archaeology project will begin in September and plans are underway for the second Colonial Trades Fair on June 24, 2017. Dayton's Autumn Celebration on October 1st brings our famous Brunswick Stew sale, as well as a pre-order stew sale with pick-ups on September 30th (before the crowds are here!).

Please consider joining Fort Harrison or renewing your membership! Member support is vital to our continued success in maintaining and preserving this wonderful old house, which is a State and National Historic Landmark. Thank you for your support!

The highest three categories may accumulate over several years. The names of all donors of \$500 or more are inscribed on a plaque displayed at Fort Harrison.

Join for the first time or renew your membership by completing the information below.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Corporate \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$1000 |

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____



Yes! I want to be a member of the 1749 Society!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

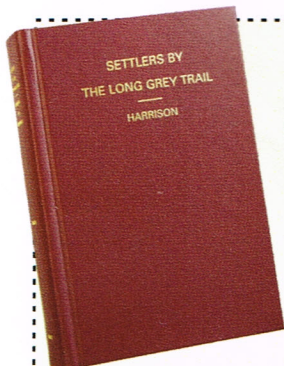
Phone _____ Email _____

Payment Schedule: \$1749 now

\$ _____ 1st year \$ _____ 2nd year \$ _____ 3rd year

\$ _____ 4th year \$ _____ 5th year

The Board of Directors invites you to join the 1749 Society of Fort Harrison, honoring those who have contributed \$1749 to the foundation. "1749" is the year Daniel Harrison built his home along Cook's Creek, and your donation goes to the endowment fund to help secure the future of the house. You may make a one-time payment or allocate the donation over a 5-year period.



Great Gift Idea!

Family members will enjoy "Settlers by the Long Grey Trail" by J. Houston Harrison. This book is an in-depth genealogy of Isaiah Harrison and his children, beginning in Long Island, New York and their migration to Delaware and on to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. His sons John, Daniel, Thomas, Jeremiah, Samuel and daughters Mary and Abigail moved to the Harrisonburg-Rockingham County area.

Price is \$50.00 per copy at Fort Harrison. Add \$6.50 for shipping the first copy and \$2.00 each for additional copies shipped at the same time to the same address.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

Number of Copies _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Extensive data on many local families connected with the Harrisons. 405 pages illus, index (1931) reprinted 2006

by Carol Yetzer

In colonial times, Mrs. Harrison would have planted her garden outside the back or side door, handy for open-hearth cooking. Seeds were often brought from the Old World, and friendly Indians might introduce native plants. The household would not function properly without this little garden. It was valuable for many uses: culinary, medicinal, fragrance, beauty and for dyeing linen and woven cloth.

We have planted perennials in our garden, but annuals such as Rosemary and Basil, were planted, hoping they would reseed.

Tansy repels ants, use for dye

Lavender insect repellent, dried blossoms for sachets and potpourri to freshen clothes, linens and rooms; calming nerves

Mint for tea, comfort nerves and stomach

Yarrow tea for sore throat and gargle; reduce fever and perspiration

The Kitchen Garden



Comfrey healing scrapes and bruises; soil enhancement (is toxic to the liver)

Chives flavor food, treat ailments, and thought to protect from evil spirits

Parsley dispel gamey taste of wild meats like venison; boiled roots remove "obstruction of the liver" and promote urine production; dye

Sage also enhance meats, spring tonic to clean the body; brew with honey into an ale for women in need during childbirth and delivery

Lemon Balm attract honey bees, add to bath water to calm, relax and give restful sleep

Savory season meat, beans, fish, vegetables; add to vinegar

Nothing was wasted colonial gardeners and many plants were dried for winter use.

Our garden is a work in progress and was originally established many years ago by the Spotswood Garden Club. We hope to add more varieties, such as flax, bedstraw, caraway, fennel, etc.



228214189861406643
F W D F

9314189861406643



10 SEP 2016 PM 2 L

RICHMOND, VA 230

Dayton, VA 22821
P.O. Box 366

www.fortharrisonva.org

Fort Harrison, Inc.

