

Fort Harrison

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

VOLUME 34 Spring 2019



4th Annual Colonial Trades Fair

COME TO THE FAIR!

Saturday, June 22!

Basketmaker

Clyde Jenkins,
Stanley

Blacksmith

Glen Bryant
Clifton Forge

Broom Maker

Gary Robinson
Warm Springs

Cabinetmaker

Ray Pine
Mount Crawford

Children's Toys

Susan Smith
Dayton

Colonial Medicine

Dan Michael
Bridgewater

Engraver

Mark Thomas
Dayton

Floorcloth Maker

Chris Washack
Leraysville, PA

Land Surveyors

Dave Ingraham
Mount Crawford
Eric Pyle
Harrisonburg

**Food available by
New Beginnings
Church Youth Group,
Tiffany Knupp**

Leatherworker

Andrew Kilcup
Bridgewater

Potter

Cathie Miranda
Luray

Smoked Food Preservation

Tim & Terry Duff
Fair Lawn Farm, Monterey

Tape Loom Maker & Weaver

Paul & Elissa Parish
Staunton

Watercolor Artist

Leah Kilcup
Bridgewater

Weaving & Spinning

Donna Robinson
Rockingham
Vicki Mongold
Fulks Run
Ann Follansbee
Edinburg
Waltraud Hornick
Front Royal

**Dancing & Music by
Shenandoah Colonial
Dancers, Tom & Lesley
Mack**

Leatherworking, watercolor painting, floor cloth making, flax spinning and tape loom weaving will be joining the outstanding list of trades at Fort Harrison's Fourth Annual Colonial Trades Fair on the grounds around the Daniel Harrison House.

Set for 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday, June 22, the Trades Fair will also feature the popular returning trades along with the newcomers.

**Come learn a few colonial
dance steps with the
Shenandoah Colonial
Dancers! Consult
Dr. Peachy
Harrison
about your
aches and pains!**





SCHOOL HONOR ROLLS

RUSHVILLE GRADED SCHOOL FOR JANUARY.

Primary Grades—Mary Rohrer, Fannie Suters, Mary Miller, Hazel Heatwole, Emma Smith, Mary Myers, Boyd Suters, Carlard Smith, Wade Shifflett, Joseph Suters, Frank Rohrer, Robert Shifflett and Warren Clayton.—Lena Smith, teacher.

Grammar Grades—Frank Beery, Walter Beery, Bryan Clayton, Calvin Heatwole, Emory Heatwole, Elmer Myers, John Rhodes, John Rohrer, Glenn Shank, Wade Shank, Daniel Showalter, Calvin Wilbarger, Bernard Young, Nellie Coffman, Fannie Myers, Ella Rohrer, Ethel Smith, Margie Wilbarger, and Delphia Young.

JOHN R. EYE, Principal.

ABOVE: Rushville School items. Lena Smith (front row, center) was Mary's teacher at the school. Mary is believed to be the last girl on the right of the front row (enlarged). Mary was an Honor Roll student, according to the Feb. 3, 1914 *Daily News-Record*.



LEFT: Rug that was handmade by Mary and loaned by the Rohrer family for the special May 17 exhibit.



Visitors enjoy chatting with author Catherine Campbell, sharing stories about the well-known lady.



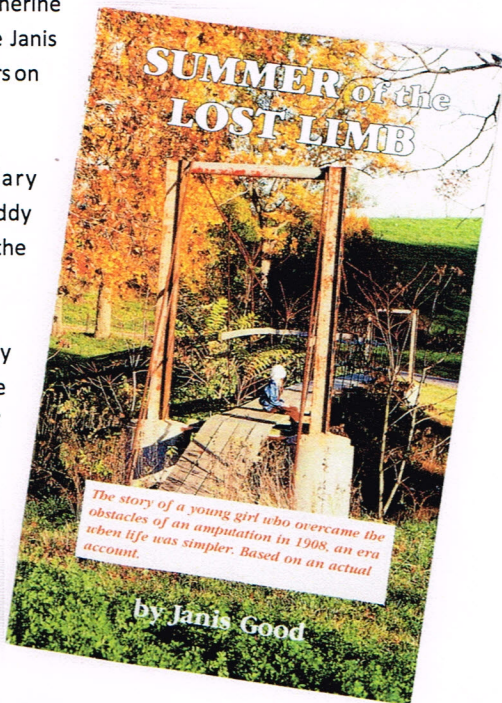
Lee Early talks about the kitchen table, on loan for the special exhibit, where little Mary's leg was amputated by three local doctors.



ABOVE: Author Catherine Campbell (pen name Janis Good) enjoyed visitors on May 17.

ABOVE RIGHT: Mary Rohrer's special Teddy Bear that is part of the permanent display.

BELOW: The lovely quilt, loaned for the special May 17 remembrance was hand-embroidered by Mary Rohrer.



Remembering

"Summer of the Lost Limb"

On May 17, members of the Dayton community gathered at Fort Harrison to commemorate the long and meaningful life of Mary Rohrer. From the time of the farm accident that caused the amputation of her leg in 1908, until her death in Dayton at the age of 93, Mary was a well known and much loved member of the Dayton Mennonite community.

After the sale of her estate in 1996, the executors decided that Mary's story should not be forgotten. Her first artificial limb, wheelchair and crutches as well as documents and her cherished teddy bear, were placed at the Daniel Harrison House, where Mary visited many times over the years.

Family members and friends of "Aunt Mary" have often stopped by to see her things and remember her.

Last year, we decided to update the exhibit by adding a few new items, such as a black gown and shawl and her sewing bag, complete with some sewing items. Some of the documents were also better preserved.

Earlier this year, our neighbor Mrs. Norma Koogler, asked if we could have a day to specially invite the community to see the exhibit. Norma was also concerned that young people did not know Mary's story and had not read "Summer of the Lost Limb" by Janis Good. The book is a wonderful children's book that tells the story of Mary's accident and amputation, but also how Mary's family and neighbors supported her and how she learned to walk again.

The result for the special day in May was a fresh exhibit which included new items belonging to Mary, such as her Sunday bonnet, one of her embroidered quilts, and a rug that she made. Other loaned items include a child's book about animals and the kitchen table on which the doctors performed the amputation of Mary's leg. Fort Harrison extends its thanks to Rohrer family members who loaned us their treasures.

A highlight of the day was having the author of "Summer of the Lost Limb", Catherine Campbell (aka Janis Good). Catherine shared stories about her visits with Mary and her sister Maggie while writing her book.

Fort Harrison's Board of Directors is honored to preserve Mary's legacy and to continue to tell the story of Mary's unusual and inspiring life.



ON APRIL 13

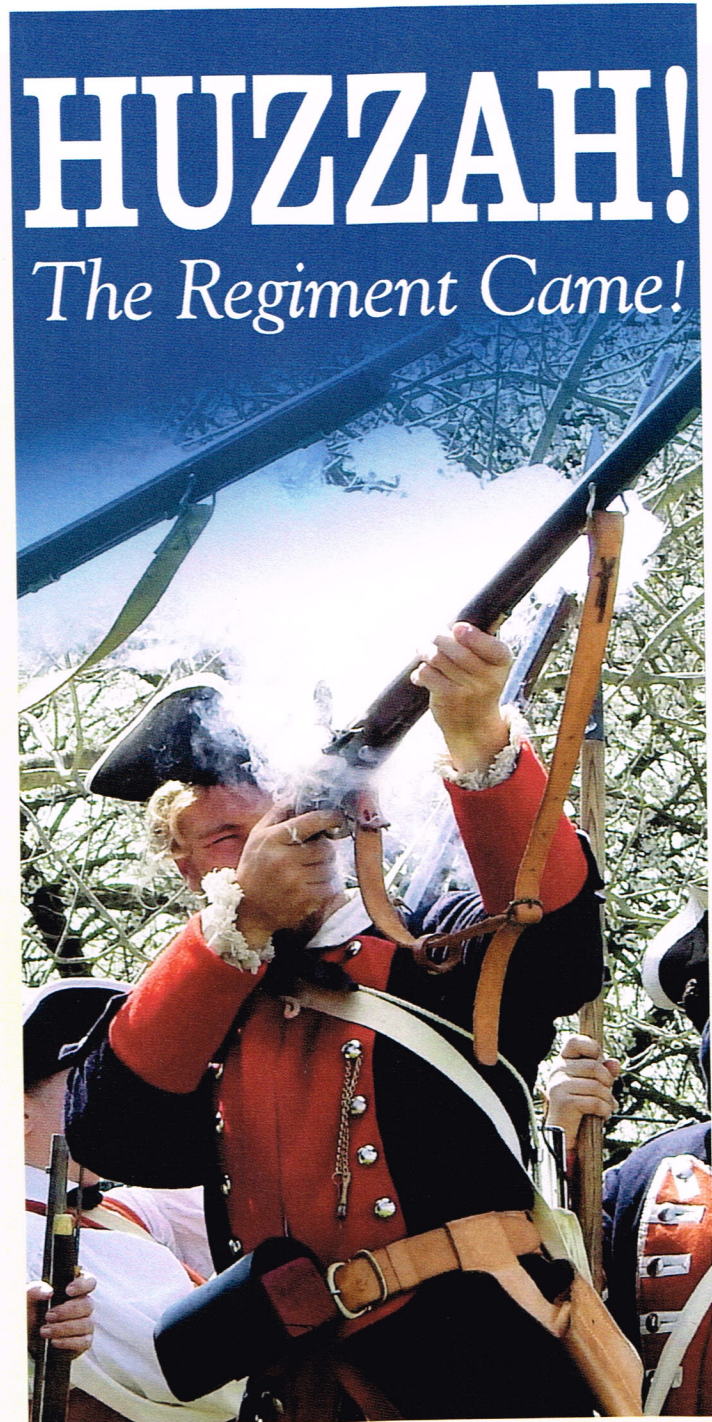
Fort Harrison was pleased to host a visit by the Virginia Regiment, George Mercer Company. This dedicated group of re-enactors conducted drills, fired several musket volleys and spoke with our visitors about the role of the Virginia Regiment during the French and Indian War. Mercer Company takes part in several re-enactments during the spring season, including the Battle of the Great Cacapon in West Virginia and Fort Loudoun Day in Winchester.

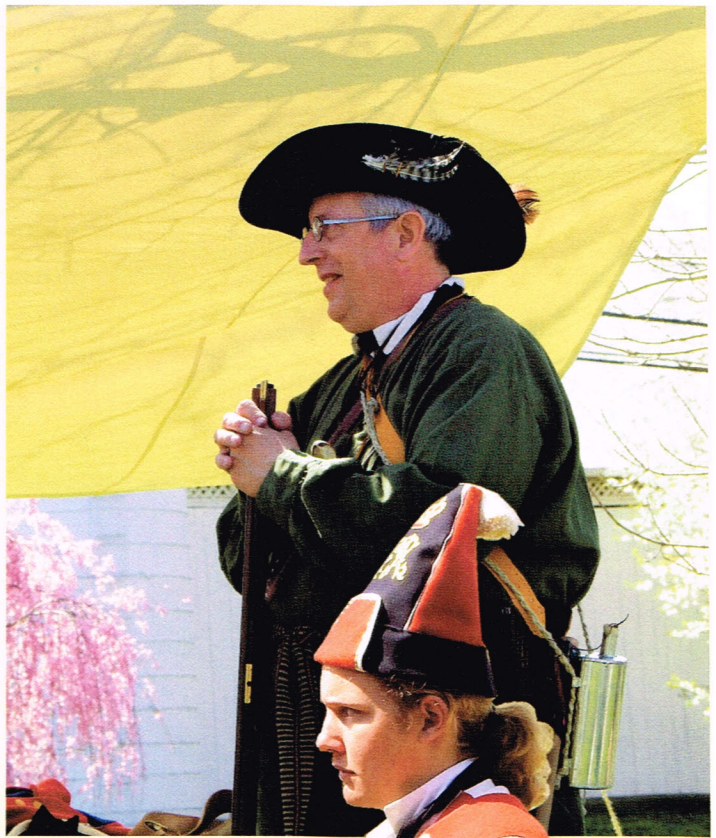


George Mercer, the original commander of the company, began his career as a land surveyor, but joined the Virginia Regiment at the onset of the French and Indian War. His connections with the Washington family probably influenced his choice, as he fought under the command of Lt. Colonel George Washington at the Battle of Fort Necessity.

In contrast to the uniformed and disciplined Virginia Regiment, there was also a Rockingham County group of long hunters at HUZZAH!. These 18th-century explorers, peculiar to southwest Virginia, were famous for embarking on a hunting trip as long as six months at a time. In groups of two or three men, they left home in October and returned in March. Hunting, trapping and other frontier skills were the expertise of the long hunter, the most famous being Daniel Boone.

Fort Harrison's Board of Directors extends their thanks to all participants who helped to make HUZZAH! an educational and fun day for our visitors.





ABOVE RIGHT AND BELOW: Long Hunters from Rockingham County joined in the day's activities, providing another perspective on life at the edge of the frontier during the French and Indian War.





“Going in circles” 1749 DATE CONFIRMED

February brought dendrochronologist William Callahan to Fort Harrison to acquire samples for dating the limestone section of the house. Fourteen samples were taken from attic beams and timbers under the house. Of those, 13 were able to be analyzed by Dr. Edward Cook, using microscopic analysis and computerized “master chronologies” for the region.

The project determined that the trees for the house were cut during the dormant period between 1748 and 1749, making it likely the house was built in 1749. Fort Harrison has long used the 1749 date based on Augusta County court records. The newer brick section of the house was not the focal point of the dendrochronology study, but it was concluded that the brick section was likely built between 1840 and 1845.

A brochure that details the tree ring dating project at Fort Harrison is now available. A 5-minute video showing the project’s steps is available on Fort Harrison’s Facebook page and on its website at www.fortharrisonva.org. An anonymous donor supplied the funding for the study.

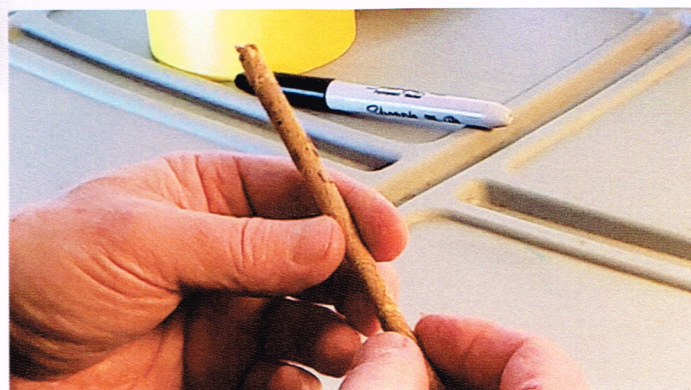
Trees can talk!
Tree-Ring Dating Confirms 1749

In February 2019, Fort Harrison underwent an extensive study to determine the actual year in which the oldest limestone portion of the house was constructed. It was also hoped that the study could successfully include the newer brick portion of the house, which was built later – after the house left Harrison family ownership.

Dendrochronologists William Callahan and Dr. Edward Cook performed tree ring analysis on selected structural timbers in the attic and underneath the house. Of the 14 field samples taken, 13 proved to be of sufficient quality for laboratory analysis. Nine of the core samples were oak and four were pine. A microscopic study of each sample measured the ring widths and a computer program was applied to compare the Fort Harrison samples with other tree ring analyses already in the database. Master chronologies, determined by analysis of living trees as well as historic structures in Virginia and surrounding Pennsylvania and Maryland, were used in the study.

Dendrochronologist Bill Callahan works at extracting a core sample from an attic timber at Fort Harrison.

Continued on page 2



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: 1 Bill Callahan and Pat Early check an attic beam that ultimately provided an excellent sample. **2** A small group checks the attic floor joists for possible sampling sites. **3** Looking like a cinnamon stick, Bill Callahan holds a sample he just drilled from a timber. **4** Bill uses a high-tech drill bit to core a sample in Fort Harrison’s attic. **5** Front page of Fort Harrison’s new brochure detailing the dendrochronology study.



Help Wanted!

Board Member Sallie Meffert would like to teach colonial cooking to a volunteer, with the goal of sharing the role for events at Fort Harrison. School groups and special events like the Colonial Trades Fair enjoy the authenticity of cooking at Fort Harrison's summer kitchen. If you are interested in learning, it's a great opportunity! If you would like to see the types of things that Sallie does, we can share some video clips of Sallie at work! Email Pat Early at "fortharrisonva@gmail.com".

Summer Docents needed, too!

The Daniel Harrison House is open Friday and Saturday afternoons from 1 pm to 4 pm from May through October. As a Docent, you would escort people through the home, sharing about the Harrison family, the home, and the Dayton community. We have the materials on hand that make it easy to learn what you need to know.

You can choose the dates you wish to serve, selecting them well in advance. We suggest serving a minimum of three afternoons during the 6-month period.

If you are interested in Colonial history, Virginia history or Rockingham County history, this is a perfect opportunity to learn as well as put your knowledge to work! Email Pat Early at "fortharrisonva@gmail.com".

Coming "On Board"

(at Fort Harrison, that is!)

Fort Harrison, Inc. is pleased to welcome four new members onto the Board of Directors:

Martha Graham
Dan Michael
Frank Miller
Phil Stone, Jr.

Fort Harrison, Inc. Board of Directors

President	Alex Banks
Vice President	Jody Meyerhoeffer
Secretary	Kathryn Sipe Boase
Asst. Secretary	Mary Scott
Corresponding Sec.	Betty Campbell
Treasurer	Martha McCoy
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Nancy Brubaker	Cliff Rohrer
Jackie Buchanan	Jim Sanders
Martha Graham	John Sipe
Clive Hallman	Eric Stephenson
Sallie Meffert	Phil Stone Jr.
Daniel Michael	Charles Warren
Frank Miller	Carol Yetzer
Andrea Miracle	

Pat Early, Director





Fort Harrison, Inc.

www.fortharrisonva.org

P.O. Box 366
Dayton, VA 22821



Who is he?

We would love to know who the man is tearing out the stone wall to the left of the chimney on the second floor. Any ideas? The photo would have been taken about 1980. Email Pat Early at "fortharrisonva@gmail.com".

Fort Harrison had some pleasant surprises during an otherwise sad event: the closing of the BB&T Bank branch in Dayton. We have long had a safety deposit box at the bank where we kept important photographs, documents and other items that would fit in there. With the branch closing, we needed to move the contents to a new box at Bridgewater.

As with most people and places, our priorities change and our memories cloud. We had forgotten the details of a few of these cataloged photos. There were also negatives with no apparent matching prints.

After sorting out those details, the Dayton branch called us about a *second* deposit box from many years ago that we did not know about! The contents were largely duplicates of the first box, but did contain photos with different perspectives or with people we don't recognize. As space permits, we will share some of these – sometimes just for fun, or sometimes when we need help (like the photo above).



This photograph taken during the renovation of the Daniel Harrison House was one of many found in a safety deposit box.