

# Fort Harrison

335 Main Street, Dayton, Virginia ■ [www.fortharrisonva.org](http://www.fortharrisonva.org)

VOLUME 32 Spring/Summer 2017

## Colonial Trades Fair!

*Come enjoy this extraordinary event Saturday, June 24 10 am to 4 pm*

The second annual Colonial Trades Fair at Fort Harrison promises to please visitors again with most crafters returning from last year, and new skills represented. Food and beverages will also be available this year. Authentic live demonstrations and sales characterize the day-long event.

<b>Basket Maker</b>	Clyde Jenkins, Stanley
<b>Blacksmith</b>	Glen Bryant, Clifton Forge
<b>Broom Maker</b>	Gary Robinson, Warm Springs
<b>Cabinetmaker</b>	Ray Pine, Mt. Crawford
<b>Engraver</b>	Mark Thomas, Dayton
<b>Flintknapper</b>	George Lott, Bridgewater
<b>Hearth Cooking</b>	Sallie Meffert, Bridgewater
<b>Land Surveyors</b>	David Ingram, Mount Crawford Eric Pyle, Harrisonburg
<b>Potter</b>	Cathie Miranda, Luray
<b>Rug Weaving</b>	Harry Lee Harmon, Bridgewater
<b>Smoked Foods</b>	Tim & Terry Duff, Fair Lawn Farm, Monterey
<b>Spinners, Weavers</b>	Debbie Forrest, Luray Penny Hollabaugh, Luray Vicki Mongold, Fulks Run Krista Wardecker, Broadway

### **ALSO!**

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

**Flintlock Demonstrations** by Mark Thomas, Dayton

**Food** provided by the Beery Family, Rushville





# FRIENDS, FINE FARE

*Christmas Open House once again a success!*

In December, the Board of Directors was excited to host a Christmas Open House for our members as well as many of Fort Harrison's new friends and supporters. Thanks to all the excellent cooks who provided refreshments. Special thanks to Andrea Miracle and her helpers who decorated the house and to Cliff Rohrer who provided his delicious Old-Fashioned Kettle Korn Company kettle corn for everyone to take home. Participants also had a chance to choose and donate a star on Mary Harrison's quilt, currently undergoing conservation.

*Everyone enjoyed the Raspberry Shrub! Here's the simple receipt:*

## RASPBERRY SHRUB

1 quart Raspberry Sherbet  
(scoop small balls and freeze ahead)

Mix 3 cups Cranberry Juice and 3/4 cup Apple Juice. Combine the two juices and chill.

Serve with a scoop of sherbet.

**Serves 8**



(ABOVE) Jackie Buchanan and Chester Bradfield



(RIGHT) Andrea Miracle greets guests at the lovely refreshment table





Fort Harrison President Jody Meyerhoeffer chats with Bill Meyerhoeffer



Mark Thomas "sits by the fire" and shares ideas for the upcoming 2017 Colonial Trades Fair



Barbara Paul, Seymour Paul, Chester Bradfield and Sallie Meffert enjoy catching up

# BLOCKHOUSES, FORTS, PALISADES, *More*

Here at the Daniel Harrison House, our current JMU archaeology project under the leadership of Dr. Dennis Blanton has encouraged us to look deeper into other possible historic sites in the area where palisades, tunnels, or even a blockhouse were used as fortifications in case of attack during the French and Indian War. The following is a list of some locations in our area:

## Turleytown Blockhouse near Brock's Gap

In 1903, John Flory (later a President of Bridgewater College) wrote an article for a UVA literary magazine entitled "A Visit to the Turleytown Blockhouse". It provides an excellent description of the remains of the building as it looked in the early 20th Century.

*"The grotesque and outlandish appearance of the old fort...The house proper, some twenty feet square and a dozen high, capped by a towering black roof that projects half a dozen feet on each side of the building...The windows, four or five feet wide and probably ten inches high, are not supplied with glass lights...but with strong upright oaken bars, securely mortised into frames likewise of oak. These windows served the double purpose of providing light and ventilation, and also loops from which the besieged took aim at their wily foes."*

Mr. Flory goes on to describe the only opening into the structure, a very small and narrow door: "It is of solid oak, and the three thicknesses of lumber employed in its construction are so arranged that the grain...extends in as many different directions. The three large hinges, extending the entire width of the door..."

*Source: "A Visit to the Turleytown Blockhouse" by John Flory, UVA Magazine, Vol.46, No.4, Feb 1903, pp.232-236.*

*Source: Painting by Martha Henderson, donation by Mike Rhodes to Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, photography by Allen Litten.*

## Ottobine Blockhouse

An early blockhouse was located near Ottobine on what is now Waggys Creek Road. Waggys Creek was originally known as Howes Branch in the 18th Century. The blockhouse was located along the creek on the south side near the intersection of Waggys Creek Road and Fulton School Road. This structure was located near an early 19th-century cemetery that is surrounded by an iron fence which still exists. The late Hugh Smiley, Jr. stated that water was piped to the blockhouse from the nearby spring through wooden pipes.

## Rawley Pike Blockhouse

Another blockhouse was located at the intersection of the Rawley Pike and Peake Mountain Road. According to Hugh Smiley, it was located on the left side of Peake Mountain Road immediately after turning off the Rawley Pike Road. The site was mined for shale in the mid 20th Century so there is no way to find the exact location.

## Sangerville Blockhouse

An early blockhouse was located between the Briery Branch Bridge and Sangerville, just off Community Center Road. After passing Cooktown Road, traveling south, is a state road to the right, immediately after turning this road forks. The blockhouse was located in this fork.

*Source: The Ottobine, Rawley Pike and Sangerville blockhouses information was obtained by interview of Mr. Hugh Smiley, Jr., conducted by Greg Adamson and Jody Meyerhoeffer.*

## Madison Hall: possible "fort" at Port Republic

In the summer of 1755, John Madison of Madison Hall in Port Republic, wrote a letter to his first cousin, James Madison, Sr. of Montpelier (father of the future President). The date is August 19, 1755 – just weeks after General Braddock's defeat by the French and Indians at the Monongahela River near present-day Pittsburgh. The contents of the letter not only mention

that John Madison is building a fortification of some sort for defense, but also addresses the conditions of the settlers on the frontier during this dangerous time. John Madison states:

*"Four families, on their flight from a branch of New River, this minute passed by my house, who say that five men were murdered at the house of Ephraim Voss on Roanoke since the death of Col. Patton. 'Tis shocking to think of the calamity of the poor wretches who lived on the Holston and New rivers, who for upwards of a hundred miles have left their habitations, lost their crops and vast numbers of their stock. Could you see, dear friend, the women who escaped crying after their murdered husbands, with their helpless children hanging on them, it could but wound your very soul."*

*"As the Governor has been pleased to appoint Captain Andrew Lewis the Lieutenant of this county, I expect I shall see his instructions at court. Perhaps he may fall upon some measures to put a stop to the inroads of those barbarians, without giving the people below the trouble of marching over; of which I will write to you by Mr. Semple."*

*"I am extremely obliged to all my good friends for the guns sent. Pray tell them they shall be carefully returned, as soon as I can be otherwise provided. I am also much obliged to you for your kind invitation, and*



Turleytown Blockhouse, watercolor by Martha Henderson

*much to my good aunt for the concern she expressed to Mr. Johnston for our welfare. But when I consider what a train I have, I cannot think of being so troublesome. Besides, should I lose my all with my life, I think my children had as well go hence, whilst in a state of innocency.*

*"I am with the greatest esteem,  
"Your affectionate kinsman,  
"Jno. Madison"*

**Postscript:** "I verily believe they are determined on our destruction. However, as they come in small parties, if they will be so kind as to stay till I have finished my fort, may Heaven send me a few of them. Perhaps I may defray all expenses. Farewell."

*Source: John Madison to James Madison, Sr., August 19, 1755.*

## Fort Hog

Located near the North Fork of the Shenandoah River and about three miles inside Brocks Gap, Fort Hog was just 15 miles from Fort Seybert and 20 miles from the fort at Upper Tract. Commander Peter Hog was assigned this post by Colonel Washington in 1757. Although there is no evidence of an attack on Fort Hog, there were attacks on settlers in the area. At least four people are known to have been killed in late 1757 and early 1758. In Spring 1758, Peter Hog sent some of the men under his command to assist at Fort Upper Tract. If they were present on April 27, 1758 when Chief Killbuck attacked, they were also killed, as there were no known survivors.

*Source: "The Valley During the French and Indian War" by Pat Turner Ritchie, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Fall 2007.*

## Fort Upper Tract

Fort Upper Tract was designed under the direction of Colonel George Washington working under the authority of Governor Dinwiddie. It

was built in the fall of 1755, soon after Braddock's defeat, and manned by Lieutenant Lomax and twenty of his men, making Upper Tract a military fort, unlike other fortifications in this article. The exact location of Upper Tract fort is unknown.

In August of 1756, Washington mentions the fort in a letter to Governor Dinwiddie. He writes, "...we have built some and altered some other Forts, as far south on the potomack waters, as any Settlers have been molested; and there only remains one body of Inhabitants, at a place called the Upper Tract; which needs a guard

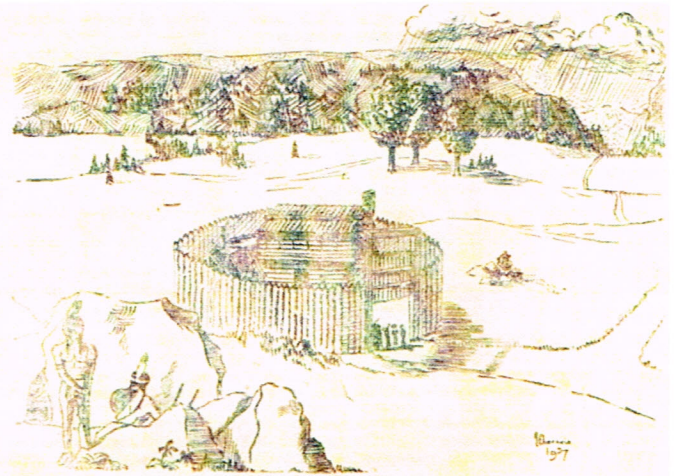
*Source: G. Washington to Robert Dinwiddie, August 14, 1756*

In another letter to Dinwiddie, Washington believes that by April 1757, Fort Upper Tract is no longer in use. He writes, "I also beg leave to observe here; that the Fort at the Upper Tract, notwithstanding it is more in the Indian pass of the mountains, is too high up; since numbers of inhabitants from those parts, if I am rightly informed, are lately moved down about Harness's, and a place called Butter-milk Fort; which renders it necessary to place the troops, or at least a principal part of them, there also; to protect the inhabitants in sowing and gathering their Crops, etc."

*Source: George Washington to Robert Dinwiddie, April 29, 1757.*

According to Washington's instructions regarding fort construction, the fort was most likely built of wood, walls sixty feet in length, and bastions in all four corners.

On April 27, 1758 Chief Killbuck and his warriors attacked the fort, killing all the militia sent for reinforcements as well as some civilians. There were no survivors.



FORT SEYBERT

## Fort Seybert

Located in eastern West Virginia's Pendleton County (Augusta County, Virginia at the time of the French and Indian War), Fort Seybert was the scene of an Indian raid and massacre on April 28, 1758. Chief Killbuck led a group of Shawnee and Delaware Indians in the attack.

Located on a bluff on the South Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac River, Fort Seybert was a substantial structure, containing a blockhouse surrounded by a palisade. Alonzo Lough's later description mentions the fort layout: "defense consisted of a circular stockade some thirty yards in diameter, consisting of logs or puncheons set on end in the ground, side by side, and rising to a height often of twelve feet. A puncheon door closed the entrance. Within the stockade stood the two storied block-house twenty-one feet square. From the upper loop-holes the open space about the fort could be swept by the rifles of the defenders." Alonzo Lough was a resident of Fort Seybert, West Virginia in the early 1900s.

*Source: New Interpretations of Fort Seybert, Lee Keister Talbot, Grant County Press, May 13, 1937.*

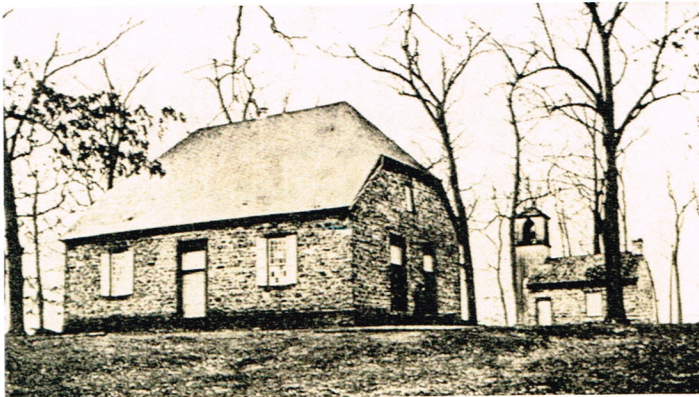
While most of the settlers sheltering at Fort Seybert were killed, others were taken hostage and a few escaped. A small group of women and children is said to have escaped and made their way to a fort on Beaver Creek (near Ottobine) and then later on to another fort near Dayton. This may have been the fortified stone house of Daniel Harrison.

## Augusta Stone Church

Situated on the Valley Pike, eight miles north of Staunton, Augusta Stone Church was built in the early 1740s. According to the National Register of Historic Places, it is the oldest surviving church in the Shenandoah Valley. The first building was a log structure, soon followed by construction of the stone building, which was supervised by Rev. John Craig. The building is also one of the few remaining churches from the colonial period that retains a clipped gable roof. Another example of such a structure is the Westover Church near the James River plantations of Westover and Berkeley. The original size of



son. Photographed by Allen Litten.



**Augusta Stone Church, ca 1900**

the limestone meeting house was 57 feet by 39 feet and three of the original walls, 20 inches thick, still remain.

Reverend Craig mentions in his narrative the building of fortifications at the Stone Church:

*“Some of the richer sort that could take some money with them to live upon were flying to a safer part of the country. My advice was then called for, which I gave, opposing that scheme as a scandal to our nation, falling below our brave ancestors, making ourselves a reproach among Virginians, a dishonor to our friends at home, an evidence of cowardice...”* He went on to encourage the building of forts and fortified places, one being the Stone Church. He says: *“They required me to go before them in the work, which I did cheerfully...The people readily followed, and my congregation in less than two months was well fortified.”*

Source: Foote's Sketches, page 32.

According to historian J. L. Peyton, the church was surrounded by an earthen embankment, to provide greater protection from raiders. Although the church is located very close to the community of Fort Defiance, there is no evidence that an actual fort was ever built there.

Source of Sketch: Augusta Stone Church, Waterman, Watkins and Co., 1885.



**The lower building is the house of John Lewis, Augusta pioneer, as it appeared in 1915.**

## Fort Lewis

John Lewis, one of the foremost explorers and settlers of Augusta County, established his settlement near Staunton around 1738. Peyton's History of Augusta County, written in 1882, mentions its location as: "a few miles below the site of the town of Staunton, on the banks of the stream which still bears his name." Lewis called the place

"Bellefonte" which means fine or good spring. Peyton also describes the house as located on the estate owned in 1882 by D. C. McGuffin, Mrs. J. A. Harman and Capt. John N. Opie. Indeed, Waterman, Watkins and Company's map of the Beverly Manor magisterial district in 1885 shows these three farms located about a mile east of Staunton and Lewis Creek flows nearby.

Source: History of Augusta County, Virginia, Peyton, page 30

Peyton also mentions the following details about the building: *“Here, amidst the deep shadows of the wilderness, he built a stone dwelling, which, with its flanks, formed one side of Fort Lewis, and in this half dwelling, half fortress, he maintained a long struggle with the savages, and under its stout walls the infant colony grew in time strong enough to defy every foe. A portion of this old fort still remains in 1882...”*

Source: History of Augusta County, Virginia, Peyton, page 31.

Source: Photograph of Fort Lewis known as Bellefonte, ca. 1740.

***“While Braddock's defeat occurred in the region to the north of the Potomac, its consequences were immediately felt by the Valley settlers to the south, they being the nearest of the Virginia's Colonists to the territory claimed by the French. News of the disaster spread like wildfire, and widespread consternation, anxiety, and alarm, was universal. The Rev. John Craig at this time did valiant service in rallying the spirits of the Augusta inhabitants. He states that they were in dreadful confusion, and discouraged to the highest degree. Some of the richer sort were for flying to safer parts of the country, but he advised eloquently against this, and urged the building of forts, one of which was to be his church.***

**– “Settlers by the Long Grey Trail,” Harrison, page 203**

The evidence is clear that the settlers here in Rockingham (then Augusta) County were concerned about the possibility of raiding Indians (and French) in the early years of the war. The more prominent families (who had more labor and money available) took defensive measures where they could to provide for the safety of their communities. The Daniel Harrison family was one such family, and their substantially built stone house on Cook's Creek may have offered shelter to its neighbors during those dangerous times.

Please note: all sources are written in exact wording, spelling, etc. from the original text.

Fort Harrison would like to hear from anyone who has additional information on these fortifications (or others) in our local area. Please contact Pat Early at 540-234-0131 or email [fortharrisonva@gmail.com](mailto:fortharrisonva@gmail.com)

# Update ARCHAEOLOGY at FORT HARRISON

JMU students from Dr. Blanton's archaeology class were with us again this spring to do some shovel tests. This time they were searching in Mrs. Koogler's front and side yard and in the pasture in front of the house. Time was limited and results were not as exciting as their last visit, but as usual we enjoyed their time at Fort Harrison. Dr. Blanton plans to return in the Fall, when more extensive excavations will continue in the pasture and further down the hill towards town.



Photos by Richard Martin

From Dr. Dennis Blanton:

JMU students exploring the Koogler pasture were thrilled to find a prehistoric "arrowhead" in one of the shovel tests. In fact, the young lady who recognized it declared, "This is the most excited I've been in weeks!" And that says something coming from a college student.

Truth be told, the artifact might or might not be a true arrowhead. Although the shape of it defies easy classification, it is of a kind that is no less than about 1500 years old. This was a period when bow and arrow technology was just beginning to supplant spear-throwing, leaving the question of exactly what the point was attached to a bit uncertain. Regardless, it is further testament to the attraction the knoll had for humans in the valley.

The artifact is made from a gray-colored quartzite, that is best known from natural outcrops on the Blue Ridge. And this aspect of the find is a clear measure of the extent to which Native Americans were traversing the area.

If nothing else, this and other discoveries of ancient stone tools demonstrates that the story of Fort Harrison is especially rich, capturing as it does the full span of the human experience in this area.

## Welcome to our new treasurer!

Martha McCoy has joined the Fort Harrison Board of Directors as Treasurer, as longtime treasurer Chester Bradfield steps back to Assistant Treasurer. Martha, an Enrolled Agent (EA), is a supervisor at PB Mares in Harrisonburg.



## What is it?

Dr. Blanton and his students uncovered a fascinating feature during their spring digs at Fort Harrison. Can you guess what's in this photograph?

What the photo shows is the cross section "profile" of the excavation out in the pasture where we identified it. If you look carefully at the wall of the excavation you can discern two key strata: at the bottom the soil is orange/red colored and that's from intense heating; and just above that layer is a band of gray ash. Both of those layers are the signature of a hearth, or something very much like one. And the evidence conforms especially closely to the kind of hearth evidence one would see in something like a slave building.



## MEMBERS

Alex & Pat Banks	Phyllis Weaver Hearn*
Chester & Nancy Bradfield	Catherine Hildreth
Dan & Nancy Brubaker	Helen Craig Lynch
John & Jackie Buchanan	Joseph G. Myers*
Betty Campbell	Betty B. Rice
Eleanor Canter	Jane W. Ritchie
Earl & Janet Downs	Joan Harvey Sipe*
Jeff & Beverley Evans	Ilene Smith
Diane Guzzi	William* & Bonnie Lou Wampler
Clive Hallman, Jr.	Charles & Judy Warren

\*deceased

### "1749" Pledged Members

Terri Denton  
Bill & Andrea Miracle

The Board of Directors established the Society to honor those who have contributed \$1,749 to Fort Harrison. "1749" is the year Daniel Harrison built his home on Cook's Creek. You may become a member by making a lump sum payment or in smaller amounts over a 5-year period. Donations go into an endowment fund that secures the future of the house.



Fort Harrison, Inc.

www.fortharrisonva.org

P.O. Box 366  
Dayton, VA 22821



Extraordinary engraving detail, much of it requiring magnification to be seen

## New promotional materials

Fort Harrison is entering the 2017 visitor season with fresh promotional materials. A new full-color rack card leads the series, complemented by a new visitor brochure that highlights the key points about the home and the Harrison family.

Recognizing that historical sites are not visited as heavily as they were a decade ago, Fort Harrison has partnered with Silver Lake Mill and The Heritage Museum to create a rack card for "Dayton's Historic Triangle" – three sites all within a stone's throw.

(LEFT to RIGHT) New Fort Harrison rack card, visitor brochure and Historic Triangle rack card

## A Surprise Donation with extraordinary detail!

In May we received a surprise gift from Mrs. Margaret Harrison Sheehy, of Ross, California. As a descendant of Dr. Peachy Harrison, Mrs. Sheehy has presented us with various Harrison items over the years. This time her surprise was a knife and fork set which she believes belonged to Dr. Harrison.

She also included a small silver ladle made by George Conrad, a silversmith working in Harrisonburg in the early 19th Century.

The tiniest donation was a gold ring belonging to Margaret Harrison Stephens, one of the Harrison daughters.

These items will be featured in a new exhibit which will focus on Dr. Peachy Harrison and his wife, Mary Harrison. Mrs. Harrison is the creator of the beautiful quilt currently undergoing preservation.

The Board of Directors would like to thank Mrs. Sheehy for her generous donation.

