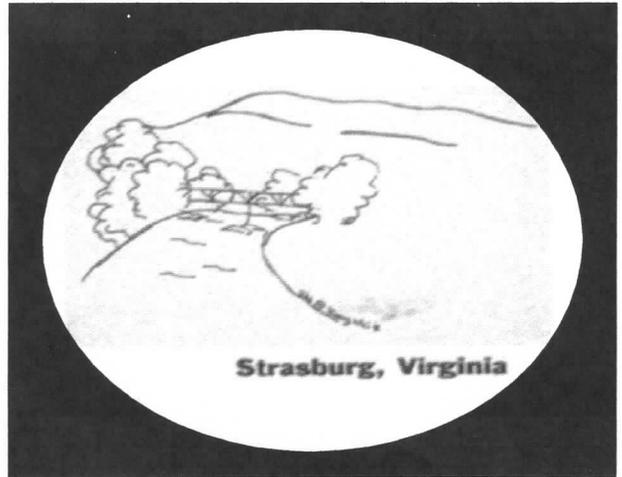


# STRASBURG HERITAGE ASSOCIATION



VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

SPRING 2007

STRASBURG, VIRGINIA

## *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

BY

*MICHAEL WHITTLE*

The Strasburg Heritage Associate is proud to be a member of the local community and support programs that preserve our rich heritage.

During April our members picked up trash along the Valley Pike from the Old Mill to Fisher's Hill. The Board of Directors voted at the April meeting to support keeping the Shenandoah County Courts in downtown Woodstock. We sent a letter to each member of the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors that read:

***"The Strasburg Heritage Association Board of Directors made a motion on Wednesday, April 18, 2007 in support of keeping the courts in downtown Woodstock.***

***As the oldest continuously used courthouse west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Shenandoah County Courthouse is a valuable historical resource, not just for Shenandoah County, but the entire Shenandoah Valley. In keeping with the mission of the Strasburg Heritage Association and its commitment to historic preservation, the Strasburg Heritage Association urges the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors to carefully consider the proposal put forth by the Citizens for Downtown Courts Committee to rehabilitate and expand the old courthouse for continued use as a court."***

We hope you saw our table at Mayfest in front of Bygones and enjoyed all of the wonderful events during the Mayfest celebration. Mark your calendar for June 10 at 4:00pm we will have the summer membership meeting at the Keller-Hottel homestead.

We thank you for your support and look forward to seeing you at our next membership meeting.

## **Summer Meeting to Highlight Hottel-Keller Homestead and Family.**

We hope you can join us on Sunday, June 10 at 4 p.m. when we will visit the Hottel-Keller Homestead, the George Hottel Homestead and the Shenandoah Germanic Heritage Museum at Mt. Olive. This wonderful piece of Shenandoah County history is located on 392 acres purchased in 1750 via a land grant from Lord Fairfax and is owned by the Hottel-Keller Memorial, Inc. (HKMI). HKMI was formed in 1921 to commemorate the history of the Hottels and Kellers in America. The group's membership and energy declined by the 1950s, but has become revitalized over the last 25 years. This year HKMI is celebrating the 275th anniversary of the arrival of John Hottel and George Keller to our shores. As we all know, there are still many Hottels and Kellers in Shenandoah County! Sarah Mauck tells us more about the Hottels and Kellers elsewhere in this issue.

Gae G. Ward, a director of HKMI, will give us a tour of the Homestead and Museum and will focus on museum artifacts, Germanic architecture and its changes, and social history and its impact on the Germanic peoples. Gae is a historian by profession, an author and a musician.

Join us to enjoy history, refreshments and fellowship at this beautiful site. The public is welcome.

Directions: The museum is located on Back Rd. about .7 miles south of its intersection with Mt. Olive Rd. It is the second stone entrance way on the west side of the road.

## **Strasburg Family History Share Fair**

**Save The Date**

One of SHA's goals is to record and preserve our local history. Our Oral History project has been a result of this goal. For several years we've talked about encouraging families in Strasburg and Davis District to share their family histories, family tree, family Bibles and photos to create an archive for future generations. Mark your calendar now for Sunday, September 16 when we will co-sponsor, along with the Strasburg Community Library, a Strasburg Family History Share Fair at 3 p.m. at the St. Paul Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall.

We're asking families to bring and share genealogical information from family Bibles, other family papers (deeds, etc.) and old photographs. When possible we will scan the information brought in to create a permanent archive of local family histories. We hope this collection of information will add to our Oral History Project interviews. Old photographs would be especially helpful with the project, now available to the public at the Strasburg Community Library.

We've all seen old family papers, Bibles and photographs from time to time at auctions, being sold to strangers, and have wondered about the history lost. We hope that this Share Fair will give the community an opportunity to ensure that our own local history and way of life is remembered and appreciated. Please ask family and friends about documents they may be willing to share. Perhaps you could create your own family tree and photo display to bring to the Share Fair.

We'll have more details in our late summer newsletter.

# The Centenarian

by Kathy Kehoe

Only seven years before Marie Smith Williams' birth, Strasburg celebrated New Year's Eve 1899 and welcomed in the Twentieth Century. The 21st Century was only seven years old when she turned 100 on Feb. 20th, 2007. Turning 100 years old is cause enough for celebration but Marie Williams' life was so intertwined with the Town of Strasburg that she is well known by several generations of citizens. Marie is a lifelong resident of the town, married Sandy Williams, the boy next door, and raised seven children in our little town. Of those children, five continued to live in the area and many of her 19 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, and 10 great-great grandchildren still live in the area. Marie is also well known as a Strasburg Town Council member of many years, as an active member of St. Paul Lutheran Church and the Ladies Auxiliary of the Strasburg Fire Department. She was sponsor and chaperone of the popular and well attended Strasburg teen dances for nearly two decades, and she managed the Strasburg Pool. She was chair of the Town Council Recreation Committee, volunteered at Shenandoah Memorial Hospital and was involved in many other civic activities.

The day of her open house birthday celebration at the St. Paul Lutheran Church on Feb. 19th, her daughter Martha Brill was praying for the snow to stop. And it did. Over 200 people signed the guest book that day. All but one of her grandchildren

attended the birthday party. There were two birthday cakes, one for Mrs. Williams and one for her good friend of many years, Rosalee Cash, who had turned 101 in December. The two women spent many hours cooking together for Lutheran Church activities and preparing the communion. They also went together to the church camp, Massanutta Springs, and cooked for the youth campers. The two women were close friends and often made quilts together. Every other week, Mrs. Cash still goes to visit Mrs. Williams. Rich Geish, Marie's grandson-in-law, played the piano for a sing along that included "You Are My Sunshine" and her husband's favorite hymn, "Amazing Grace." As a young wife, Marie and Sandy often enjoyed singing around the piano at her in-laws house on "B" Street (now Branch) in the home of Arch and Lucy Belle Williams and they continued those traditions in their own home.

The town charter for the Strasburg Teen Club hung in Marie Williams house for many years. It was dated 1957 and the Teenage Officers were listed as: Suzanne Kibler, Co-Chairman, Allen Manuel, Co-Chairman, Alfred Racey, Treasurer, Andrea Crabill, Secretary, and Douglas Arthur, Reporter. It was signed by Mayor J. Ray Miller.

## Strasburg Teen-Age Club

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

is a member in good standing of the Strasburg Teen-Age Club Strasburg, Virginia.

AGE ADDRESS

Bobby Funk Jr Pres.  
CO-CHAIRMAN  
1961 Sally Ludwig  
EXPIRES SECRETARY



Standing: David C. Derby, G.G. Gochenour, Noel Borden, T.C. Haun, William Walton.

Seated: George Trimble, Harry Keller, Jr., Mayor Robert L. Funk Jr., Marie Williams.

**Strasburg Town Council: Circa 1960's**

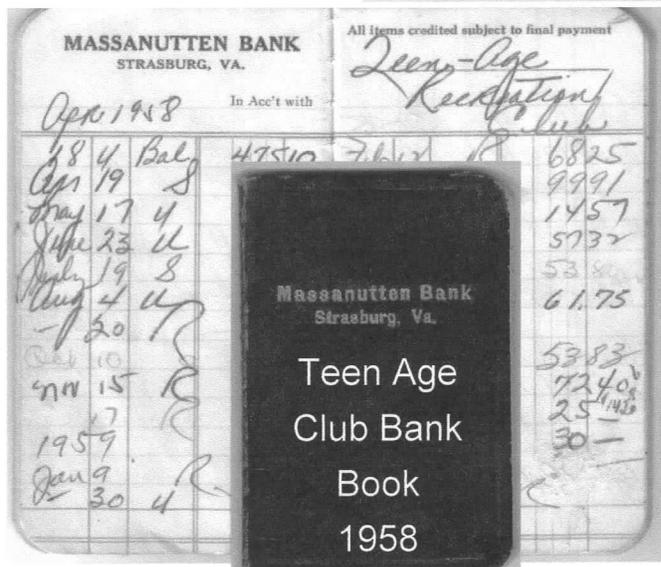
Standing: David C. Derby, G. G. Gochenour, Noel Borden, T. C. Haun, William Walton;  
Seated: George Trimble, Harry Keller, Jr., Mayor Robert L. Funk, Jr., Marie Williams.



Rosalee Cash  
Age 101



Marie Williams  
Age 100



Massanutten Bank  
Strasburg, Va.  
Teen Age  
Club Bank  
Book  
1958

# ANOTHER PREACHER STORY

FROM THE PAGES OF HORSE FEATHERS BY MARIE SHULL

The preacher had a good-looking team of horses, but decided to sell them and get a Model-T. The biggest drunk and sinner in town offered the best price and bought them. Since they belonged to a Bible-thumping, hellfire-and-damnation preacher, the only way you could get those horses to go was to shout "Praise the Lord!", and then they'd really fly. Then, to stop them, you had to shout "Amen!" Those were the only commands they would obey. The preacher explained all this to Old Harry, and Old Harry drove them away. Harry was sippin' right heavy out of his bottle as they drove along, and suddenly he realized they were headed for the cliffs above Cedar Creek.

"Whoa!!!" he yelled. Nothing happened. He pulled on the reins. Still nothing happened.

He couldn't remember what the preacher had told him, so he started to pray, maybe for the first time in his life.

"If you'll stop these horses, Lord, I'll never drink another drop in my life! Amen!" Hearing the right command, the horses skidded to a stop right at the edge of the cliff, with Cedar Creek splashing far below. Old Harry looked over the edge, pulled out his handkerchief and mopped his forehead. He sank back in the seat, feeling he had truly witnessed a miracle that had saved his life. Looking Heaven-ward with great joy, he shouted, "Praise the Lord!"...

*Read more of Marie Shull's delightful stories. You can find her Horsefeathers books in the Strasburg Library.*

# *The Kellers & the Hottels*

by

*Sarah Mauck*

Religion was not the only reason for the huge exodus of the Swiss-German forebears after the Thirty Years War of Europe in the late 1600's. But, religious conflicts along with social injustices and the economy brought them to Pennsylvania in droves. Similar to other early Valley settlers' stories, Johannas Hottel, his wife Maragret and four children immigrated to America in 1732. Like other Germanic immigrants, they brought with them the necessary things to prosper in the new world. They brought their tools, livestock and farming skills, their strong sense of community, work ethic and faith.

That year another German immigrant, George Keller bought land adjacent to Johannas (John) Hottel. He married the eldest child, Barbara Anna Hottel and so begins the long history of the Hottel-Keller relationship as pioneers, relatives and neighbors. In 1742-43 John, Maragret, Barbara, her husband George and her brothers, Charles and George moved to the frontier--the Shenandoah Valley--as land became available by a patent with Yost (Joist) Hite. The Hottel's fourth child, John, remained in Pennsylvania raising his family there.

John Hottel purchased land near Mt. Olive in what was then Frederick County, Virginia. His son, George (1722-1787) purchased 400 acres nearby on the west side of the Back Road. Records show that in 1750 he "re"purchased the land from Thomas, Lord Fairfax after a long legal battle between Yost Hite and Lord Fairfax. Soon after, George and

Barbara Keller purchased acreage next to brother George. George Keller became the magistrate or "Gentleman Justice" of Dunmore County (later named Shenandoah County) when it was formed in 1772. His original log home is long gone but another house, built in 1804 by son, Henry Keller, Sr.(1759-1823) stands today as part of the Shenandoah Germanic Heritage Museum. In 1921 a group of descendants began an organization to track the lineage. They held a family reunion, the Hottel-Huddle-Keller Reunion Picnic in September of that year at the Fishers Hill Veterans picnic grounds. In 1930 Rev. W. D. Huddle, a descendant from Ohio, wrote a book called *History of the Descendants of John Hottel*. Considering the large families of our pioneers ( 9-11 children being the norm) and the number of generations between Johannas and today, it is mind boggling to realize that there are tens of thousands of descendants. They live in almost every state in the U. S.and have an endless list of surnames including Hottle, Huddle, Leaders, Coulter, Fravel, Keeler, and Snarr. The group effort languished, but was reorganized in 1982. Then in 1984 Mr. William Jacob (Jake) Keller bequeathed 392 acres of the original Keller homestead to the Hottel-Keller organization for the establishment of a museum. Jake was the great-great grandson of Henry Keller, Sr., who had 11 children! Jake was born in his great-great grandfather's house. He lived there all his life and wanted to preserve this important part of Shenandoah County's history. The Hottel-Keller Memorial, Inc is a non-profit organization dedicated to the history and cultural heritage of the early Germanic immigrants who came into the Shenandoah Valley. They educate members and the general public through

museums, living history demonstrations and other programs. They maintain genealogies and archives of important documents, letters, diaries, photographs and personal stories from colonial farm life, Revolutionary and Civil War experiences, church registers, newsletters and present day correspondence with descendants from all over the U. S. This year

marks the 275 anniversary of John Hottel's and George Keller's arrivals in the new world and the 25th anniversary of the organization. The Homestead museum is open on weekends and well worth a visit. Also, a treasure trove of information awaits you on the web site at [www.hottelkeller.org](http://www.hottelkeller.org)

