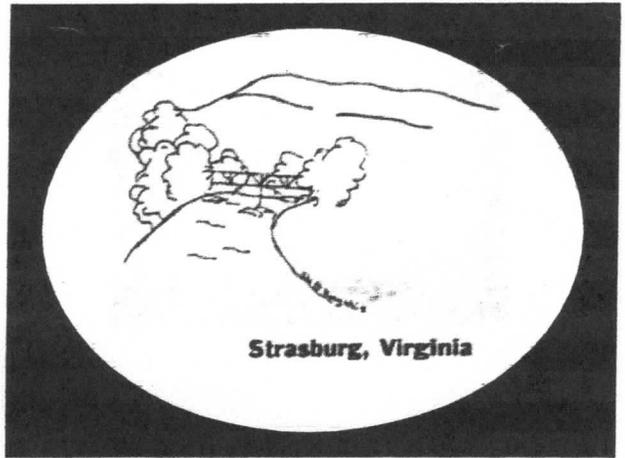


STRASBURG HERITAGE ASSOCIATION



VOLUME 8, ISSUE 2

SPRING 2008

STRASBURG, VIRGINIA

SHA Membership Meeting Sunday, June 22 4-6 PM Historic Harmony Hall

Join us on Sunday, June 22 at 4 PM for a very special opportunity--a visit to historic Harmony Hall on Cedar Creek in Shenandoah County. Built around 1753 for a member of the Hite family, this stone house is remarkable as it always has been since the 18th Century. Also known as Fort Bowman, it is now owned by Belle Grove, Inc. Belle Grove's Executive Director, Elizabeth McClung, will share the story of Harmony Hall with us and will lead us on a tour of the house. The property also includes documented early Native American camping and burial sites.

Ms. McClung's presentation will be outside; we ask that you bring your own lawn chair if desired. We will carpool down the narrow access road. Meet at the commuter parking lot at Rt. 11 and Int. 81 at the north end of Strasburg for transportation.

In case of rain, we'll meet at Belle Grove in the lower level meeting room.



Harmony Hall, Shenandoah County, Virginia. Photo by [unreadable]

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MICHAEL WHITTLE

I'm honored to have served as the President of Strasburg Heritage Association. I take pride in what we have accomplished for the community of Strasburg over the last 2.5 years. I would like to thank the Board of Directors and the Membership for their dedication to local heritage. I would like to thank Kathy Kehoe who has stepped up to take on the challenges as the President of Strasburg Heritage Association. I look forward to working with Kathy and Strasburg Heritage so that we can continue to educate the public about the history of Strasburg and the Valley.

INTERIM PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

KATHY KEHOE

I am happy to serve the SHA as Interim President. As a founding member, I have seen the association go through many changes. I feel that the SHA is an important part of my hometown. Our board and members are dedicated to preserving our history and remembering our heritage. Our townspeople make up a combination of old and new, life long residents and newer residents, and what we have in common is a love for Strasburg. We hold the Shenandoah Valley in our hearts, whether we see it for the first time as adults or view it from the familiar perspective of our childhoods. We thirst for knowledge of the first German settlers who came here in the 1750's and are fascinated by the architecture, the artifacts, and the customs and traditions of those who were here before us. We are joined in our love for our small town and the rural countryside we call home.

My vision for the SHA is to help revitalize and invigorate our association, to help us work towards another successful homes tour, promote our educational public meetings, increase our board membership, and improve our communication with other town organizations. I want to see the SHA work with other town organizations for our 250th anniversary in 2011. We currently have several worthwhile projects including rescuing a small historic building and preserving the oldest tombstone in the town's oldest cemetery. Please read further into our newsletter for more information on our ongoing work.

Treasurer's Report

In his annual financial report, treasurer Richard Seelbach reported that as of May 18, 2008, SHA's checking account totaled \$10,046.88. We also have a Certificate of Deposit valued at \$6,310.26.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER

We are pleased to announce our newest board member Maggie Maloney. Maggie is well known in Strasburg for her years of work with the Strasburg Community Library children's programs and the past award winning children's newspaper Koo Koo News. A native of Louisville, Ky, Maggie love of Strasburg has endured over the last forty years. In the 1970's, she wrote several human interest stories for the Washington Post, highlighting area country stores. She produced the first women's radio show with the first FM station in our area. Maggie tells us that she was so homesick after moving back to Louisville, that she could not wait to get back to Strasburg, where she had left her heart. Maggie will co-chair the SHA 2008 Homes Tour and will be participating in our June 22nd Meeting at Harmony Hall. We feel fortunate to have this great lady on our board and look forward to working with her.

Heritage Rescue Report

Barbara Adamson

While old dwellings and significant public buildings are often valued as historic and therefore worthy of preservation, outbuildings usually are not. So, when a phone call resulted in the opportunity to save an outbuilding from Strasburg's long ago tannery industry, the SHA board took notice. Behind a tenant house at the west end of Brown St. stands an approximately 12x12 ft., log building that was moved to that spot some years ago. It came from the old Obed Funk tannery that once operated on the north side of Queen St., near Town Run, after the Civil War.

The owner of the property has decided to replace the log building with a modern garden shed and asked if we were interested in moving it. When we realized the building's significance, we decided that we were interested, despite the fact that we don't yet know where it will eventually be re-erected! Our plan is to have it carefully dismantled, marked for future re-erection and display, and stored until that time.

One idea has been to make the project a part of Strasburg's 250th Celebration in 2011 – a worthy goal!

Tombstone Preservation

Barbara Adamson

At the west end of Queen St., next to Mt. Zion Methodist Church, lies Strasburg's oldest public cemetery, whose gravestones include the names of some of the town's oldest and most distinguished families. Burials no longer take place in the old Queen St. cemetery and its upkeep is managed by town maintenance employees. It is adjacent to the Mt. Zion Church's cemetery, which still has burials and is maintained by the church.

The adjacent Mt. Zion Church cemetery still has burials and is maintained by the church."

SHA member Gloria Stickle brought to our attention that many of the grave markers in the old cemetery are rapidly deteriorating, with the inscriptions on some barely readable today. Gloria urged SHA to consider embarking on restoration and preservation work on the stones most in need and suggested that we start with the oldest marked stone, that of Samuel "Brother Obadiah" Funk. The fieldstone marker reads "A monument to the Pious Memory of Br. Obadiah, Sam Funk of the Chri. Order of Ephrata, died Dec. 7, 1779, aged 60 yrs. 9 mo."

Gloria researched what could be done for the marker and consulted Rinker and Frye Memorials in Mt.

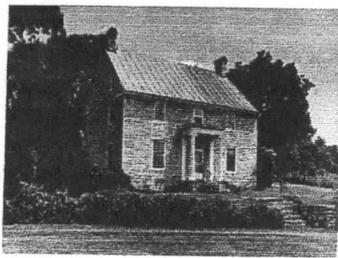
Jackson about the project. The company has recommended that the headstone be properly

cleaned and covered with a protective plexiglass enclosure. They also recommended that a low granite marker with the same inscription as on the original headstone be installed so that visitors will be able to read the legend easily. Gloria will direct Rinker and Frye to proceed with the project as recommended.

We would like to continue with other preservation efforts at the old cemetery, such as a sign with more information about the cemetery, its connections to Strasburg's history and perhaps additional gravestone preservation. Volunteers are invited to become involved with the project.

YooHoo! Friendly Reminder

SHA membership dues of \$20 annually are due in February. If you haven't sent yours in, we hope you will do so and continue your valued support of Strasburg's history. Thank you.



Harmony Hall

Kathy Kehoe

This is the house, according to our folk history, where a young Confederate soldier named Hinkins climbed up into the eight foot hearth fireplace to hide from the Yankees. A neighbor of Harmony Hall, Hinkins was visiting a young lady of the house when Federal soldiers arrived. The large fireplace, built nearly a hundred years before, was large and tall enough to accommodate a grown man inclined to balance on the stones for safety. Over a hundred years later, another young man would do the same for a different reason. He was there celebrating his bachelor party on the eve of his marriage and wanted to prove that it could be done. This unnamed young man's reenactment proved that the stones were a natural hand hold and foot prop and would indeed hide a grown man.

Harmony Hall is the name given to the limestone house built in 1753, also known as Fort Bowman. It was home to George and Mary Hite Bowman, who emigrated from Pennsylvania. Historical Marker #A55 on Rt. 11 notes "The house is an important example of the Pennsylvania German influence on Shenandoah Valley architecture." Virginia Hinkins Cadden, in her book "The Story of

Strasburg" (September 20, 1961 Bicentennial Edition) writes that "It was to this house that George Miller's little daughter came running in 1764 with the tragic news that her parents had been killed by the Indians." Fort Bowman was one of several homes in the area attacked by Indians during the French and Indian War. According to an article by Maggie Wolff Peterson in the Quad--State Business Journal, May 2007, the grounds consist of 95 acres. Joist Hite, "among the earliest of German immigrants to occupy the region" was the father of Mary Elizabeth Hite Bowman. The Bowmans' built the house after buying 1000 acres in 1732. The plantation later increased to 2000 acres and "included a gristmill and sawmill."

The Marker also tells us that Major Joseph Bowman was born at Ft. Bowman. He was the "second in command in General George Rogers Clark's expedition for the conquest of the Northwest in 1778-1779, during the Revolutionary War. As you travel down the lane to the house, you pass the Bowman family cemetery on the left and according to the marker, those buried there include "Samuel Kercheval, the early-19th century historian of the Valley."

Fort Bowman was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1969. It was bought by Beatrice Heath O'Connell as a summer home in the 1960's. During the 1970's, the house was rental property. Sarah Kehoe Mauck lived at Bowman's Fort from 1973 to 1976. Sarah hosted many large parties that local residents may remember, including a large wedding that took place in front of the living room fireplace. Sarah remembers that frequently there would a

"knock on the door" and someone would ask for a tour of the historic home. Once a visitor from California, quoting a Pennsylvania professor, explained how the rafters in the attic were built like the bow of a boat and pointed them out to Sarah as they stood in the attic. The original stockade line was still visible and Sarah remembers her rooster standing and crowing there.

Mrs. O'Connell left the property to the Belle Grove Foundation when she died, with lifetime tenant rights to her son Irvan. When he transferred his tenancy to Belle Grove, Belle Grove donated a conservation easement to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation and a historic conservation easement to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. (Quad, State Business Journal, May 2007) The property now is part of the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. Caretaker tenants now live in the house and work is still being done to ready the house for historical interpretation.

Local collectors were finding arrow heads there in the bottom fields in the 1970's. As recent as March of this year, James Madison University archeology students were studying the Harmony Hall property. In 1964, under the direction of Strasburg resident and Chapter President Julian Hammond, the Northern Virginia Shenandoah Chapter of the Archeological Society of Virginia excavated 938 square feet on the Bowman property. Working with Harold A. MacCord, the first Virginia State Archeologist and with permission from the property owner, Charles Buchanan of New Market, artifacts were recorded in the Society's Quarterly Bulletin (Vol. 19, No. 2, Dec. 1964).

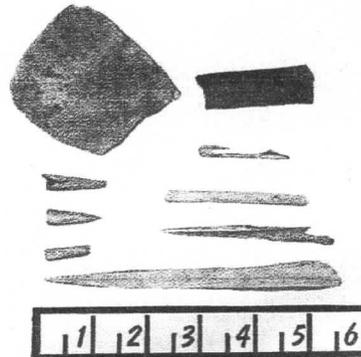


Figure 3. Bone implements from the Bowman Site

Fourteen year old Mike Kehoe was then part of the Chapter and participated in the study. He remembers local residents involved in the 1964 project: Mr. and Mrs. James Crawford, Wayno Vann (also a collector), Michael Vann, (son of Iris Vann), Mr. Funkhouser, Lenier Rodgers, (local historian from Mauertown), George Shulen and Mrs. Grove, both from Stephens City, and the Kehoe brothers Mike & Sam who lived across the creek on their family farm. Julian Hammond, who operated an insurance company in Strasburg for many years, had a large collection of artifacts.

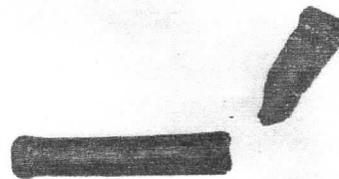


Figure 4. Two fragments of a clay pipe from the Bowman Site. Scale - size of pipe 3 inches long.

Recovered artifacts listed were tools of jasper, quartz and quartzite, a "rudely chipped" limestone hoe, "bone awl, usually made from a splinter of deer bone," a "fragment of a flat, perforated needle, or bodkin," a "fishhook made from what seems to be deer bone," "cups made by trimming and cleaning the carapace of the common box tortoise," and "one fragment of pipestem and a pipe bowl." Howard McCord, author of the report added that "pottery vessel fragments were the most common artifacts recovered. McCord wrote that "Six burials were found in the area excavated." These were American Indians who lived in the 1400's.

The Harmony Hall property is a time line of history: The people of the Shenandoah Valley have worked and cared for this land for generations: early American Indians to the German emigrants who came from Pennsylvania in the 1750's, generations of farmers who cared for the land, the dedicated archeological chapter of the 1960's, the preservationists of Belle Grove and Cedar Creek National Park. People of the 21st century continue the efforts of our ancestors in saving this spot in time for future generations, for interpretation and study and for insight into our past.

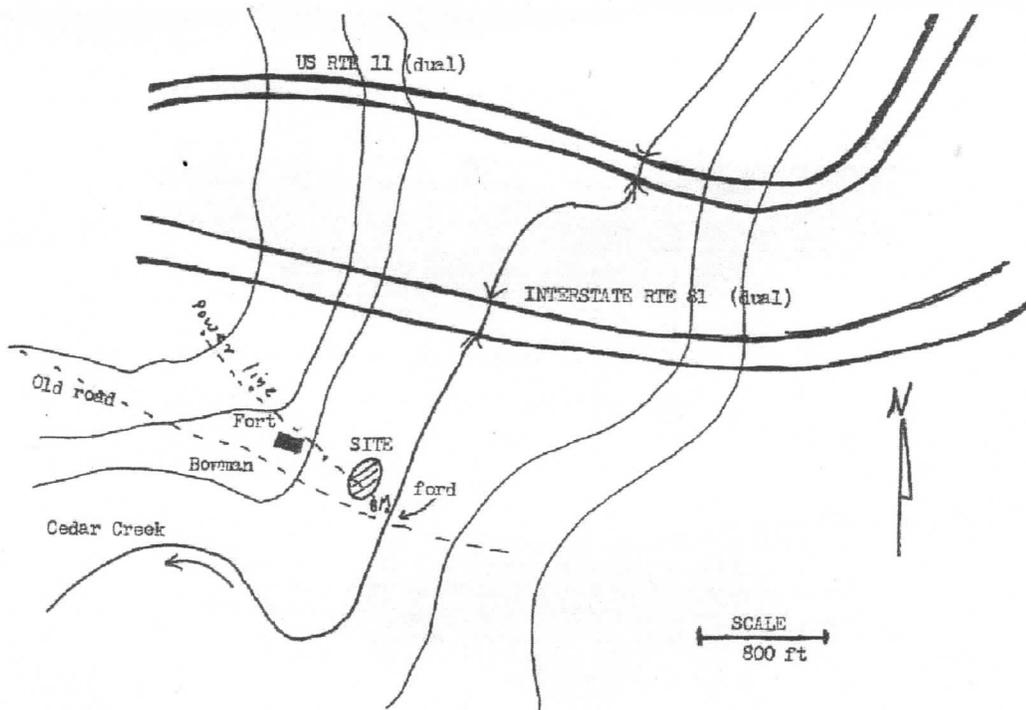


FIGURE 1 ENVIRONS OF BOWMAN SITE, SHENANDOAH COUNTY, VIRGINIA
(Fort and Site symbols - not to scale)

Strasburg Heritage Association
P. O. Box 525
Strasburg, VA 22657

Strasburg Heritage Association
P. O. Box 525
Strasburg, VA 22657

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Membership: \$20

Patron (donation) \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please mail completed form and payment to above address