



Strasburg Heritage Association

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Strasburg, Virginia
www.strasburgvaheritage.org

Spring 2011

SHA Quarterly Meeting

STRASBURG POTTERY FEST

A celebration of Strasburg's 250th birthday has to include a festival of famous Strasburg pottery! Please join us when SHA and the Strasburg Museum co-sponsor Strasburg Pottery Fest on Saturday, June 18 from 10:00am to 3:00pm, rain or shine. Activities include:

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| 10:00 am | Strasburg Museum opens
Pottery demonstration begins
(Shenandoah Valley Potters Guild)
Pottery appraisals begin
(\$5.00 per item)
Tailgating starts |
| 11:00 am | Lecture – "History of Strasburg Pottery"
(John Adamson) |
| 1:00 pm | Lecture – "Strasburg Pottery, Form & Function"
(John Huntsberger) |
| Continuous | Museum's Pottery Collection
Exhibit map – "Where were the potters located?"
250th Commemorative items for sale |
| 2:30 pm | Auction of Eberly bean pot to benefit Strasburg Museum |

You might ask 'what is tailgating'? Tailgating is a way for pottery collectors to display, and perhaps sell, items from their collection. They will set up their items on the back of a pick-up, or on a table, maybe under a tent. Visitors are then invited to admire and ask questions about the pottery collections. Any collector is invited to participate as a tailgater. If you would like to do so, call 465-8176. We're hoping to have some rare items to show.

President's Letter

Barbara Adamson

SHA's annual meeting and 250th program held on Feb. 27 was a rousing success with a large crowd in attendance. Beautiful, mild weather helped make for quite a day with Daniel Bly's excellent presentation and the dedication of the 250th Monument in front of Town Hall. We thank everyone who helped make the day a special one.

We welcome new SHA board members Mary Hitchings and Linda Williams and thank Martha Jones and Michael Whittle for their service on the board. Thanks go also to members John Adamson, Ginger Aliotti, Donna and Ed Bollhoffer, Jim Carter, Sue Foster, Dan Kitzmiller, Dee Morrissey and Linda Williams for participating in our spring Rt.11 Litter Pickup. We managed to get a lot done between rain showers on April 23. Remember to check the latest 250th exhibits in the Arthur & Brown Law Office windows. The displays have been really great and the community is enjoying them. The 2011 Holiday Homes Tour will be held on Saturday, December 10. We'll have more details in our fall newsletter. Hope to see many of you at upcoming 250th events!

Still Number One!

The 1908 State & World Champion Reel Racing Team

Marie Spence

Soon after Strasburg's town water system was completed in 1906, Strasburg's Volunteer Fire Department was organized. The first volunteer company was the Massanutten Hose Company, Number One. Before motorized fire-fighting equipment became common or affordable, people working quickly and effectively together was of supreme importance.

The Strasburg Fire Department had a huge reel which carried 500 feet of fire hose. Seventeen young men of the Massanutten Hose Company, No. One formed a reel racing team, honed the necessary skills and entered competition against other local fire departments. This group of dedicated and physically fit volunteer firemen named their team the "Red Devils". The Red Devils developed a local and regional reputation as "the team to beat, if it could be done." No competing team locally or statewide could beat the Strasburg men for reel racing speed and accuracy.

Employing skills necessary in real-life fire situations, competitive reel racing demands efficient team work, strength, endurance and physical ability to run swiftly; and maneuver the 500 feet of heavy fire hose into the necessary position, couple the hose with the fire hydrant and then pump vigorously with sufficient force to produce a steady stream of water into a "targeted fire zone." All the above must be successfully completed in competition faster than any other team.

At the 1908 State Firemen's Convention, Strasburg's Red Devils took the Virginia State Reel Racing Championship. This qualified the Devils for higher levels of competition. Serious town pride and increased rivalry with other local and state reel teams ran rampant. Things would get even better for the seventeen dedicated fire department reel team members.

On August 28, 1908, the young firemen and their equipment traveled to Harrisonburg, Virginia for what was titled the World Reel Racing Championship Competition. A large number of obviously very strong title winning teams were present for competition that hot summer day. Each team was given two attempts at achieving the fastest certified qualifying time.

In the first round, Strasburg’s Reelmen produced a qualifying time from start to finish of 27.5 seconds. On the second run the Red Devils successfully put in an even faster time of 27 and 1/12 seconds. Stopwatches were double checked and the time was declared official! The Massanutten Hose Company, No. One team had produced the fastest clean run time of the entire competition. The Strasburg Red Racers were declared World Champions! They had successfully produced a Reel Racing pace, which more than a century later remains UNBEATEN! Fire Company, No. One truly was Number ONE!

Prize monies, realized from all the Strasburg Red Devils first place wins was invested. Some of the prize money was used to start the town of Strasburg’s first nickelodeon which was known as the Machoca Theater. This operated for many years at a profit. When the property became available where the current two-storied brick fire department building now stands, half of the monies used to purchase that land came from the wisely invested Reel Racing prize money of the World Champion Strasburg Fireman of 1908.

The Massanutten Hose Company, No. One World Champion Reel Racers included the following familiar local people: Crawford Bell, Fred Burner, John Dean, Gus Fisher, Locke Hottel, Harry Keister, Louis Keister, Cleve Lake, Louis Mackir, George Pollard (Captain), Jim Pollard, Sam Pollard, Walter Pollard, John Rogers, Fred Sonner, Douglas Spengler, and Amos Stickley.

Today, the Strasburg Fire Department Reel used by the 1908 World Champions can be seen n the Strasburg Museum.

A Train is A’Coming!

The Town of Strasburg and Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation invite you to experience the most unique Civil War Sesquicentennial event of 2011 in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

A spectacular two-day event culminating with reenactment of Col. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson’s infamous overland relocation of railroad rolling stock on the Valley Pike through Virginia's scenic Shenandoah Valley. Watch as men and animals muscle a replica Dutch Wagon locomotive and caravan of equipment over the same historic route used by Jackson’s men 150 years ago.—from the “greattrainraid.com” website

A Symposium will be held at the Strasburg Fire Hall starting at 3:00 pm. Check out greattrainraid.com; cedarcreekbattlefield.org; or call the Town of Strasburg for more information on this historic event and to find out about the many more events scheduled for Memorial Day weekend.

New Museum in Strasburg! The Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation opened the Hupps Hill Cedar Creek Museum May 7th. Civil War artifacts found in the surrounding area are part of the exhibits. The Town of Strasburg visitor center will also be located there. The Museum is looking for volunteers. Call 540-465-5884 or 540-869-2064 for more information.

Upcoming Folk History! Do you remember Crystal Caverns or the Crystal Caverns Roller Skating Rink? Help me explore the history of the Hupps Hill property for the next newsletter. Contact kathyckehoe@gmail.com or call 465-4185—Kathy Kehoe

The Jacob Funk House in Strasburg - 291 North Water Street

John Adamson

Jacob Funk, son of Henry Funk, was the nephew of Strasburg founder Peter Stover's wife, and an early Strasburg resident who purchased and sold several properties in Strasburg. The Jacob Funk house was erected about 1784 on a lot purchased directly from Peter Stover. The lot Jacob Funk chose is at the corner of North and Water Streets and fronts directly on Town Run, a dependable water source. Built upon a full-height stone cellar, the original upper part of the house was undoubtedly log construction. The dominant feature of this house is a massive central stone fireplace indicating Germanic influence in its design and construction. The foundation and central chimney reveal the skill of the builders with a finely constructed supporting arch in the original central chimney and nicely executed jack arches over the windows.

The deed for this property (lots 123, 124, 125 and 126) was recorded on January 15, 1784 and contains some interesting details, terms and conditions. The purchase price was "20 pounds current money of Virginia". The Revolutionary War was over (Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown in 1781), and the treaty ending the war was signed in 1783, however, the English system of currency was still the standard of the day. The deed called for "...the said Jacob Funk...on or before the 15th day of January next build or cause to be built on each of the Lots 123, 124, 125 and 126 one good dwelling house twenty feet long and eighteen feet wide with a stone chimney to the same..." This condition was probably meant to assure that development of the town of Strasburg occurred in a timely fashion. The requirement for a stone chimney was likely a matter of fire safety. The house Jacob Funk built on Lot 123 was quite large for its day, with exterior dimensions of 30 feet by 26 feet, suggesting that Jacob Funk was relatively wealthy.

In addition to the purchase price, Jacob Funk was also required "...yearly and every year thereafter on the 1st of January pay two shillings & sixpence as a ground rent." A note dated March 25, 1784 at the end of the deed states: "Be it remembered that full peaceable possession of the within four lots was had & taken & delivered by the said Peter Stover according to law to the true intent & meaning of the within indenture." It is very likely that Jacob Funk built and lived in the house on Lot 123 until 1810 when he sold it to Peter Stover's son, Christian Stover, and moved to Indiana.

The house was changed significantly sometime about 1900. The structure above the old stone cellar was completely rebuilt. Wooden frame construction replaced what was probably the original log fabric of the house. Charred floor joists and flooring, visible in the cellar suggests that there may have been a serious fire, perhaps causing the reconstruction of the upper floors. The old stone cellar with its massive central stone fireplace remains, but above the cellar everything was changed. The original central chimney and any stone fireplaces above the cellar level were removed and brick flues were built to allow heating with wood stoves. The woodwork in the upper two floors shows typical construction and decorative details of the Strasburg area around 1900.

The current owners, Wayne and Mary Cottrill, purchased the house in 1999. They have made thoughtful repairs as needed, but always with an eye to preserve as much old fabric as possible. If it could talk, the old house would surely have interesting stories to tell. But the stone foundation rests mutely where it was built nearly 230 years ago, in silent testimony to the skills and styles of a much earlier age.



An Alphabet of Proverbs

Taken from the Shenandoah Valley Folklife Society Newsletter Fall 2006. Reprinted from the Rockingham Register May 3, 1888.

A gain of produce is worth a pound of craft.
Boasters are cousins to liars.
Confession of a fault makes half amends.
Denying a fault doubles it.
Envoy shooteth at others and woundedth herself.
Foolish fear doubles danger.
God reaches us good things by our hands.
He has hard work who has nothing to do.
It costs more to revenge wrongs than to bear them.
Knavery is the worst trade.
Learning makes a man fit company for himself.
Modesty is a guard to virtue.
Not to hear conscience is the way to silence it.

Proud looks make foul work in fair faces.
Quiet conscience gives quiet sleep.
Richest is he that wants least.
Small faults indulged are little thieves that let in greater.
The boughs that bear most hang lowest.
Upright walking is sure walking.
Virtue and happiness are mother and daughter.
Wise men make more opportunities than they find.
You never lose by doing a good act.
Zeal without knowledge is fire without light.

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