



Strasburg Heritage Association June Program

Sunday June 22nd, 2025

2—4 pm

St. Paul Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall
156 W. Washington Street, Strasburg

The Man Behind the Legend—Coach Proctor

Don't miss this opportunity to hear his story in his own words. Coach Proctor will share stories about his childhood, early school years, high school and college years; and how he came to arrive in a small town in the Shenandoah Valley to become a household word for generations of high school athletes. After years of Friday Night Lights and hours of after school practice--

Everybody knew his name.

The public is invited. Join us for refreshment and fellowship afterwards.

President's Message

Tim Taylor

We hope everyone is doing well. We want to thank all of our members for their continued support via their membership dues. Your generosity is much appreciated and will help us to continue offering services to the greater Strasburg community. If you have not yet paid your dues, feel free to mail them in at any time. Of course, donations are always welcome.

We have been busy. We just awarded scholarships for many graduating students from Strasburg High School. More information on our scholarship recipients is shared in this newsletter. We had booths where we shared information about our group at local events such as Vintage in the Valley, Shenandoah County Heritage Days, and Mayfest. During these events, we enjoy sharing what the Strasburg Heritage Association offers, network with new and old friends, and share stories of our local history.

We have a great program coming up on June 22nd and we are working on our Ghost Tours which will be in October. If you or if you know of anyone that has a good ghost story, please reach out to any of our board members!

Please take time to visit our website to check out our archived newsletters and listen to stories and interviews being shared on our podcast channel. Links to these resources can be found in this newsletter.

Have a safe, enjoyable, and relaxing summer.

Sincerely - Tim Taylor - SHA President and the SHA Board

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It Takes A Village

SHA Scholarship Program

Joan Williams

I am a Board Member of the Strasburg Heritage Association and Chairperson of our Scholarship Program. Friday, May 9th, was a joyful day for our graduating class, their families, classmates, friends, and community. That was the day we celebrated our graduating class at their 2025 Senior Scholarship and Recognition Ceremony. Forty groups, organizations, clubs, and families were there to present well over 60 scholarships totaling many thousands of dollars to a class of 134 students.

The Strasburg Heritage Association is a non-profit group that promotes an interest in history. We depend upon our members and the community to donate to our annual scholarship fund. Over the years, we have given both singular and multiple scholarships. We have chosen to present one \$1,000.00 scholarship over the last several years, and preference would be given to a graduate pursuing a degree in history, government, civics, teaching, or working in public service, policy, or planning. We had five students apply for our scholarship. The decision was difficult, considering the quality of the applicants. This year, we were pleased to award our \$1,000.00 Scholarship to Ava Grace Holsinger, who will major in history and plans to attend James Madison University in the Fall.

I want to share an uplifting and inspiring story by recognizing two association members, Michael Marcheterre and Craig Morris, who reside in Strasburg's Historic District. Since our scholarship's inception, they have consistently supported our annual scholarship fund and the students' educational dreams and goals. This year, they felt we had five highly qualified and very deserving candidates.

Let me tell you more about these students. This year is the first time we received an all-female slate of applicants. These young ladies are all B+ to A honor roll students. Three have dual credits or certifications from Triplett Tech or Laurel Ridge. Two will receive their degree from Laurel Ridge before graduating from high school. Two participate in varsity athletics, and three hold part-time employment. All are involved in numerous clubs and volunteer commitments in school and their community. They all received glowing recommendations and each wrote a heartfelt essay to submit to our board.

So, realizing the qualities and accomplishments of these students, Michael and Craig quickly and graciously stepped up and generously donated \$2,250.00 for the remaining four students. These gentlemen are the ones who made our four additional scholarships possible this year at the ceremony. As they say, it does indeed, "Take a Village."

The following are the students who benefited from their kindness and generosity.

Our \$750.00 Scholarship was awarded to Hanna Pamela Gomez-Molineros, who plans to attend Laurel Ridge College.

Our \$500.00 Scholarship was awarded to Maria Rene Elbon, who plans to attend Laurel Ridge College.

Our second \$500.00 Scholarship was awarded to Jolet Jacquelin Solis-Rios, who plans to attend Radford University.

Our third \$500.00 Scholarship was awarded to Madalinda Velasques-Pablo, who plans to attend Laurel Ridge College.

If you know these gentlemen and see them around town, please take a moment to express your appreciation for what they did to support the Strasburg Heritage Association and further the academic journey for four of our Strasburg High School graduates. I am grateful for living in this wonderful small town.

I hope my words have caught your attention. We welcome you to consider joining us to learn more about our association's mission, local history, presentations, events, and scholarship fund.

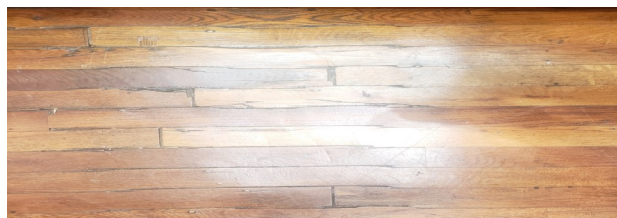
If you would like to donate specifically to our scholarship fund, please send to: Strasburg Heritage Association, Scholarship Fund, PO Box 525, Strasburg, VA 22657.

A Little Folk History Bob's Grocery

By
Kathy Kehoe

"I got cold chills when I realized my feet were in that divot (dip) in the floor, where Bob had stood behind the counter." --Kitty Jean Morris Miller

Kitty Miller was giving a talk at Marcy McCann's Open House last September, sharing her memories of Bob's Grocery and her brother-in-law Robert L. Funk Jr. Bob and wife Charlotte owned and operated Bob's Grocery on West King Street for 38 years. Kitty's husband Donald was a brother to Charlotte and the two families visited often. That dent in the floor boards is a sign of the past, and it shows the path of Bob and Charlotte's footsteps as they worked. Embedded in time, their footprints linger in that spot, an enduring symbol of the time they spent there.



Current owner Marcy McCann bought the building in 2003. After re-searching the deed, she found the house was built in 1821. She has preserved as much of the original history as she could and recently obtained a historic plaque from the Strasburg Heritage Association, unveiling the plaque during her open house. SHA president Tim Taylor introduced Marcy, thanking her for her dedication to preserving the history of Strasburg. "I know she has Strasburg in her heart!"

Bob and Charlotte's sons, Bobby, (Robert L. Funk III) and Michael, shared their memories of growing up in Strasburg. "My mother and father ran the store from 1945 to 1981, until my father lost his vision and could no longer operate the store" said Mike Funk. "As Daddy's vision was deteriorating, my brother Bobby bought a house on Walton Street in 1976, and my parents moved there. They left the upstairs apartment which had 3 levels and a lot of stairs, but they continued to operate the store for 5 more years, gradually winding it down with a great deal of my mother's assistance. In 1981, they sold the store to Harry "Skeeter" and Pat Lambert, and they changed the name of the store to "Skeeter's." Mike continues, "Skeeter was well known in the area, and coincidentally Skeeter's father had a neighborhood store back in the day in downtown Strasburg next to the Newsstand. The grocery business was in Skeeter's DNA too. My mother continued to work part-time for Skeeter, as she liked being 'uptown' and seeing and interacting with all the customers. After some time, Skeeter and Pat sold the store to Chris and Gail Grove who lived in the Fort Valley area. They moved into the apartment upstairs, and my mother also continued some part time work with them." After the Grove's sold the store, Bobby Funk remembers the building was a radio station, an antique shop, art gallery, brewery, and most recently a bakery and a place to buy soup.

Bob grew up on the east end of town where his father, Robert L. Funk Sr. operated a grocery store in a building later known as Jack's Shack, where Jack Pangle had a barbershop. Bob and Charlotte's son Bobby Funk met with Sarah Mauck to share his memories of his Grandfather Funk whose store catered to the Strasburg Depot railroad workers. According to Sarah's research, there were two boarding houses near the train turntables (or wheel-house) on Funk Street. The workers could buy their food on time at Bob's until they got their paychecks. Bob Funk Jr. worked in the store for his father. When his father went to work for the railroad, Bob Jr. operated the store until he bought the building on the west end of town from a Mr. Acree. One hundred- and four-year-old Loretta Tillie Rutz Stickles

Campbell remembers her family walked to the grocery store from their house on the west end of town. Her father, Harry Rutz Sr., worked for the railroad. He would let Tillie and her siblings charge candy and ice cream to his bill that he would pay at the end of the month. When Bob Jr. opened the store on West King, he continued to provide this much needed service to customers.

Bob's Grocery was much more than a grocery store in our hometown. The interest free charge accounts helped many of Strasburg's families. Wives and children could come in and shop, and everything would be written on their "tab". At the end of the month, the bill would be paid in full. A memory shared by Donna Grim Leeth on Facebook's "Strasburg Memories": "During a very tough financial time I remember Mr. and Mrs. Funk at Funk's Grocery extended credit to my Mother and our family for food for six weeks. They were so caring, kind, and generous to do that. I will never forget that." Bobby said that a lot of people called in their orders on the telephone and had groceries delivered—another reason it was convenient to pay at the end of the month.

Bobby's recollections were that when he was growing up, a small sewing factory opened up next door when the bowling alley closed. The employees would come in at lunchtime and after work to buy lunch items and other groceries. Some of the customers Bobby remembered were local people like Virginia Cadden "who loved to shop there," said Bobby. Other workers in the neighborhood would stop in at Bob's to buy their lunch. The Shenandoah Telephone Company had an office on Washington Street, Lawyer Jack Marsh would come to "hang out and talk", said Bobby, and dentist Dr. Burke would come from his office across the street.

Roger Thomas grew up in Strasburg and shared this memory on Facebook: "Oh, Mr. Bob, as we called him, was a great man along with his wife Charlotte. We would go there and get what we needed and pay him up on the first of the month. There were plenty of times that we would get surprise company coming up early Sunday morning or they would come late Saturday night. (like my grandmother's sister and her family or my grandmother, nieces or nephews) We would call Mr. Bob at his house and ask if we could get sausage and eggs for breakfast, if he could open up the store. And of course Mr. Bob would open that store for us. He'd go down into the store and we got what we needed, put it on the bill and my grandmother paid him on the first of the month. He was an awesome man. How many people would do that today? I can remember going to that store when I was just a kid. Mr. Bob and Ms. Charlotte were truly good people--they didn't treat black folks any different."

Karen Bailey Wisecarver: "I can remember walking in deep snow from our house on Capon Street next to what was later Massanutten Manor all the way to Bob's Grocery, just to get a loaf of bread, eggs, and a week's worth of lunch meat because they were the closest store that was open when we had a blizzard in the 80s. They had the best deli counter in town."

Mike Funk recalls living above the grocery store. He points out that his brother Bobby is ten years older, and if you do the math, Bobby lived there "full time" for 15 years and then went to D.C. to Strayer College and became a banker there. Mike lived there for 25 years until after he finished high school and college. Mike says, when people have asked me where I'm from, I tell them, "I'm a "city boy" and grew up in Strasburg, because our front yard was 4 feet of sidewalk and Rt. 11." Early on, I never quite knew how good I had it until I was about 5 or 6 years old, and a friend said, "you are so lucky; you live where you can get candy and ice cream anytime you want!" Well a light bulb came on, and going forward, I had a pretty good outlook and often took advantage of the situation.

Bobby Funk said he loved living over the store on main street, that it was so much fun to live there. "I worked in the store stocking shelves and helped deliver groceries. A lot of our business was phone calls—people would call in their orders and we delivered. Another job was sorting the 'pop' bottles that people brought back for money. I had to make sure Pepsi and RC, you know, went into the right crates." Back then, when a customer bought a carton of soda pop, or soft drinks, a deposit was included in the price. When people returned their empty glass pop bottles, the store owners gave back their deposit for each bottle. (usually 5 cents each) The delivery driver would take cases of used bottles back to the company for cleaning

and refilling. The store would then be reimbursed for the deposit. Each brand of soda would be placed in its own wooden slotted crate for return.

The Funk's large backyard was popular with neighborhood kids. Bobby Funk recalled that there was a big porch in the back and a large back yard where kids could play. He remembers when Town Policeman Marshall Robinson lived across the street and often came over to play games with the kids. Mike Funk, when giving his talk at the open house, said "The neighborhood kind of congregated in the backyard..., we played baseball, football and basketball back here--there were so many kids in the neighborhood. We would come up to the store when it was hot, go into the big ice-box and cool off, and then get some ice cream or a soda."

Sharon Bly Ferguson remembers: "I spent right much time hanging around Bob's grocery store. My aunt lived across the road and when we visited her, a lot of the town kids would play in the Funk's backyard. We played a game called Kissing Birds. When the boys caught one of the girls they had to kiss them. I had a crush on Bob's son Michael and when he wasn't chasing me I remember hiding behind the bushes so the other boys couldn't find me." Sheila Ritenour shared that, "We had the best time growing up playing with all the neighborhood kids. We made up games as we would go."

Bill Stover has a memory to share: When they were kids, Billy Stover, Michael Funk and some other boys were spending the night in sleeping bags in the back yard. Sometime in the night, the boys snuck out and went to see some girls. When they were running back across the street to the Funks, the town cops were sitting at the service station on the hill. There are no secrets in a small town. And so when the policemen saw the boys running through the dark under the streetlights, they followed them. Town policeman Buck Ramey told Mrs. Funk, "Now we can't have these kids running the streets." At this point of the story, Mike interjected, "So the police pull into the driveway, shine their car lights and search light into the yard, and proceed to corral all of us and march us up the porch steps. At that point, I had to go in and wake up my parents at 3:00 a.m. Suffice it to say, it was not a good night. Both Bill and I agree, there are many humorous aspects to this story, which in good taste, cannot be shared. I think we can both give thanks the Store outlasted our boyhood antics."

The Funk home was a social gathering place for the adults as well. Cyndie Ryman shares that: "My Mother (Maybud Vann) played canasta (card game) with Charlotte and we also went to St. Paul Lutheran church with all the Funk family. Charlotte was a great woman, always had a smile and a great laugh during those card games. Daisy Kern, AdaMae Miller, my Aunt Iris Vann, Fay Sonner and I can't seem to remember the rest. They always had a great time!!" Fay Sonner shared that "we always had a blast! It was a wonderful time!" Fay also remembers Janie Mowery played with them, on two card tables in the living room once a month. The women always brought lots of snacks, and they would swear they were going to stop bringing them because, Fay said laughing, it wasn't good for their figures, but they brought snacks every time anyway.

Before Kitty Jean Miller learned to drive, when her kids were little, she'd pull them in a little red wagon from her house on Holliday Street to Bobs Grocery store and visit with her sister-in-law Charlotte. Kitty and Charlotte would sit on the porch swing and talk while the



Mike Funk in front of the store with Michael Tucker and Ricky Bly with bicycle. 1965. Photo by Sharon Bly Ferguson.

kids played. Her husband, Donald, used to take the kids to his sister's after Sunday School and she always had a Coco-Cola for them. When son Mike was home from college, he tended to sleep late. His mother would tell Kitty's younger kids, to "go wake Mike up" and they would run laughing noisily to his room to wake their older cousin.

Kitty remembers that Bob always wore a white shirt and tie. "I don't remember him wearing any other shirt. Every day he got up at 5 or 5:30 and put on a white shirt and tie". And, she adds, "a freshy ironed shirt. And the store was open 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. He even wore a white shirt and tie to the Miller family reunion." Mike added to this: "In high school, when my girlfriend, later and still my wife, Jennifer, first met my parents one cold winter evening around 7:30 at our house, there was my father watching TV still with his white shirt and tie on. She still mentions it to this day."

"He was quite a guy on so many levels" said Kitty, "Bob was a man of strong faith." Mike added that "my father was very active in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on High Street. He had over 50 years of perfect attendance, taught Sunday school, chaired many committees as well as the Board, and also served on the regional board of the church." Kitty said that "Bob was active in the fire department and as a retired fireman, he always marched in the annual fireman's parade." Mike adds that his father was a member of the Strasburg Fire Department for over 60 years and served as both Captain and Chief." Kitty said that Bob was a Southland life insurance agent in the 1960s and when he was working and making house calls, Charlotte was in charge of the store. Mike added that his mother Charlotte was an integral part of running the store.

"My father" said Mike Funk, "was mayor of Strasburg, probably around 1964, for 12 years, and when he was Mayor of Strasburg, a lot of town business was discussed in the store." One of Brenda Rose's fondest memories of the building was during the era when Bob Funk was mayor, and ran the grocery store, and she worked for the Town of Strasburg. "He was the mayor and had to sign all the weekly paychecks. That was one of my duties. After the paychecks were written, I walked up the street and took the paychecks to him for his signature."

People remember some of the items for sale were Silver Label hams, bar-b-que loaf, baloney, Blue Ribbon white bread, Hellman's mayonnaise and soft drinks, or "pop". Bobby remembers that in the summertime, the store sold a type of tomato called Culpepper--everybody wanted to buy them there. Bobby said a local woman, Susie Nickens, sold her popular home-made bread in the store.

Bobby remembers the names of some of the employees who worked there: Bob's brother Jack Funk, a Mr. Venable who was the meat cutter, Daphne Wymer, a first grade teacher who worked there part time, Bob Bergey, Pat Crabill, Sherry Brill and Carol Ludwig. Another worker was Clarence "Pecoe" Robinson. Bobby didn't drive but rode with the delivery truck to carry groceries into customer's homes. There was one little girl who was intellectually disabled and when she came into the store with her mother, Charlotte let her play "store". She would stand happily behind the counter pretending she was working.

In the early 60s, there was a TV sitcom called "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis." Teenage Dobie's parents' ran a grocery store. I know of at least one little girl in the neighborhood who imagined Mike Funk as the character Dobie Gillis.

Today, the historic brick building at 234 W. King Street is the home of Marcy McCann, who lives in the renovated upstairs apartment. When you walk in the front doors you might see a shadow of a man named Bob standing behind the counter, his wife Charlotte at the stairwell, coming back from doing a little housework upstairs. But first you will see a bakery, *Cakes by Ashton*, and to the right, *Heirloom Kitchen*. Bob and Charlotte aren't there anymore, but the town will never forget their names. Bob's divot remains, a testimony to his years of greeting customers, and Marcy has preserved much of the history of the building. "This building was created on a site using clay dug while creating the cellar. It's two bricks thick and went on the tax rolls of Shenandoah County in 1821," she told the Northern Virginia

Daily in 2024. Marcy had the brick sand blasted to remove the white paint and restore it to its original natural brick.

Kitty Jean Miller shared a heart warming tribute to her brother-in-law: "Bob was a man of small stature. But strong and knew his craft. I never saw him without his white shirt and tie. His usual attire in the store. He would don his big apron, go into the huge walk in refrigerator and haul out a huge piece of beef. Cut me some stew meat. Grind me some hamburger. Cut me some luscious steaks. In fact, when he was near death at the Winchester Hospital, and had not been responding - I felt the "call" to go see him. When I went into the room where he was, - he was propped on an angle with face toward the wall. Having worked in healthcare all my adult life, I knew that the sense of hearing is the last to go. So I talked to him. Just a one sided conversation. Memories. Words of love. Then I said emphatically "dammit Bob Funk, I have not had a decent steak since you stopped cutting meat" I know that he heard me. He moved his head toward the sound of my voice. That was his goodbye to me." Bob died in 1998. He and Charlotte were married 56 years. It would be 12 years before she followed him.

"Strasburg had maybe between 1500 and 2000 people when I was growing up." said Mike Funk. ".....pretty great growing up ovetop a grocery store; right on Rt. 11 before Interstate 81 was built and tractor-trailers and traffic and everything was coming through the town. Strasburg was as wonderful then as it continues to be today."

To Our Readers: If you have memories to add to folk histories, please contact Kathy Kehoe by emailing strasburgheritage@gmail.com, calling 540-465-4185 or contacting any SHA Board Member.

THE HISTORIC BUILDING PLAQUE PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION: Our plaque program hopes to increase awareness of, and pride in, buildings important to the history of Strasburg and Davis District. Obtaining a plaque is purely voluntary. Real estate taxes will not increase, nor will any limitations be placed on the property. There are neither restrictions nor covenants associated with obtaining a plaque.

ELIGIBILITY: The building must be at least 60 years old. - Thus, in 2024 for example, the structure must have been built before 1964. - What matters is the year the original house was built. Additions do not affect eligibility. The building must be within Strasburg or Davis District.



PLAQUE COST: \$120.00

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The application should be filled out as completely as possible. Please make your check payable to Strasburg Heritage Association and mail it, along with the completed application,

to Strasburg Heritage Association, 196 Maynard Lane, Strasburg, VA 22657.

Once the Association ensures the application is complete and the building is eligible, your plaque will be ordered. Delivery, which includes hardware for mounting the bronze plaque, should take approximately 6 - 8 weeks.

The Folklore Corner—The Answers
How well do you know Strasburg ?

by
Larry Vance

Answers
to the quiz in the Winter 2025 Newsletter.

1. What is the meaning of Shenandoah?

Daughter of the Stars

2. What is the translation of the Native American noun, Massanutten?

Potato Land or Potato Ground

3. Why was Sandy Hook-or simply "The Hook"! -so named?

Because the river makes a hook instead of a complete bend

4. What does Staufferstadt translate to mean in English?

Stovertown

5. What was the original name of Crystal Caverns?

Hupp's Cave

6. The distance between Strasburg and Woodstock is +/- 12 miles. What is the approximate distance when measured by the stream course of the Shenandoah River?

51 Miles

7. What Confederate General was mortally wounded at the Battle of Cedar Creek and captured by Union Cavalry near The Old Mill?

Stephen Dodson Ramseur (in 1864, he was 27 years old and one of the youngest generals in the Confederate army.)

8. (Follow up to question # 7). What prominent Union General was one of the last to visit this Confederate General before his passing at Belle Grove? They had been classmates at West Point.

George Armstrong Custer (remembered for many historical events, but particularly his last battle at The Little Big Horn in 1876.)

9. What is the name of the landmark where the Shenandoah River nearly comes into contact with the Valley Pike +/- a mile south of Strasburg?

The Bend of the River

10. In what year was the Strasburg water tunnel connecting a portion of Fort Valley and Strasburg completed?

1923

Fenton Rinker: A Good Christian Man

by *Dan Downey*

Born into a prominent family that settled at Cabin Hill (Conicville, VA) the expectations for Jacob G. Rinker were high. His father, Captain Jacob Rinker, was a well to do business man in Woodstock and his grandfather, Colonel Jacob Rinker, was a Revolutionary War hero who prospered in west central Shenandoah County. Jacob G. started adult life when he united in marriage with Diana Smith in 1842. The union produced a son, Fenton Theodore Rinker, in late November, 1843. At the time the young couple's expectations of life were great, but their dreams were soon shattered with news that Jacob G. had a terminal illness. He quickly prepared his will in 1844 just before he passed at age 23 with his son only nine months old. He designated his brother, Rev. Henry St. John Rinker, as Fenton's guardian to attend to his son's religious education and protection of property until the age of twenty-one years. To make circumstances even worse, the infant boy's mother died three years later leaving him an orphan. At this time Fenton was sent to live in the household of his father's first cousin, Levi Rinker, a wealthy mill owner, merchant and businessman who had a large family of his own along the banks of Mill Creek near Mt. Jackson.

By the time he reached age eight in 1852, Fenton moved to the new brick home of Colonel Daniel and Elizabeth Ann Rinker Stickley along the banks of Cedar Creek three miles north of Strasburg. Elizabeth Ann was his cousin. Apparently it was thought that the newly married couple that had not yet started a family would raise the boy and he would help on their farm. Henceforth Fenton was raised as a son and brother to future Stickley kids in this family. He received his education and religious training at the Stickley school and Walnut Springs Christian Church in Oranda until he was in his teens, all the while learning farming from Daniel Stickley. In this era of history all male youths eighteen and up had to serve in the militia. Fenton joined the 136 th Virginia Militia in late 1861. This timing coincided with the beginning of the War Between the States. Virginia Governor Letcher called out the militia to defend the state after the firing on Fort Sumter and the state's secession from the Union. By late winter 1862 the militia was being incorporated into the more formally trained regiments that eventually became the Confederate Army. Many of the youths that came from large farms had an advantage that they could join the cavalry as they owned their own horses. Fenton took it one step farther and enlisted in the horse artillery unit organized by Captain Robert P. Chew, later know as Carter's Battery. So did his close friend Laban Stickley who was living at the farm up the road at the beginning of the war. Both served together throughout the conflict. Although it might have been exciting to an eighteen-year-old to join such a unit he actually had an even greater incentive: by signing up on March 7 th he received a one-month furlough to return home signed by none other than the famous Turner Ashby himself! Things don't always work out as planned as he departed Winchester (twenty miles north of the Stickley farm) but a short four days later the entire Confederate Army withdrew to Strasburg with the Yankees close behind. Cedar Creek was the barrier separating the blue and gray for about a week. On the 18 th of March three guns of Chew's battery unlimbered on the hilltop above the Stickley House and duelled with the union batteries on the hill where I-81 now crosses. That same day the southern cavalry burned the covered bridge that had been over the creek since 1838. So Fenton's furlough was short lived. He continued to serve the Chew's battery throughout the war often returning home when the troops moved north and south along the pike. He was in every major campaign and did not get wounded or captured, although he came close to the latter. One time he had returned home ill and was in the house convalescing when the Yankees raided through. They entered houses as they pleased searching for "rebels" and confiscated whatever food and goods they found. The quick-thinking family members put him in bed in the upstairs bedroom covered with quilts, wearing a

woman's nightcap, face to the wall. They told the Yankees he was a "sickly old grandmother" and the soldiers believed them, so he got away. In 1914 when Cousin Jennie Stickley showed his picture to a visitor she commented "Isn't he too nice of a boy to be shot?"

After three more years of war Fenton was paroled in Winchester following Lee's surrender. He then turned his attentions to a young lady name Rebecca Ellen Swisher who lived near Mulberry Run (Clary) at the former Funkhouser farm, recently the home of Tillmer Stickley. The two had grown up together at school and church. Elder John Pirkey of Walnut Springs Christian Church married them November 27, 1866 at the bride's home, after which they moved "to their own farm" west of Hawkinstown near the middle road. Rebecca bore four children in the following twenty years: Laban (1868), Turner (1873), Casper (1877) and Lulu (1880). A fifth child, Jay Guy, was born in Nebraska (1888). Fenton maintained his steadfast faith throughout his life. He and Joseph Fultz were instrumental in building a Campbellite (Disciples of Christ) church known as Salem at Hamburg in 1877. A few years later, Fenton took the dramatic step of moving his entire family to Lancaster County Nebraska. Rebecca's eldest living brother, William B. Swisher, a pioneer doctor and rainmaker, and her youngest brother, Joseph H. Swisher, were residing in Nebraska at this time. Fenton was granted 160 acres under the Homestead Act and uprooted the family to settle in this new land. He lived in Lincoln, Nebraska, hauled cobs and operated a dairy. In 1910 at age 66 he died of arteriosclerosis and was buried in Wyuka Cemetery. His gravesite is on the list of the modern-day walking and driving tour brochure for that cemetery. Following his death Rebecca moved farther west with her children and ended up in Glendale, California. She died in 1937 and is buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park, along with several of her children. Her motivation for moving was likely that her oldest son was already living there along with other relatives.

Fenton's legacy was his children and descendants benefitted from the start he got in life as an orphan and ward of the Stickley family and his Christian upbringing at Walnut Springs. His "sister," Laura Stickley Bates, summed up his life in 1917 by recording that he was "a good soldier and good Christian man."





PO Box 525

Strasburg, VA 22657

Strasburg Heritage Association

Strasburgheritage@gmail.com

www.strasburgvaheritage.org

Annual dues are due in February; if you are not sure if you have paid your dues, please email us.

Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

MEMBERSHIP _____ Cost is \$20.00 annually

Additional Donation: _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

If this is a gift subscription, add your name and contact info here.

Please Mail Completed Form to:

Strasburg Heritage Association

PO Box 525

Strasburg, VA 22657