



Volume 25

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Issue 1

Strasburg, Virginia

NEWSLETTER

strasburgvaheritage.org

ANNUAL MEETING

Lena C. Artz – A Pioneering Botanist of the Massanutten



Sunday, Feb. 23, 2025

Program presentation by **Andrea Weeks, Ph.D.**

2-4pm at St. Paul Lutheran Church

W. Washington St. Strasburg, VA

Shenandoah County and the Valley were once home to a pioneering botanist, Lena Clemmons Artz (1891-1976), who was born and raised in Woodstock. Artz was a high school biology teacher who dedicated her life outside of the classroom to documenting the unique plant communities of Shenandoah and Rockingham Counties as well as advocating for their preservation.

Little was known about her life or work until an archive of her field notebooks and personal papers was discovered in 2021 at Laurel Ridge Community College. Artz lived in a cabin near Elizabeth Furnace from 1935 until her passing in 1976. Andrea Weeks, Ph.D./Associate Professor and Director of the Ted R. Bradley Herbarium at George Mason University has studied Artz in an ongoing project to uncover her life and legacy, what her archives and plant specimens tell us about her scientific research, and how her life unexpectedly intersected with that of another unsung botanist of the Valley, Francis W. Hunnewell, II, the last private owner of Belle Grove Plantation. Andrea has had many adventures along the way and continues to do so as she learns more about Artz and her connections in Shenandoah County.

President's Message

Tim Taylor

Happy 2025 to all! I hope everyone's year has gotten off to a great start. The Strasburg Heritage Association is looking forward to another year of serving you and our community. I am excited about our Annual Membership Program Meeting on Sunday, February 23. I attended a previous presentation by Dr. Weeks on Lena Artz and it was outstanding. More details and information about the program are in this newsletter. This is our annual membership meeting so we will be conducting the business of approving board members and officers for the upcoming year. We need at least 10% of our membership to constitute a quorum, so I hope you can join us. The Nominating Committee's Proposed Slate of Board Members and Officers will be shared at the meeting and are listed on our website.

It is the time of the year we ask everyone to renew their membership by paying their annual dues of \$20. We appreciate any financial support you can provide. We continue to support our community by giving scholarships to graduating Strasburg High School students, providing support for two community meals, sharing Strasburg Community history and folklore via our awesome newsletter, a podcast channel, and informational programs, and assisting with various events such as Vintage in the Valley and Shenandoah County Heritage Day. Another exciting project we are working on is compiling our folk stories from past newsletters along with our ghost and graveyard stories into a book. There are so many great folk stories from our community, so we know the book will be a big hit!

Our Holiday Homes Tour was a great success. More information is in this newsletter. This fall we look forward to hosting our ghost tours in cooperation with the Town of Strasburg. If anyone knows of any ghost stories, please reach out to me!

Thanks for your continuing support! This organization is blessed with a hard-working board that is great to work with and loves serving our community. We appreciate our membership and if you have any ideas on how we can better serve you, do not hesitate to reach out to a board member. We look forward to another exciting year of sharing Strasburg community culture, heritage, and history.

Sincerely - Tim Taylor - SHA President



Lena Artz (1891-1976)

A Little Folk History New News About Old News And Other Perspectives

Memories of World War II:

"I was a young girl of eleven when WWII ended in May of 1945. I turned twelve in Sept. of 1945. My parents were immigrants from Germany, coming to the United States in the late 1920s. Consequently, all my relatives at that time lived in Germany. I remember worrying so much about them, especially my grandparents. My parents, as a young married couple, came to the United States because of their fear of Adolph Hitler. My brother and I were born in Pennsylvania. It was indeed a wonderful day when the war came to an end. Many tears of joy. War is a terrible thing. I dread to think about the possibilities that may be with us in our future. I hope and pray for peace every day." --Dee Keister

"My mother, Patsy Cameron Rutz, who lived on the West End of town, told me that she remembered when the war ended that the fire alarm went off and all the churches that had bells started to ring and everybody was blowing their car horns." --Kathy Combs Kehoe

"ARMISTICE DAY, World War I: My mother, who was a child at the time, told the story of the mail man coming by their house and told my grandmother Kitty (who was hanging clothes on the line) that World War I was over. She had two sons "over there"...my uncle Melton and my Uncle Mays. My mother said that Granny Kitty raised her apron to her face to wipe the abundant tears away. Lest we forget." --Kitty Jean Morris Miller

A Little More on The Virginia Restaurant: (See Newsletters Fall 2009 and Fall 2019)

Strasburg resident Dee Keister, now 91 years old, shared her earliest memories of Strasburg. "The beautiful mountains. That is what my mother loved most about the Commonwealth of Virginia. My parents immigrated from Germany to the United States in the late 1920s. My mother loved the mountains of Virginia because they reminded her of her childhood German home. The Skyline Drive gave her special delight. Many summers, as I was growing up, we would travel from our home in Pennsylvania to spend a weekend at the lodge at Big Meadows. The year that I was sixteen years of age, we ventured from the scenic Skyline Drive to have dinner in Strasburg. Where did we eat? The Virginia Restaurant, of course. Little did I know that my future husband, Pat Keister, lived just a half of a block from the restaurant. Pat loved the Virginia Restaurant. One of his favorite Christmas gifts, as a child, was a Virginia Restaurant gift card. I often wonder if Pat was in the restaurant when my parents and I had dinner there when I was in my teens. I like to think that he was. When Pat took me to meet his parents, (Arline and E. E. Keister), we went to the Virginia Restaurant for dinner. When we walked in, I recognized the inside of the restaurant and told Pat "I have been here before". During this visit to Strasburg, Pat took me fishing in his beloved Shenandoah River. Was this a test? I'll never know. I had experience fishing on a lake but never in a river. We waded. Pat decided to teach me how to bait the hook with a minnow. On my first attempt, the minnow slipped out of my hand into the river. And then, jumped back into the bait bucket. What are the chances? If it was a test, I think I passed. I met Pat in October of 1952. I was in training to be a

Registered Nurse at Lankenau Hospital, a Lutheran hospital in Philadelphia. Pat was in his senior year at the Lutheran Seminary of Philadelphia. There were several dances at the School of Nursing during the academic year to which Lutheran Seminary students were invited. Pat came to the October dance. He asked me to dance and we danced together for the rest of the evening. A week later, Pat called me to ask me for a date. Unfortunately, I was on night duty at the time and was unable to go out with him. That was still true for the next several times that he called me. He was beginning to think that I did not really want to go out with him. He decided that he would try one more time. Thankfully, that time, I was finally off night duty. Our first date was in December. We married nine months later. I believe our marriage was meant to be. Two weeks after our September wedding, we made our home in Scotland as students at the University of Edinburgh, Pat as a student of the graduate school of theology and I enrolled in the undergraduate school to study British history and English literature. A wonderful way to begin a marriage. We had 68 wonderful years together before Pat's death in 2021. I miss him so very much." —*Dee Keister*

Mike and Kathy Combs Kehoe were talking in a booth at the Virginia Restaurant in 1971 when Mike asked her to go with him to the Hometown Theater. They walked down King Street and watched a John Wayne movie. Mike was in college and didn't have much money to spend on a date, but it was a Sunday and dollar night at the movies. In March, 2024, they were married fifty years. —*Kathy Kehoe*

Donald Miller and Kitty Jean Morris had their first date at the Virginia Restaurant. "And the rest is history." said Kitty, she and Donald were married 60 years until his death in 2022. When the town put in new sidewalks, an organization called Hometown Strasburg sold individual bricks in memory of people or places. Kitty bought a brick near the site of the old Virginia Restaurant: (Now Sager Real Estate). Look for Kitty's brick: DONALD AND KITTY, FIRST DATE, 1961. —*Kitty Jean Morris Miller*

A Little Bit More on Barricks Shoe and Variety Store. (See newsletter Summer 2023)

Larry Allamong belonged to a trail club and frequently rode horses with the club and his brother Jim. He wore a pair of "dingo boots", a soft leather boot popular at the time. When he wore a hole in his dingo boots, he took them to Barricks. Mr. Barrick patched them so well they never needed patching again. Larry also remembers how Mr. Barrick used to make historically correct items for Civil War reenactors to wear during reenactment battles. Once Larry took Barrick a piece of leather and asked him to make boots, but when Mr. Barrick examined the leather, he explained it was the wrong kind of leather to make boots like the soldiers wore in the 1860s. —*Larry Allamong*

"As I think you know, I was a flight attendant for United airlines for 30 years. Nineteen of those 30 years I was married and living in Strasburg. Most of my flights were out of Dulles to the West Coast, either Los Angeles or San Francisco. Returning from the West Coast, I always made an announcement as we flew over the Shenandoah Valley and pointed out Strasburg. I would say that if they looked carefully and closely, they might see my two children out playing in the yard. On at least two occasions, I was stopped by a passenger who asked me if I knew Byrd Barrick, and, of course, I replied that I did. Both told me that Byrd Barrick was the best repairer of cowboy boots

anywhere. One said, 'I tell all of my cowboy boot wearing friends about Byrd Barrick, and they all take their cowboy boots to him for repair.' I remember asking where these two gentlemen lived, and neither lived very close to Strasburg, but they came all this way to have their cowboy boots repaired by Byrd. Just another small world story. –C. J. Borden

Coach Glen Proctor, Strasburg High School

In 1964, Glen Proctor was working in Charleston, West Virginia when he got a call asking him to come to Strasburg to interview for a job as coach for Strasburg High School. He was making \$3000.00 a year coaching a swim team at a country club. He interviewed with then superintendent of Shenandoah County schools W.W. Robinson and was offered \$4350.00 annual salary which he accepted. (SHA Oral History Podcast on www.strasburgvaheritage.org)

William “Bill” Stover shares his memories of Coach Proctor:

“I first met Glenn Proctor in the fall of 1965, his first year at Strasburg. I was in the eighth grade and he was my fourth period World Geography teacher. I began playing junior varsity football in ninth grade under Jack Bauserman. We were undefeated that year. In 10th grade I began to play varsity for Coach Proctor on a team with 21 players. We did not have enough players to have a full scrimmage, we practiced the left side against the right side. Our record was 5 and 5. As a junior, I was on Coach Proctor’s first winning team, just barely, we were 6 and 4. That year coach changed the shade of purple of our uniforms to Northwestern Purple, gray pants, and gray helmets. We sort of looked like the Oakland Raiders. I was not very big maybe 140 pounds, Coach always said “It’s not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog.” For years, I thought he made that up, however I believe he is quoting Mark Twain. As a senior, in the 1969 season we were 7 and 3. In the locker room before the last game of the season, he talked about the fact that we were the first class that he had worked with for his first 5 years. He had a tear in his eyes....

After graduation in 1970, I was fortunate to be able to join the “chain gang” along with Ralph Hottle and Harry Miller (we ran the chain and down marker for all of Strasburg’s home games until 2005; however Harry is still doing it.) Being on the opposing teams’ sideline, I got to hear what the other coaches had to say about Coach Proctor and how they respected him. That year the team went 10 and 0, as you can see, a gradual improvement. As I look back, I was blessed to have been able to play for Coach Proctor. His teaching of hard work and discipline helped me when I enlisted in the Army National Guard. I have no idea how many men in Strasburg have been influenced by this man. I am just glad to have been one of them.

When I see Coach today, he calls me by the number I wore when I played for him, #86. How he remembers my number from 55 years ago, I will never know, However, I have talked to other players and he remembers their number too.” -William “Bill” Stover

When the Strasburg High School Rams were headed to the VHSL (Virginia High School League) state championship in December 2024, Jake Layman shared his memory from 1992.

“It was the fall of 1992 and we had just won the semifinals and were heading to the Virginia state championship at a coal mining town in southwest Virginia. I was sitting on the bus, watching the snow covered Appalachian Mountains pass by the bus windows while I nervously listened to Poison, by Bel Bob Devoe, over and over on my Walkman cassette player. The other guys sat in their seats, in the near complete silence generally demanded by the legendary coach of our team,

Glenn Proctor.

We had no idea what we would face, but every one of us were excited by the opportunity to play in the Big Game. After all, we had started out the season terribly, losing one of our first games and barely winning the other. Coach rearranged the defense, making it smaller but much faster and more aggressive, while expanding his experiment with the spread offense (a daring change for a man who usually still ran the same Korean War era offensive scheme in the 1990s). It changed everything - we ended up crushing traditional rivals, such as Central High (49 to 7) and breezing through the playoffs to arrive at this day.

Ultimately, we would end up losing by less than one touchdown. We drove back home, into a town that was decorated for an expected victory homecoming - but ended up lacking a single soul at that late hour in the night. Nonetheless, the experience will never be forgotten by any of us.

I will always remember three great lessons from the honor of playing football for Coach Proctor:

1. Grit is the most important element to success
2. When the game plan isn't working, you have to be flexible and humble enough to change it
3. There is no substitute for hard work - no short cuts

I wish victory for Strasburg High School, but more than anything I am so happy these guys get to experience such a spectacular thing. I hope they have learned what Coach Proctor called, "the lessons that can't be learned in any classroom." --*Jake Layman*

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.

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Shenandoah County Heritage Day 2025

Come out to beautiful Shrine Mont at Orkney Springs on Saturday, April 12 for the annual Shenandoah County Heritage Day. The event will be held in the hotel's ballroom from 11am-3pm. The day will include dozens of local history and family genealogy exhibits, lectures and the VA250 Mobile Museum Experience. The Mobile Museum is housed in a 72' tractor trailer and, for us, will be a kick-off to the American Revolution 250 commemoration activities in 2026. Hosted by the Shenandoah County Historical Society and the Shenandoah County Library Archives, we invite you to exhibit your own family history or local history topics. There is no charge to exhibit and tables/chairs are provided. Call the Historical Society at 540-459-1795 and leave a message, or call archivist Zach Hottel at 540-984-8200 by April 1st. We will get back to you.

The Folklore Corner
How well do you know Strasburg ?
by
Larry Vance

1. What is the meaning of Shenandoah?
2. What is the translation of the Native American noun, Massanutten?
3. Why was Sandy Hook-or simply "The Hook"! -so named?
4. What does Staufferstadt translate to mean in English?
5. What was the original name of Crystal Caverns?
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?
7. What Confederate General was mortally wounded at the Battle of Cedar Creek and captured by Union Cavalry near The Old Mill?
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.
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?
10. In what year was the Strasburg water tunnel connecting a portion of Fort Valley and Strasburg completed?

Answer the following and check back next edition for the answers.

2024 Holiday Homes Tour

by Mary Redmon and Barbara Adamson

Saturday, December 14, 2024 was clear and cold – just right for a wonderful holiday homes tour! We want to thank our hosts for their generosity in sharing their lovely homes with us. They include Elizabeth Stratton and Jim Stup; Wendy and Steve Pieper; Carol Johnson; Liesl Schillinger; and the Sons of Confederate Veterans, owners of the iconic Dosh House. We also want to thank our dedicated volunteers at each of the houses. Lastly we thank those who generously helped us with ticket sales at Clementine Vintage, Sager Real Estate and Strasburg Visitor and Information Center at Hupp's Hill.



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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.

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