



Strasburg Heritage Association

Volume 11, Issue 3

*Strasburg, Virginia
www.strasburgvaheritage.org*

Fall 2011

SHA Quarterly Meeting

Strasburg Family History Share Fair 2011

Please join us for the 2011 Family History Share Fair – an opportunity to learn about Strasburg families and their histories which, of course, are what make up the history of our town. You are invited to come enjoy family photos, family trees, documents, books and other items relating to our town's history and spend the afternoon visiting with old friends and new. If you would like to participate and bring your own family information or would like to recommend someone else whom you think should be there, call 465-5570 for more information. Displays don't have to be fancy. We also invite everyone to bring photos or other memorabilia from Strasburg's 1961 Bicentennial Celebration. We know visitors will enjoy these items and we hope to be able to document them in photos if possible. The Fair will also include a few displays of general Shenandoah County history and a volunteer from the Shenandoah Room at the County Library in Edinburg. She will bring materials and share information about doing genealogical research in the Shenandoah Room. Refreshments will be served. You won't want to miss the lecture by Jim Artz on family research or John Horan's tour of the cemetery.

**Time: 2:00 – 5:00 PM Sunday September 11, 2011
St. Paul Lutheran Church W. Washington St. Strasburg
Exhibits All Afternoon**

**Jim Artz – “Getting Started With Your Family Research” – 3:15
John Horan – Tours Of Historic St. Paul Cemetery – 2:30 & 4:00**

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President's Letter

Barbara Adamson

This special 250th year of celebration is speeding by! Our latest 250th SHA activity was the successful Strasburg Pottery Fest held in June. I want to thank everyone who participated including Strasburg Museum, who co-sponsored the event, the Shenandoah Valley Potter's Guild who demonstrated pottery making for our visitors, Gene Comstock, who contributed his time and expertise doing pottery appraisals, John Huntsberger and John Adamson, who presented very informative lectures and those who displayed their extensive pottery collections.

We hope to see all of you at upcoming 250th events this fall!

REPRINTED! The Story of Strasburg

We are very pleased to announce that The Story of Strasburg reprint is now available. It was first published in 1961, on the occasion of Strasburg's 200th birthday. This slim volume was a compilation of articles and historical pieces from the Northern Virginia Daily's Bicentennial Edition. Importantly, it also contained Virginia H. Cadden's five-part History of Strasburg, also a part of the NVD's Bicentennial Edition. The reprinted volume has been expanded to include the text of Daniel Bly's excellent presentation from our February 27, 2011 Founding Families program, "Strasburg, Virginia: A New Look at the First Fifty Years", as well as his research regarding the origins of the Hupp Homestead. Also included is an update chapter about Strasburg since 1961. The book is priced at \$8.00 and is available at the Strasburg Museum and other local outlets, or from SHA (call 465-5570).

Hometown Meeting Invitation

Hometown Strasburg, a group with many successful projects under their belt, has invited community members and representatives from civic organizations to attend their next meeting on Thursday, Sept. 8 at 7PM at Town Hall. Hometown president, Carla Wallen, reports that the group would like to brainstorm possible ways that we can work together to improve our town. We hope that many of you can attend and explore ideas to make Strasburg an even better place to live.

Fall Litter Pick-Up

We've set the date for our fall litter pick-up on Rt. 11 south. The date is Saturday, November 12. Meet at 8:00 AM at the Old Mill parking lot. Remember gloves and sturdy shoes. Please join us – many hands make quick work!

GERMAN FEST
Saturday, Sept. 24th
10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Germanic Heritage Museum, Back Road, Hottel-Keller Homestead

Charles W. Heater

by

Marie Spence

Charles Wunder Heater was born into a family whose roots were had already been firmly planted in the soil of Virginia for generations. He was born on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1853 on the large family farm just south of Middletown, Virginia. As a boy, Charles worked on the family land and attended small local private schools. As an adult, he would reflect back among private groups of friends, to the difficult years when Civil War ravaged the Valley and battle surged back and forth over the family property. It was said that Charles seldom spoke openly about the tragic loss of his two brothers who were lost in those 1860s years.

In his late teens, young Charles became a "popular catch" among eligible, unmarried ladies of the local area. He was said to be quite handsome and well positioned with land. On June 16, 1874 at age 21, Charles Wunder Heater married Miss Cora A. Henkel of New Market, Virginia. Charles and Cora Heater likely planned a large farm family of offspring, as was the tradition in both their families. They had one son. Charles Haller Heater was born to the Heaters on January 16, 1879. As a young man, this son was an active farmer. He later became very interested in the railroad and became a locomotive engineer on the Pennsylvania and Erie Railroad. To family and friends, this only offspring was known as Hall Heater.

At the death of his father Solomon, Charles Wunder Heater assumed responsibility for operating the family properties, agricultural pursuits and the well being of his mother. The most well known part of the Heater land still abuts Belle Grove Plantation just south of Middletown, Virginia. The family home, now known locally as The Heater House, still stands as part of the Cedar Creek Battlefield. So efficient was he as an agriculturist, he was asked to assume leadership roles in local and state farming interests and chaired the Virginia State Board of Agriculture for a period of years. Governor Fitzhugh Lee appointed him as a Director of the Valley Turnpike Board. Heater served actively in that capacity until the Valley Pike (Route 11) was officially turned over to the State of Virginia for maintenance. Heater was especially influential in construction of a number of iron bridges erected across bodies of water along the Valley Pike locally.

Heater followed some of his ancestors by being a long time Democrat by political stance. He became an influential leader locally and statewide for that political party. Although repeatedly asked to personally run for various statewide offices, he never allowed himself to be put up as a candidate for state legislature positions. He appears to have been a man of sharp intellect, possessing a charismatic personality. Many people both locally and throughout the state seemed to know and like him. He and his wife were both members of the Lutheran Church, attended church services and activities regularly with Heater's sisters-in-law when they visited. He was prominent on the Church Council for many years.

In addition to agricultural, political and church activities, C. W. Heater proved quite astute in financial investments. He was a stockholder in the Town of Strasburg's Massanutten National Bank and in the People's National Bank of Strasburg as a trustee and advisor. Just after the end of the First World War, Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Heater left their Heater residence and large farm surrounding the house. They crossed Cedar Creek and took up residence in the Town of Strasburg in March of 1919.

C. W. Heater purchased a home on High Street known among long-time Strasburg residents as the Chiles

property which had a new rear addition. The Heaters set about making large repairs and numerous improvements to the structure including the addition of a lofty front porch and bay windows for the comfort and safety of the family and frequent visitors. The Heaters would own their East High Street property until 1941. In 1942 William and Mary Ellen Ellifrits purchased the Heater residence and lived there for many years. In 1994 Ronald and Sandy Miller bought the property. In 2011, the one time Heater residence was purchased by Timothy and Rhonda Taylor and continues to be the home of Mayor and Mrs. Taylor, their two daughters and numerous pets today.

Heater quickly immersed himself into Strasburg town life. This was a community with which he and his relatives had a long familiarity. Charles soon became a well recognized person on the streets of Strasburg. Just a little more than one year after moving into town, C. W. Heater did something he had never been willing to do before. He allowed his name to be placed on the ballot, as a candidate for mayor of Strasburg. He ran and was unanimously elected in June 1920, succeeding Mayor Hurn. As town mayor, C. W. Heater gained such wide respect and acceptance he was reelected in 1922 for another term. As town leader, "improvement" seems to have been the major theme of Heater's campaign and terms as mayor. During C. W. Heater's leadership years, big changes and plans were made. New land was annexed into the town and the push was made to create an adequate water system for Strasburg. Mayor Heater, as Superintendent, spearheaded the Strasburg Water Project to become a full reality.

A tunnel was blasted and bored through Three Top Mountain into Fort Valley, where a 25 million gallon capacity reservoir was constructed. Many local residents found work hauling away rocks and doing other aspects of the project. Upon completion, Mayor Heater stated, "An adequate supply of pure water (is assured) for many years to come."

When the C. W. Heater family took up residence in Shenandoah County and Strasburg in particular, the town and its immediate surrounds encapsulated a population upwards of two thousand. Heater envisioned continued progress and growth with the possible presence and availability of traditional necessities for longtime and newly arrived residents. Heater and the majority of his mid 1920s council felt that such necessities of good living included the sufficient water supply and such other things as electric power for domestic and industrial needs and a telephone network for private and business uses.

Through the determined efforts of Mayor Heater and the Strasburg Town Council members, contracts were secured and signed with the Northern Virginia Power company to produce electric capability to the area with the Strasburg town limits as well as the areas immediately outside the town boundaries. The signed contracts were written to be binding that the Northern Virginia Power Company provide power and electric service to Strasburg for the next three decades.

The Honorable Charles Wunder Heater was able to accomplish many progressive projects for the town and its citizens. Mr. C.W. Heater continued to take an active interest in agriculture, finances and town happenings. He was frequently seen walking Strasburg's streets conversing with those he met. He often sat in a comfortable chair on his High Street front porch with a book in his hands observing life in the family friendly community. His tall, stately, upright figure with white hair and mustache was a regular sight in Strasburg for many years as people often stopped him to talk or to ask for advice on some matter.

Charles Wunder Heater died on January 21, 1932 at the age of seventy-nine. This man from a long line of Virginians had seen Civil War, a World War and the opening years of what would be known as the Great Depression. He was able to make a distinguished positive difference in the world in which he lived, including the citizens of Strasburg.

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2011 Heritage Holiday Homes Tour

The 2011 Strasburg Heritage Holiday Homes Tour will be held on Saturday, Dec. 10 from 10:00am to 4:00pm. SHA will again sponsor the tour in partnership with the Massanutten Garden Club. For this special year, our 250th birthday celebration, we have lovely homes to visit. They include the old Rosalie Cash home at 276 W. King St. owned and beautifully renovated by Jim Whitehead and Sheila Cleary, the old Rickard house at 292 W. Queen St., carefully restored by owner John Massoud, Mary and Sam Hitchings home, the historic Sonner house, at 208 W. Queen St. , and the home of Steven and Rachel Schetrom, known by many as the former home and office of Dr. and Mrs. Winkfield at 168 N. Massanutten St. The congregation of the historic Strasburg Presbyterian Church were planning to welcome us to their church and the manse, but the unfortunate fire in July has made that impossible. We know that the church will be restored within a few months and we wish them our best. At this time, we do not know where the final stop on our tour will be. Your help as a volunteer for the tour would be welcomed. Please call 465-5570 if you would like to be a part of this popular event.

What Do You Remember About.....Growing Up in Strasburg?

Diane Artz Furlong: I remember it was possible to know almost everyone you saw. That you didn't have to leave town to buy a new dress or a pair of shoes because there were shops right here. I remember it was quiet although the sound of a train whistle was commonplace. It was an event if a car came by the house that didn't belong on that street. Groceries from "uptown" were delivered to the house in a cardboard box and milk bottles magically appeared on the front porch. We went to the doctor and dentist a few blocks away because my mother couldn't drive a car. It snowed deeply in the winter and the summers were long with a family vacation every year. In the summers, I remember going to the movie every week (if the movie was deemed appropriate!) and going to the town pool every day. I remember knowing that Strasburg was a small town without much to offer by way of excitement or adventure and that many of my friends bemoaned this and looked forward to the day they could leave. But I never did. I have always found my contentment here.

Leigh Henry: A continuous loop of traffic made up of teens circling the town looking for action & each other - remember that? Joe Wolfson's - overalls & ties, the Dairy Queen perched beside the town run, the newsstand - what a great place! Toys stacked to the ceiling, comic books & candy, paperback books...and, parades.

Pam Tewalt Snapp: Virginia Rest with homemade french fries and ketchup, and the Newsstand--two of my favorite places.

Brenda Kenney Stensney: The fact we walked everywhere..

Diane Artz Furlong: The fire alarm going off every Thursday evening at 7 p.m. It was a call for the weekly meeting, I believe. And don't let's forget the beacon light going round and round at night.

Mary Campbell Redmon: Lloyd's Department Store, Riddlebergers (bought first homecoming dress there), Jazbo's, Tommy Hart cooking at the Hometown Restaurant (hot burger special w/ mashed potatoes and gravy), Kaplin's on the corner of Fort and Main had a candy store in the back--a nickel would get you a day's supply of Mary Janes, wax bottles soda bottles, fireballs, etc., People's Drug Store was a TALL building, Johnson's Grocery, bowling alley, pool hall, Silco, Barrick's, Brill's Grocery, the immortal Sylvia's Restaurant.

Karen Rinker: Playing softball on field behind the elementary school, hangin on the bridge at town run; I remember I thought the town parking lot looked bigger with the carnivals then but realize its actually rather small, long tall cokes at the Virginia Restaurant, parties at double bridges, not being afraid to walk home from town late at night, dances at the fire department.....I miss the old days! The only time we stayed in was when we were sick, we went out and played all day, we were not allowed to be couch potatoes.

Linda Meloni: The carnival behind the fire department, The Jewel Box, Silco, Virginia Restaurant, and Western Auto. And all the hippies standing on the corner in front of the Virginia Restaurant, and of course!!!--the wonderful ff & ketchup!!!!!!

Roxie Lee Rush: Hanging out with a group of kids on the bridge across from the Tastee Freeze. I will never forget the ketchup at the Virginia Restaurant and ice cream floats for breakfast before school. We never locked our doors when we went to bed.

Debbie Huntsberger Winkler: I remember the Virginia Restaurant and Mr. Fisher sitting on the same stool every time I went in there.

Terri Shrader: Don't forget the skating Ring at Crystal Caverns, spent many Friday, Sat. and Sundays there. And the rides on the Fire Trucks, they would come out and pick up the children and take them into the town lot for the Fireman's Carnival. And the NewStand ...and penny candy.

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Membership Application & Renewal

Name: _____
Address: _____
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MEMBERSHIP: _____ Cost is \$20.00

Additional Donation: _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

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