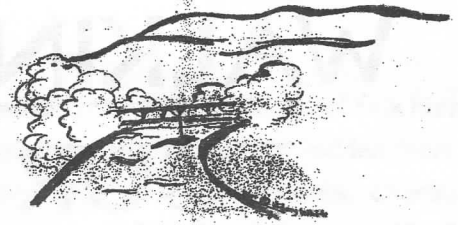


Strasburg Heritage Association



Volume 3, Issue 2

FALL 2003

Strasburg, Virginia

General Meeting SUNDAY, SEPT. 21ST

All Are Invited!!!

The Strasburg Heritage Association's upcoming General Meeting is a very important one. Please mark your calendars for Sunday, Sept. 21, from 4-6 p.m., at Strasburg High School's new Library, and invite your friends! Melanie Griffis Tillison of the Valley Conservation Council will give a program on **Better Models for Development in the Shenandoah Valley**. This will follow the lines of the Council's book, co-produced with Ed McMahon and the Conservation Fund. Ms. Tillison will focus on principles for better development, including preserving historic resources, conserving natural and scenic assets, and respecting local character in new construction.

"When people come to the Valley, what do they look for? Beautiful mountain landscapes, productive farms, wonderful historic architecture, rural traditions, small historic towns. This is the image of the Valley region—but is that what they see? Increasingly haphazard new development is rapidly eroding the unique character of our region. For every beautiful view of the mountains, another is marred by houses built on a ridge line. When a farmer retires, the next thing to crop up in his field is a 'Lots for sale' sign. What can be done?"

"Across the nation, Virginia and the Valley there are examples of 'Better Development.' Downtowns are being rejuvenated, open space is being preserved, community landmarks are being renovated for new uses, farmers are banding together to protect their way of life.

As citizens, we need to have a vision for what we want our communities to look like and be able to point to examples of the way those things are being done right now to achieve our vision to our local officials. Together we can work toward creating and maintaining the kinds of communities we want to live and work in.

Because we feel this is such an important subject, SHA has sent invitations to our Town of Strasburg and Shenandoah County officials, including the Town Council, Board of Supervisors, and Planning Commissions, as well as to builders, developers, realtors, the Preservation League and Chamber of Commerce members so that as many people as possible can benefit from the ideas shared at this program.

Town Tales from our President

Sarah Kehoe Mauck

Stirred by recent articles in our newspaper about the Shenandoah River, friends and I grabbed inner tubes one afternoon and spent three hours floating around Deer Rapids. The beauty and peacefulness swept me away to the carefree "Huck Finn days" of my childhood. A lone crow's caw and the trickle, then rush, of the water were the only sounds; the BLUE mountain seemed close enough to just reach out and touch; and the crystal sky went on forever; -ahhhhh, a day of beauty and wonder. How lucky we are to have this natural resource, this treasure right here in "our own backyard". I hope we will always be able to enjoy the Shenandoah River and that our children's children can experience it as well. This hope is why I care about our heritage and why this association is so important to me.

WALKING TOUR COMMITTEE

John Adamson

Strasburg is a great town to walk around in. Our history and old buildings and houses overlap in the Historic District in an interesting way, known well to only a few locals. In the mid 1980's a number of caring Strasburg citizens created a good walking tour that shares the history and architecture with anyone who follows the seven signs. Unfortunately, the addresses of all the buildings have been changed since those signs were erected.

As reported in our last newsletter, SHA is working with Strasburg's Tourism Committee to redo the old Walking Tour. The SHA members walked the old tour and decided that not only did the addresses need correction, but that additional information would improve the tour. In the process, we are increasing the number of signs to ten. The revamped Walking Tour will have more information about the east end of Strasburg, and a couple of new signs on High and Queen Streets. There will be mention of the Mt. Zion Methodist Church, the Riverview Cemetery, more old houses and some other tidbits of Strasburg history.

Working on this effort are: Sarah Mauck, Carla Wallen, Dee Keister, Jana Howard, Gin Cadden, Leon Smith, Mike Whittle and myself, John Adamson. We hope to complete our work within a few months, but there is still time for anyone who wants to join in. If you are interested in helping, please contact me and let me know your ideas and availability.--John Adamson, 465-5570.

AROUND THE TOWN.

Living Towns Conference--Towns & Counties: Partners in Planning;
Wednesday, Sept. 17, Grace Episcopal Church, 110 N. Church St., Berryville, call Town of **Berryville**

955-4081; Program goals include smart growth strategy, enhancing preservation and maintenance of the Shenandoah Valley's historic and natural heritage.

Stonewall Jackson Museum at Hupp's Hill Anniversary Lantern Tour of the Battlefield, Saturday, Oct. 11 from 7-9 pm--Admission \$3.00 adults, \$2.00 children.

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Our Neighbors: Stories from Fishers Hill

Kathy Kehoe

We are exploring the rural area of Fishers Hill during our Homes Tour this year. A few years ago, I collected a bit of Fishers Hill folk history. My information came from a few elderly life long residents of Fishers Hill. Maynard Baker, who was born in the only house he ever lived in, loved to talk about his homeplace. Other life long residents Hughie Keller, Lindy Miller and Doc Ritenour also had a few stories and tidbits of information, as well as local historian Mike Kehoe.

If you are exploring this Strasburg neighbor, you will pass under the railroad bridge which spans Rt. 601 and Tumbling Run. It was built of stone carved from a local quarry by Italian artisans and Irish laborers. In the 1920's, the bridge was made of wood. A railroad guard lived in a house near the bridge whose job was to walk along the bridge after a train went by to check for sparks from the train's coal fire. In those days, this was the only way to keep a wooden bridge from burning.

When you round the corner to go over the low water bridge toward Keller's Mill, you will probably notice the lovely white church sitting atop the hill. During the Civil War, this hill was all oak forest and the Confederates camped here. The church wasn't built until 1889, the land purchased from George A. Hupp for \$25.00, and chosen for its location near the depot. Lumber and labor were volunteered and about \$700.00 was used to build the main part of the church.

The small picturesque stream was called Falling Creek in the 1700's and was the power source for Keller's Mill in the 1770's. The mill was built between 1775 and 1777. It was set on fire by General Sheridan's troops in 1864 during the Civil War. Lindy Miller remembered the story passed down in his family was that a Yankee officer made the soldiers put the

fire out with water from the creek. Local folk history is that 100 bushels of wheat was kept hidden from both armies for Fisher Hill families to use. Charles Keller inherited the mill from his father in 1927. The mill ground wheat and barley and later provided its own electricity as well as power to the church and a few surrounding homes. Fishers Hill had electricity before its larger neighboring town of Strasburg, but the village of Fishers Hill never had electric lights on Sunday. John Keller thought it sinful and would only turn on the power if there was a church function on Sunday evening. Maynard Baker, grandson of John Keller recalled that when the function was over, "You had to hurry home from church 'cause Grandpap would go directly to the mill to turn off the lights." The mill stopped making flour in 1940 when the Pure Food Law made it unprofitable, but continued to sell grain and other animal feed until 1966.

During the Civil War, the brick house beside the mill was the Fisher homeplace. It was built in 1844 by Abe Stoner, and in 1880, John Keller bought the house, half interest in the mill and 11 acres for \$2,000.00. Because of sickness in the family, the house had the first bathroom in Fishers Hill. "But," laughed Maynard Baker, "the water for the bathroom came from the creek, so if the creek was muddy, so was the water in the bathroom."

As the years went by, Strasburg grew while its neighbor did not. Doc Ritenour, store owner and post master of Fishers Hill for many years told me in 1986 why he thought Fishers Hill remained a rural area: "Practically everybody that lived in Fishers Hill was related because they wouldn't sell any land to anybody they weren't related to. There's been more land transferred in Fishers Hill in the last 20 years than there has been in the last 100."

Strasburg Town Team Baseball

by Doug Cooley

Organized baseball of teams made up of former high school players and others only existed in Strasburg for a relatively short period of time from 1914 until the 1970's.

The first team was organized in 1914 and was made up of players from Strasburg, as well as the Fishers Hill and Lebanon Church areas.

During the 1920's, a Strasburg team was developed that included a few paid players. Dr. C. E. Miller, a veterinarian, was the manager. Their diamond was located about where the Lions Club shelter was built behind the Old Mill on Stover Avenue. A grandstand was erected for the benefit of the fans who came to watch them play.

Interest in baseball grew in the 1930's. The Strasburg Town Team moved east a few hundred yards and used the same diamond as the Strasburg High School. It was a nice field down the hill from the school where both baseball and football games were played.

Dr. C. E. Miller continued to manage the Strasburg team that played an independent schedule. Teams from Front Royal, Martinsburg and other towns in the

Valley were their opponents. Midway through the 1930's, a Shenandoah County League was formed which included teams from Strasburg, Woodstock, Edinburg and Mt. Jackson. It was so successful that the teams played twice each week on Wednesday and Sunday. It was a good healthy competition and a fine way for people from each town to get to know one another and cheer for their teams. Later on Dusty Rhodes, Russell Yates and others managed the Strasburg Team.

Things were going so well with this league that a nice grandstand was built by some of the Strasburg patrons. While there was some let up in baseball during World War II, it was resumed after the war. The grandstand was named "Kline Stadium" in honor of Fred Kline who was a former player and was killed in Europe during the Battle of the Bulge.

The last league that a Strasburg team participated in was the Apple Valley League during the early 1970's. Except for some wonderful high school baseball, Americas' pastime has become but a memory where an organized "town" team is concerned. Alas, floods have taken the once popular "Kline Stadium" and many great baseball memories down the river.

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NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

BILLY & CINDY ALLEN, STRASBURG

DEBBI LOCICERO & HOWARD
STICKLEY, FAIRFAX

DAVE & RUTH WAUGH, STRASBURG

The Strand Theater

Doug Cooley

Around 1920, William Dalke from Woodstock opened the Strand Theater on King Street near the Strasburg Fire Department. Early on, only silent motion pictures, including the Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton classics, *The Birth of a Nation*, and a number of westerns were shown. Mrs. Shacklet, who was William Dalke's sister, managed the theater and her husband operated the "player piano" while the movies were being shown. A couple of classrooms were used in the upstairs part of the theater until space became available at the Elementary School during the 1920's.

For several years the Strand was Strasburg's cultural center. Local persons who were good actors, singers or musicians put on some plays and musicals. The Strasburg High School used it for plays and other school activities. The "Grand Ole Opry" from Nashville, Tennessee put on their show at 2:00 a.m. one morning to a full house of local country music fans.

After twenty years of successful operation, William Dalke closed the Strand when he opened the Home Theater further west on King Street, leaving behind some wonderful memories of the days when motion pictures were first seen in Strasburg.



Strasburg Homes Tour 2003

Samantha Johnson

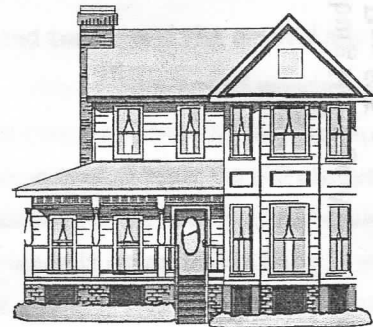
This year's Strasburg Christmas Tour is shaping up to be quite unique! Be sure to reserve Saturday, December 6 from 12:00 to 5:00 pm for pure seasonal enrichment. Tour guests can expect to find five beautifully decorated historic homes, three of which are located in the heart of the Fishers Hill Battlefield. This area was highly prominent during the Civil War with artillery of both sides firing overhead. Our homes located in Fishers Hill are surely going to reveal some unknown history and background from times gone by as we work our way through this historically rich back road.

Tour participants will also be delighted with the two properties showcased conveniently within Strasburg town limits. Our homeowners holiday decor will inspire your imagination and jumpstart the festivities of the season.

Plan on enjoying seasonal refreshments at the Presidents Museum in town and at the Erbach's Keller's Mill. Our appreciation goes out to this year's tour hosts:

Bill & Martha Erbach, Fisher/Keller Homestead & Keller's Mill; Mrs. Chris Foster, Barb House; Max Baker, end of Battlefield Rd.; Jay & Donna Alexander, 162 High Street; John & Donna Huntsberger, 384 S. Holliday St.

Tickets are \$10.00 and will be available after Nov. 10th. Volunteers wishing to help please call Barbara Adamson @ 465-5570.



Strasburg Heritage Association
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Mr. Don Miller
Strasburg, VA 22657

22657+525



STRASBURG HERITAGE ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 525
Strasburg, Virginia 22657

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone number _____

E-mail address _____

Membership: \$20

Patron (donation) _____

Total Enclosed _____

Please mail completed form to: Strasburg Heritage Association
P.O. Box 525
Strasburg, Virginia 22657