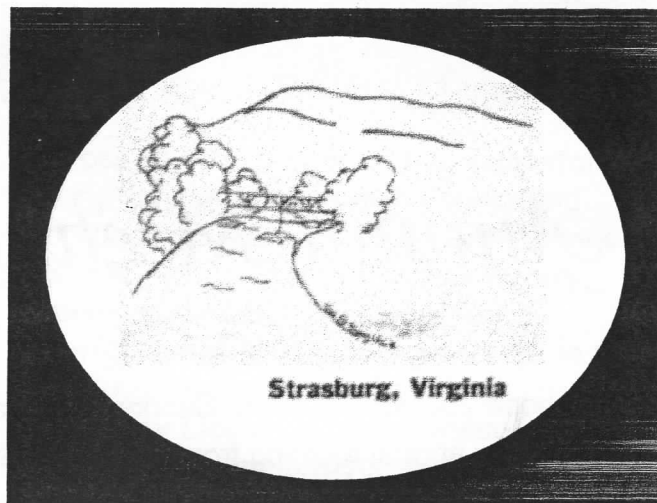


STRASBURG HERITAGE ASSOCIATION



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WINTER 2008

STRASBURG, VIRGINIA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY

MICHAEL WHITTLE

2007 was a wonderful year for the town of Strasburg and the Strasburg Heritage Association. We were able to be involved in many events around town, thanks to you, the members of our association.

§ Civil War Archeology, Bob Jolley, State Archeologist, Dept. of Historic Resources

§ Adopt-a-Highway on Valley Pike

§ Mayfest

§ Tour of the Hottel-Keller Memorial Homestead

§ Strasburg Heritage Day

§ Octoberfest- Living History Presentation

§ Holiday Homes Tour

I would like to thank everyone for all their support in 2007 and look forward to another great year in 2008. I would like to thank the officers of the Strasburg Heritage Association for staying on to serve another term.

Please mark your calendar for Strasburg Heritage Association Annual Meeting to be held on February 24, 2008 . We will be voting on the board and have a presentation by Patricia and Tori Failmezger, owners of Architectural Old House Parts in Front Royal. Also, mark your calendar to help with the Adopt-a-Highway clean up on April 19, 2008 . I would encourage all to consider volunteering to service so that we can continue to have these wonderful events.

Annual Meeting

February 24

We hope you will join us on Sunday, February 24 for our annual meeting from 4-6 PM at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Our program this year will be a presentation by Tori and Patricia Failmezger, owners of Architectural Old House Parts in Front Royal. They'll tell tales about the discovery and use of items they've come across in their business. They will also share stories about their beautiful Warren County home, a replica of Thomas Jefferson's retreat near Lynchburg, Poplar Forest. Tori and Patricia are very enthusiastic about their business and their home which should make for a terrific program. The public is welcome and refreshments will be served.

Homes Tour

2007

by

Barbara Adamson and Judy Troxell

Many, many thanks to our 2007 Homes Tour homeowners and volunteers who helped make this year's tour a success. First and foremost, we thank Phyllis and Emmett Umberger, Joan Williams and Tom Parker, Polly and Richard Wilson and Elaine Lederman for graciously

opening their homes to the community. Our visitors always comment on the warm welcome and holiday cheer they feel from our hosts. Our thanks also go to the Strasburg Guards Sons of Confederate Veterans and to St. Paul Lutheran Church for being part of the tour this year. The Strasburg Guards generously opened the historic Dosh House to the community and provided narrative about its history as well as displaying their own collections of Civil War memorabilia. We know many people were pleased to have an opportunity to see and learn about this important historic building. St. Paul Lutheran Church, the oldest congregation in Strasburg, generously welcomed us to their historic church and provided a venue for music events throughout the day.

The tour wouldn't be possible without the assistance of our hosts and hostesses, our committee chairs, Anna Belle Winkfield (Volunteers), Mary Ann Littrell (Tickets) and Lori Ryan (Refreshments) and the support of the Massanutten Garden Club. Their help with refreshments and decorations is invaluable. We greatly appreciate those who assist us by selling tickets including Hotel Strasburg, Peoples Drug Store, First Bank in Strasburg and Front Royal, Walton & Smoot and Lantz Pharmacy. We also thank those businesses who supported us with advertisement including Clip & Curl Beauty Salon, First Bank, Mowery Oil, Sager Real Estate, Six Star Catering, Stover Insurance, Strasburg Farm & Home and Wicked Stitches.

Gone but Not Forgotten

by
Kathy Kehoe

"Alas! how sad to part with thee,
Friend of my better days,
None knew thee but to love thee."

These words were Rebecca Kern's epitaph, engraved on her stone in the Kern family cemetery. We know from the recorded data of Frances Wilkins Jordan that Rebecca died in 1877 and was "Aged 75 years, 2 months and 24 days." Jordan, the wife of Strasburg dentist Dr. Walker Jordan, visited area cemeteries in 1964-65, recording the engraved inscriptions of gravestones. Her research can be found on index cards that are now archived in the Strasburg Community Library reference room. Jordan describes the small family cemetery as "located about three miles north of Strasburg on Rt. 81--near the Roy Downey property. It is to the left of Rt. 81." The story of Rebecca is told in the words on the stones. Rueben & Rebecca June Hockman had a son buried in Kern Cemetery in 1863 whose name was William Martin Hockman. This information is found on William's headstone, along with the fact that his mother Rebecca, evidently widowed by Rueben, later married Henry Kern. There are four boxes of Mrs. Jordan's work covering many family and community cemeteries in Shenandoah County. She lists the tombstone inscriptions of familiar names such as Bowman, Hockman, Hottel and Keller as well as many other families. Jordan saw that some gravestones were already becoming illegible in the 60's and by writing down each inscription, she saved important information of the families of our area.

Duane L. Borden's books are other good

sources of information listing tombstone inscriptions in Shenandoah County and surrounding areas. His book, "Tombstone Inscriptions of Strasburg and Vicinity, Shenandoah County, Virginia" was copyrighted in 1982 and is also kept in the reference room of the Strasburg Community Library. In his forward, Borden describes his reasons for gathering the information. "This compilation is being published as another tool for family historians, genealogists, and others, who have a sincere interest in their ancestors, and a deep respect for the memory of our deceased and their final resting places, as it is all too common for individuals to forget their ancestors, and the memory dulls with each succeeding generation. Each year many family bibles and other family records are destroyed by fire and water, and inexorable elements and forces each year obliterate many tombstone inscriptions."

Strasburg resident Martha Baker Jones, who has been researching local cemeteries and collecting information on the town's oldest cemetery, expresses concern that the stones that were readable when Borden and Jordan were transcribing are not nearly as legible as they were then. As the years go by and the natural elements wear down the inscriptions, the cemetery history is being lost. There are other little known plots that Jordan listed, old family cemeteries such as the one on the "late Jesse Funk property." Jordan describes it as unmarked and believes that "Stovers and Findleys are probably buried there." She adds that "There is an Indian graveyard on the same property and is straight back from the home of Frances Hoover." This site is now a rural subdivision. She also lists a private cemetery on the "Boyd Stickley property.....commonly called "The Indian

Graveyard" where there are no tombstones. Sandy Hook Elementary School now stands next to this site. Jordan believes these graves to be "those of Sonners and Robinsons." When Mrs. Jordan did her research in 1965 and 1966 she noted that information was already missing or illegible.

Calvin Sonnor has included this information on his website: csonner.net. He lists 96 cemeteries, inscriptions and some history, including 5000 names in Strasburg's Riverview Cemetery.

Borden collected information in eight volumes, from many of the same areas as Jordan, including Strasburg's oldest public cemetery where town Civil War veterans are buried. Borden lists what he believes is the oldest grave in the east section of the cemetery on Queen Street as that of Samuel Funk, who was born in 1779. Emanuel Crabill, a Confederate captain, was also buried here in 1880. Jordan copied the words on Catherine Hupp's headstone: "Our mother; Catherine; Wife of George F. Hupp; and daughter of Philip Spangler; Born March 16th 1794; Died Jan. 31, 1875; Aged 80 yrs 10 mos and 15 days; Married 61 yrs 1 mo and 9 days; He Giveth His Beloved Sleep." Another stone bears the name of Amanda Hupp who died in 1833 and describes her as the wife of John S. Hupp and the daughter of Joseph Bowman "of Ky." We know from our local folk history that Major Joseph Bowman was born at Harmony Hall (Bowman's Fort) in 1752, and was a famous Revolutionary War hero. Wikipedia Encyclopedia lists Major Bowman as "second-in-command during George Rogers Clark's famous campaign" when they seized the British-controlled town of Vincennes.

Our cemeteries are important, not just to those who feel connected to the deceased, but to genealogists and historians. Each cemetery tells its own story. As more

people are opting for cremation, cemeteries remain a historical record as markers are still erected in memory or to mark a buried urn. These engraved stones are often placed in family plots beside the graves of parents and grandparents. Traditionally, people were buried near where they had lived their lives and generally people's preferences of burial were similar to what their family believed. Custom and personal choices of religion often determined decisions about burial long before a person passed on. In Western Kentucky, there is small stone marker with my mother-in-law's name on it. She is not buried there because she was cremated in 1997, her ashes scattered in the three rivers that defined her life. But for history's sake, because we are a family of historians and preservationists, and so that family members and genealogists in years to come can find information on her life, the marker is placed beside her parents' graves to mark the date of her birth and death, in a little family cemetery just down the road from where she grew up.

I can remember walking through Riverview Cemetery as a little girl, holding my mother's hand, as we approached the family headstones. I remember reaching out to trace my finger across the deeply engraved words. I could read my grandparent's names and trace my finger across the numbers. Beside their double stone stood another with the names of my great grandparents. The line of tombstones told a story about my family, of when and where they had lived and died. The flowers we left on the grave were a symbol, a sign, that this person was remembered. My deceased relatives had walked through this cemetery themselves, teaching their children to pay their respects to their ancestors. I remember standing with the words at eye level, in my Easter bonnet, not quite understanding why my grandmother was "there" and not at

home in our kitchen where she belonged.

Today, I walked through Riverview Cemetery again, finding names familiar to my childhood. There was "Charles H. Spiggle, M.D.; 1900-1973." It was Dr. Spiggle who diagnosed my childhood diseases, including the German measles and chicken pox, and who patched up my finger the day I tore it open with an old nail while playing. I came across the name "Walter Lawrence Tate; W04 U.S. Marine Corp.; WWII; Korea; June 12, 1907; Oct. 28, 1985." Reading his marker brought back memories of many happy hours in their historical home at the foot of Fishers Hill when I was growing up and his daughter Sharon was my best friend.

Cemeteries can spark many memories. But we as a community are losing the information in our graveyards. Whether we believe the spirits of our ancestors linger near their graves, the monuments of our dead are a significant and important part of our history. White stones are turning black with lichen; engravings are wearing away as a result of acid rain, and are hard to read or not readable at all. Some stones are fallen over in the grass and are broken. If we want to preserve the headstones, we must learn how to clean and repair them and organize a volunteer effort to preserve the stones for future generations.

The Old Cemeteries Society is dedicated to researching, preserving and encouraging the appreciation of cemeteries. Their members catalogue, clean and restore, computerize burial records, combat vandalism, conduct historical research and give walking history tours. Gravehunter.net describes how to clean tombstones and stresses the importance of not using harsh chemicals—recommending a soft bristle brush and water. "It is very important to understand that acids are very damaging to marble and limestone.....for almost all stone, including polished granite. Many people have totally lost the polished face of a fine granite marker by conscientiously scrubbing with household bleaches." Gravehunter recommends a mild detergent, or a diluted solution of ammonia--1 part ammonia to 3 parts water, or a photographic solution named Triton X. Two websites, savinggraves.org and paintedhills.org warn against using shaving cream to clean a tombstone because even though it cleans well, it causes the stone to deteriorate, with long term affects similar to acid rain.

Our ancestors believed that cemeteries would always be highly respected and expected that their descendants would follow tradition and tend family graves. They believed that their tombstone was strong, their epitaph clear, engraved deeply into the stone. They had faith that someone would repair and restore and lovingly and dutifully tend their gravestones, believing the stone would always be righted, the letters kept readable. Tradition was that hallowed ground would never be neglected or untended and when the years had passed and a descendant walked through the cemetery, they would be able to read the names and trace their family history back many generations. The headstones would stand as a marker, a testimony to life. Someday another little girl would trace the engraved letters in the stone, trace the numbers of years gone by and of people she could only imagine.

Strasburg Heritage Association
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Strasburg, Virginia 22657

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL
Members 2008 Dues are now due!

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