

**Stewart Bell Jr. Archives**  
**Handley Regional Library & Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society**  
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**Shenandoah Valley Civil War Museum Collection**  
**Collection Number: 1601 THL**

**CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS:** Collection is open to all researchers.

**CONDITIONS GOVERNING REPRODUCTION AND USE:** Restrictions may apply concerning the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult a member of the archives staff for information concerning these restrictions. The user assumes all responsibility for identifying and satisfying any claimants of copyright. Some materials may require special handling.

**PROCESSING INFORMATION:** Processed by Buffy Knappenberger. Last updated May 2024.

**EXTENT:** .21 linear feet

**DATE:** 1863 – 2005 (2001 – 2022)

**SCOPE AND CONTENT:** The collection contains a variety of items concerning the Old Frederick County, VA Courthouse Museum in Old Town Winchester, including a program from the play *The Anvil* by Julia Davis that was performed at the courthouse, newspaper articles on the museum and the play, several of the brochures that the museum distributes, and several photographs of the exterior and interior of the building. Collection originally called “Old Courthouse Museum Collection.”

**BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL:** Built in 1840, the old Frederick County, VA Courthouse was located on the site of the original courthouse, built in 1744. The courthouse served as the judicial center for the county for 144 years and was the center of local activity during the Civil War. Judge Richard Parker, the judge in the John Brown trial was the presiding judge during that period. With the opening of the Winchester-Frederick County Judicial Center in 1984, the old courthouse went out of use. In 1996, a committee of Frederick County citizens strongly recommended that the Old Courthouse be renovated and reopened as a Civil War museum. The Old Courthouse Civil War Museum was opened to the public on May 24, 2003. In 2017 the running of the museum was taken over by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, and the name was changed to the Shenandoah Valley Civil War Museum.

**IMMEDIATE SOURCE OF ACQUISITION:** Gift of Trish Ridgeway

**CONTAINER LIST:**

**BOX 1**

*The Anvil* by Julia Davis – program for performance at the Old Courthouse Museum, October 8, 2005, and a preview (October 6, 2005) and review (October 10, 2005) of the play from The Winchester Star  
23 pages and four leaves, printed and typescript (photocopy)

Brochures – Miscellaneous brochures concerning the Old Courthouse Museum, printed

Exhibits- background for exhibits binder, 13 leaves, printed

News Articles – unnumbered, printed (photocopy)

Soldiers Identified for Courthouse Graffiti – 8 leaves, printed

Newspaper – Central Presbyterian Richmond, VA Nov. 19, 1863, page 2, has obituary of Robert Sherrard Bell  
**Physical Location: Oversize, Box 16**