

Key to the Past

STEWART BELL JR.
ARCHIVES



Summer 2024



Ruins of Hackwood House, ca. 1885, showing damage from the Third Battle of Winchester. MOLLUS Collection, US Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Inset: Hackwood in the 1950s following restoration. SBJA Collections.

From the Archivist

This time of year is often the busiest in the Archives Reading Room when researchers from across the United States, and sometimes from other countries, take advantage of the summer months to travel for research.

When I give tours of the Archives, I'm often asked what brings people to do research in our facility. My answer is that many of our researchers are looking for information about ancestors who once lived in the lower Shenandoah Valley. We can help them piece together the history of their family through our extensive genealogical collections.

What draws the remainder of our researchers varies. Recently, we have helped people uncover the history of their historic property, find information about a local sculptor, locate sites mentioned in the diary of a local Civil War soldier, and learn about the prison camp that held Hessian and British prisoners during the Revolutionary War.

With such a rich local history our work is always interesting, and we welcome inquiries from researchers about our collections and how to visit the Archives. You can reach us by email at archives@handleyregional.org or by telephone at (540) 662-9041, ext. 17.

Keep reading this issue to learn more about upcoming programs, one of our newest collections, the John and Anna Smith Family Papers, and a new service for family history researchers.

Lorna Loring

Archives Manager

Events and Programs

Family History Hunters: Chancery Court Records

Thursday, July 11
12:30 pm to 2:00 pm
Benham Gallery, Handley Library

Applying to Lineage Societies: Get Help with your Application

Saturday, July 27
10:30 am to 12:00 pm
Benham Gallery, Handley Library

Family History Hunters: Land Patents and Grants

Thursday, August 8
12:30 pm to 2:00 pm
Benham Gallery, Handley Library

Applying to Lineage Societies: Get Help with your Application

Saturday, August 24
10:30 am to 12:00 pm
Benham Gallery, Handley Library

Inns and Taverns of Winchester, with Mike Robinson

Saturday, August 17
11:00 am to 1:00pm
Robinson Auditorium, Handley Library

Virginia Apples & Cider: Past, Present and Future, author talk with Diane Flynt

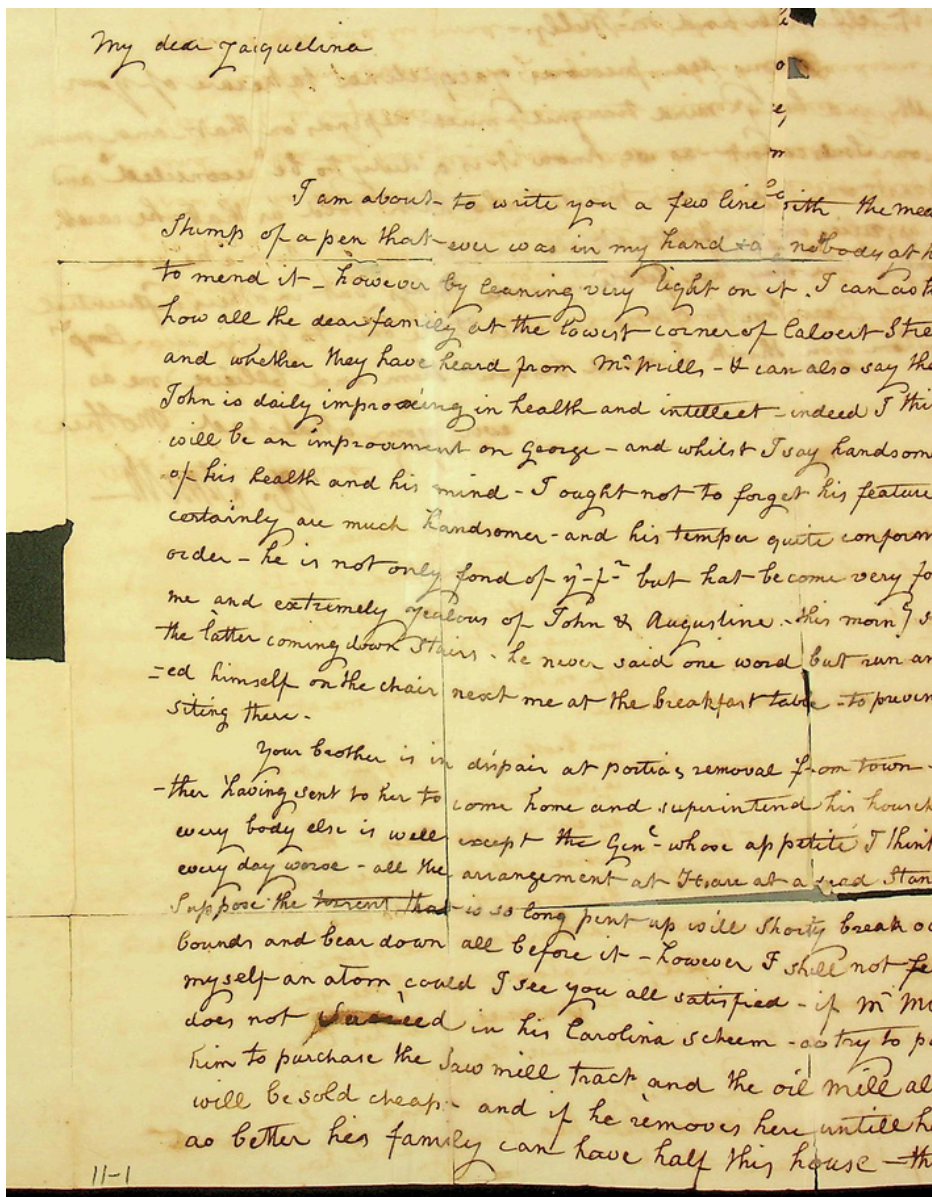
Friday, August 30
5:30 pm to 7:00 pm
Robinson Auditorium, Handley Library

Collection Highlights: John and Anna Smith Family Papers

One of our most recent additions to our collections is a series of personal letters between John and Anna Smith and their daughter Jacqueline from 1811 to 1833.

John Smith (1750-1836) was born in Middlesex County, VA. He served during Dunmore's War, the Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812, was a representative both in the Virginia House of Delegates and the U.S. House of Representatives. He settled in Winchester where he built his house, Hackwood, located just to the northeast of Winchester. The house was almost destroyed during the Civil War. (The picture at the top of the newsletter shows the original house shortly after the War. The house was been rebuilt and still stands, as shown in the inset photograph.)

In 1781, John Smith married Animus "Anna" Bull (1760-1831). She was born in Norristown, PA and was the daughter of Revolutionary War soldier Colonel John Bull. They had several children, including Edward Jacqueline Haines Smith.



My dear Jacqueline

I am about to write you a few lines with the mean-
stump of a pen that ever was in my hand & nobody able
to mend it - However by leaning very light on it. I can do so
How all the dear family at the lower corner of Calvert Street
and whether they have heard from Mr Mills - & can also say that
John is daily improving in health and intellect - indeed I think
will be an improvement on George - and whilst I say handsome
of his health and his mind - I ought not to forget his features
certainly are much handsomer - and his temper quite conform
order - he is not only fond of y^r - but has become very fond
me and extremely jealous of John & Augustine - this morning
the latter coming down stairs - he never said one word but ran an-
-ed himself on the chair next me at the breakfast table - to prevent
sitting there.

Your brother is in despair at postia's removal from town -
- then having sent to her to come home and superintend his household
every body else is well except the Gen^l - whose appetite I think
every day worse - all the arrangement at H^{ouse} at a good stand
I suppose the torrent that is so long pent up will shortly break o
bounds and bear down all before it - However I shall not fee
myself an atom, could I see you all satisfied - if Mr M
does not proceed in his Carolina scheme - as try to pu
him to purchase the Saw mill tract and the oil mill also
will be sold cheap - and if he removes here until he
as better his family can have half this house - the

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Jacqueline, as she was usually called in the letters, was born in Frederick County. In 1815, she married George William Murdock in Maryland. They had two children, George and John. George Murdock died in 1819 and Jacqueline remarried in 1827 to James Madison Daniel. The couple had several more children together. The family moved to Jacksonville, Florida, where she passed away in 1872 and is buried.

The letters to Jacqueline mainly contain news of family and friends. There is gossip and stories of local scandals, as well as her parents' advice and guidance on her education as a young lady. In addition, Anna frequently updated her daughter on operations of their plantation, with information about the farm's enslaved population. As such, the letters provide an intimate portrait of relations between the Smith family and the enslaved workers, and the daily life and concerns of a prominent Winchester family in the early 1800s.

The letter above was written to Jacqueline while she was at school in Baltimore. Anna, her mother, writes about her friends and neighbors, and gives news of her brother who "is in despair" over the departure of a young woman from the area. She concludes her letter with some loving advice: "Do my precious Jacqueline take care of your health and keep your mind tranquil. Much depends on that and much of our Soul's comfort."

Many of the letters are in a fragile condition, with brittle paper and tears along the fold lines that have been repaired with tape. They are due to be evaluated by a conservator who will determine if the tape can be removed and the paper repaired. In the meantime, scans of the letters are available to researchers in the Archives Reading Room.



Genealogy Assistance for Researchers

Do you need a little extra help with your family history research?

Beginning this summer, two of our skilled volunteers will be available to work one-on-one with researchers. Whether you need help beginning your family history research, want tips for searching genealogy databases, or have a persistent “brick wall” to overcome, our volunteers can help you learn the best strategies for your research.

All meetings take place in the Archives Reading Room and are by appointment. To make an appointment, please contact us by email or telephone.

Our monthly Family History Hunters meeting is another great opportunity to talk about your research and interact with other genealogists. Meetings are open to researchers of all levels of experience.

Meetings take place on the second Thursday of every month at 12:30 pm in the Benham Gallery of the Handley Library. No registration required.

Event News! Virginia Apples & Cider: Past, Present and Future

Friday, August 30

5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Robinson Auditorium, Handley Library

Diane Flynt, founder of Foggy Ridge Cider, the South's first cidery, and author of *Wild, Tamed, Lost, Revived: The Surprising Story of Apples in the South*, joins local cidemaker and apple grower David Glaize, of Winchester's Glaize Orchard and Old Town Cidery, for a book talk and lively discussion about the South's long history and vibrant future in apples and cider.

Diane's book will be available for sale through the Winchester Book Gallery following the event. We'll also have a pop-up exhibit featuring material related to the Apple Industry in the Archives collections.

After the book program, there will be a tasting featuring ciders from Old Town Cidery in the West Reading Room and Esplanade. Details of this event and registration will be available on the Library calendar in July.



Contact

Tel.: (540) 662-9041, ext. 17
Email: archives@handleyregional.org
Website: www.handleyregional.org/archives

The Stewart Bell Jr. Archives is a local history and genealogy center jointly operated by the Handley Regional Library and the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society. Our holdings include a variety of materials documenting the history of the Lower Shenandoah Valley from 1732 to the present, with an emphasis on the City of Winchester and Frederick County, Virginia.

Reading Room Hours

Monday - Tuesday: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Wednesday: 10:00 am to 8:00 pm
Thursday - Saturday: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Location

Lower Level, Handley Library
100 W. Piccadilly Street
Winchester, Virginia 22601

Please note that we close for lunch daily from 12:30 pm to 1:15 pm