Table of Contents

Magazine of the

Jefferson County Historical Society

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Table of Contents

Magazine of the

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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CONTENTS

Officers of the Society 3
Membership Fees 3
Publications Available 4
List of Members 5
The Execution of Ebenezer Cox,
by Cecil D. Eby 14
Narrative of a John Brown Pilgrim,
by Cecil D. Eby 20
Fragrance of Violets,
by Claire Schley Goulding 26
History of Bakerton,
by William D. Theriault 29
Shepherdstown Graded School
by John E. Stealey, III 38
September 6 Celebration 45
Summer Picnic 49
Rumsey Bicentennial 50

"No man is fit to be entrusted with the control of the present who is ignorant of the past, and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great."

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JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Organized May 21, 1927
Post Office Box 485
Charles Town, West Virginia 25414

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PUBLICATIONS

One copy of the Magazine is mailed to each person holding a paid membership. Until the publication of next year's Magazine, members may purchase additional copies for $4.00 each; order these from William H. Wilson, Box 716, Charles Town. Original volumes or facsimile reproductions are available to all persons at $5.00 per Magazine; quantity discounts are allowed. Mr. Wilson also has available copies of *Prominent Men of Shepherdstown* for $7.50 each, mailed, *Old Norborne Parish (1744-1816)* for $5.00 each, mailed, *The Washington Homes of Jefferson County* for $2.00 each, mailed, and Michael D. Thompson, *Calendar and Index to Recorded Plats in the Jefferson County, West Virginia (Virginia), Courthouse, 1801-1901* for $25.00 each, mailed.

THE EXECUTION OF EBENEZER COX

For Jefferson Countians, any reference to a shoot-out at Harpers Ferry must bring automatically to mind the famous John Brown raid on the United States Armory in October, 1859, followed by the trial and execution of the captured raiders in Charles Town in the months following. Yet by coincidence the first notorious trial in our county for a capital crime, followed by public execution, also resulted from a murder at the Harpers Ferry Armory some thirty years before the Brown insurrection.[1]

On January 29, 1830, Ebenezer Cox, a young man of Loudoun County lately dismissed from the Armory workforce, walked into the office of Superintendent Thomas B. Dunn and discharged a musket-load of birdshot into his former chief's heart. Without any question this murder would have ranked as Jefferson County's "crime of the century" had it not been altogether eclipsed by the bloodier events during John Brown's brief tenure at Harpers Ferry.

Legally it was an open and shut case. Cox was observed entering and leaving Dunn's office, his motive was apparent, and he dictated and signed a confession. But there were other matters, hinted at during the trail but hushed up in its aftermath, that suggest a conspirary was brewing among various Armory factions and that Cox served as a convenient scapegoat.

For many years the Armory had been controlled by political appointees without much regard for their expertise in arms manufacture. When placed against its principal rival, the Federal Armory at Springfield (Massachusetts), the Harpers Ferry enterprise was notoriously inefficient and its work-force fractious and disgruntled.[2] To correct these conditions, the Department of War appointed Thomas B.

[1] The first legal execution in Jefferson County occurred in 1805 when a Negro belonging to George Norris was hanged for "committing an outrage"—presumably rape. As compensation Norris was reimbursed $333.33 for his loss. J.E. Norris (ed.), *History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley* (Chicago: A. Warner & Company, 1890).

[2] For a comprehensive account of the Harpers Ferry Armory between its founding in 1794 and its demise in 1861, including discussion of managerial and labor problems, see Merritt Roe Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977).

Dunn superintendent in August, 1828. "Colonel" Dunn (his title was an honorific) had successfully managed the Antietam Iron Works near Sharpsburg and was a respected manufacturer of iron products. A no-nonsense professional, he immediately instituted long-overdue reforms: he fired inefficient workers, made all hands personally responsible for damaged or missing tools, banned drinking and gambling on Federal property, and began to phase out the "piece-work" system of production that had virtually given workers carte blanche in setting their hours of work. While the Department of War applauded Dunn's reforms, the workers seethed with anger. In the taverns they denounced him as a power-drunken martinet, and on at least one occasion accosted him outside the Armory gate. But perhaps his most impolitic move as newcomer was his decision to ask for the resignation of Armistead Beckham, master armorer, on grounds—which were valid—that Beckham had no qualifications for the position. What Beckham had, however, was powerful influence among the work-force and through family connections, with the reigning political hierarchy of Jefferson County. So within a few months after his arrival Colonel Dunn had alienated segments of both the managerial elite and the laborers at the Armory.

Ebenezer Cox was a victim of the Colonel's purge. After his dismissal he requested reinstatement, and when Dunn refused, the young man called him a "damned rascal." Dunn retaliated by announcing that any federal employee who boarded or sheltered Cox would also be dismissed—in effect, banishing Cox from Harpers Ferry and forcing him to take lodgings across the river in Maryland. According to Cox's confession—this portion never read at the trial—an unspecified number of Harpers Ferry citizens urged him to take revenge.

On the morning of January 29, 1830, Cox hung about Irwin's blacksmith shop. He said he had applied for work at a nearby ironworks but had been offered only a job as woodcutter, which he had regarded as an insult. A witness heard him say that if "something was not done he would commit murder before night, d——d if he wouldn't," but he did not mention the name of Colonel Dunn. Since he had a reputation for bluster, no one in the shop paid him much heed at the time. They might have been more attentive had they known that Cox had, on the day previous, borrowed a musket from a Maryland schoolboy and hidden it somewhere in the village.

At one o'clock, as the Armory bell was tolling the workers back to their machines, several witnesses saw Cox enter the Superintendent's office at the foot of Shenandoah Street. Some long object protruded from his cape. A few minutes later they heard an explosion: Cox emerged from the office and sauntered up Potomac Street.

In a room above the Superintendent 's office Armistead Beckham had been conferring with Major James Stephenson when they heard a "heavy dull sound" like a house falling.[3] Beckham dashed downstairs, saw Cox leaving the office and then found Colonel Dunn bleeding on the floor. A musket lay beside him. Beckham gave the alarm and the village came alive, men crowding into the office to gaze at the corpse or fanning out to find Ebenezer Cox.

Cox made no effort to escape. He was soon found in one of the Armory wheel-houses, and when seized, behaved like an hysterical drunk, crying out, "Hurrah for shave-tail! Fond of fun, by G-d!" This gibberish he repeated while being tied to a horse and conducted to jail in Charles Town. Yet no witnesses ever testified that he was drunk.

In Charles Town Cox made voluntary confessions, one to Thomas Griggs, the Commonwealth Attorney, and another to Robert T. Brown, Clerk of the Court. In both he admitted that he entered Dunn's office with the intention of shooting him if he were not reinstated at the Armory. When Dunn refused, Cox pointed his musket at the Colonel's head. Dunn leaped up exclaiming, "My God!" and the shot struck him in the chest. The room filled with smoke, and Cox was not certain that his shot had struck home. In these confessions, the prisoner listed the names of his "accessories" to the murder.

In mid-March seven Harpers Ferry men were arrested and examined among an overflow crowd at the courthouse. Cox accused one Barney Mills of being the ringleader in the plot to kill Dunn, but after fifty witnesses had been called without substantiating criminal conspiracy, all of the so-called "accessories" were released. A month later friends

[3] Nepotism was rife among all levels of employment at the Armory. Armistead Beckham had been appointed master armorer by his father-in-law, James Stubblefield, who was Dunn's predecessor as Superintendent. Armistead had married the daughter of Major James Stephenson, a powerful political figure of the era who had served six years in the Virginia House of Delegates and counted Henry Clay among his personal friends. Armistead's brother Fontaine was a prosperous merchant of Harpers Ferry who was later killed during the John Brown raid while serving as mayor of the village.

managed to slip Cox a saw and file to cut the bars to his window, and he nearly made his escape before being discovered by a guard.

The case went to trial in Charles Town on July 20, 1829, before Judge Richard F. Parker with John E. Page as prosecutor, assisted by Edmund I. Lee.[4] Although it was now six months after the murder, Cox had no counsel and asked for the assistance of John R. Cooke, an outstanding Charles Town attorney. Cooke accepted this charge although he had no preparation for the case.[5] Despite his confession, Cox pleaded not-guilty. Most of the day was spent in obtaining a jury, some forty-four veniremen being excused as having already formed an opinion about the case. The trial got under way at five o'clock and concluded just five hours later. It took the jury only fifteen minutes to return its verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree. As Cox arose to hear the verdict he betrayed no emotion except to insert in his mouth a quid of tobacco which he chewed "with some vehemence." Throughout the trial he impressed everyone with his coolness. In the words of a reporter: "A stranger, casting his eye over the crowd, would be at a loss to recognize by any outward sign. . . the actor in so bloody a tragedy."

Four days later the court reconvened for sentencing. Since it was rumored that Cox intended to name his "co-conspirators" an immense crowd packed the tiny courtroom. But to their disappointment when the clerk asked Cox if he had anything to say, the prisoner stood mute. Judge Parker then sentenced him to death by hanging on August 27. "Many a tearful eye was seen amongst the audience, and some wept outright," penned a reporter. Cox, however, impressed everyone by remaining perfectly calm and firm on hearing the awful sentence. That same night, however, his iron manner began to shatter, for he requested Judge Parker and his attorney to visit him at the jail. There he wept bitterly, admitted his guilt, and apologized for his sangfroid in the courtroom. He said his "enemies" had been present, and they would have derived

[4] For accounts of the murder and the trial see the *Virginia Free Press* (Charlestown, Virginia) July 28, 1830; and the *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* (Baltimore, Maryland) July 27, 1830.

[5] Richard F. Parker, a former U.S. Senator from Virginia and a native of Winchester, was the father of Judge Richard Parker, who presided at the trial of John Brown in 1859. John Rogers Cooke, father of the Virginia novelist John Esten Cooke and poet Philip Pendleton Cooke, had represented Jefferson County in the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-30.

The Cox trial was held in the first permanent county courthouse, a small building situated in front of the present courthouse, which was not erected until 1836.

satisfaction from his torment. He blamed no one and promised not to attempt suicide. Reporters were at a loss to explain how such a genteel-looking young man of twenty-two could have committed such a crime. They blamed it on the "vice of INTEMPERANCE" even though none of the witnesses gave evidence that Cox had been drinking at the time of the murder.

A mob of spectators estimated at between four and ten thousanbd crowded into Charles Town on Friday morning, August 27, to witness the execution.[6] Captain Hunter's troop of horse and Captain Stewart's local infantry company formed a square around the prisoner's party as it emerged from the jail, with difficulty pushing back the swarm of curious spectators. Cox was dressed in shroud and cap, and was supported on each side by a Catholic priest. Preceded by a hearse and a barouche—the latter provided in case the prisoner proved incapable of walking to the scaffold site—the cortege walked eastward on Washington Street. The heat and dust were intense and after only a short distance Cox had to be helped into the barouche. Charles Town was so packed with people on this day that all wells in town were drained dry and Evitt's Run reduced to a trickle.[7]

The scaffold was located on an open lot somewhere between the Harpers Ferry and Shepherdstown roads (Washington and Liberty Streets of today) "on the edge of town." The exact site is unknown but it is likely to have been somewhere between Seminary Street and the present entrance to the race track, all this portion of town being open country at that time. At the scaffold there was a delay while the troops cleared away the press of spectators, some of whom had taken up places underneath the scaffold for a grandstand view of the entertaining spectacle. The prisoner ascended, arms pinioned, and knelt with the priests in prayer. The noise of the throng dropped to a bare whisper. Cox reaffirmed to a priest and to Sheriff James L. Ranson the truth of his confession which had implicated seven accesories—but apparently without publicly giving their names. Then he spent several minutes reading a prayer for the dying from a prayer book. Rising up he announced to the multitude: "Look at

[6] For the execution of Cox see the *Virginia Free Press* (September 1, 1830). A short account from the Williamsport *Banner* also appeared in the Baltimore *American* (August 31, 1830).

[7] The draining of the wells and the town run was vividly recalled on the fifty-sixth anniversary of the Cox execution by W.W.B. Gallaher, editor of the *Virginia Free Press* in his paper of August 26, 1886.

me. Here under the gallows, brought to it by associating with reprobates, instead of taking the advice of my parents and friends. . . . Let my fate be a warning to you all." Then casting his eyes over the crowd, and failing to see the men he had accused, he knelt again with the priest. Finally, after shaking hands with Sheriff Ranson, he had the rope placed on the hook of the beam. After another five minutes of prayer he dropped his handkerchief as a signal to cut the rope. It was then 1:30 P.M.

For five or six minutes the hanging body gave convulsive shrugs, and once he drew up his feet. It was death by strangulation, for his neck had not been broken. After half an hour the body was taken down and carried a mile east of town where it was delivered to friends from Loudoun County for burial.[8]

John S. Gallaher, editor of the *Virginia Free Press* estimated that nine-tenths of the community believed that the blood of Colonel Dunn rested soley on the head of Ebenezer Cox. But a minority pressed for a fuller investigation of the alleged "conspiracy" and promised to publish Cox's confessions, which apparently pointed to one M–[Barney Mills?] as ringleader. Unfortunately no copies of this confession are extant; probably none were ever published. A murderer had been sentenced and executed. That was enough.

The public execution of Cox had a profound effect of those who witnessed it. Editor Gallaher wrote, "We hope never to witness a similar spectacle." He would—some thirty years later when John Brown and six confederates hung from ropes in the corporation of Charles Town.

Cecil D. Eby
University of Michigan

[8] Thomas Dunn was buried in Sharpsburg; the burial site of Ebenezer Cox is unknown.

NARRATIVE OF A JOHN BROWN PILGRIM

This account of a pilgrimage to Jefferson County by an unidentified New England admirer of John Brown was first published in the Springfield *(Massachusetts)* Republican *sometime in the early fall of 1894. It was reprinted in the December 19, 1894 issue of the* Virginia Free Press, *a weekly newspaper published in Charles Town by W.W.B. Gallaher in the upper room of the building located on the northeast corner of Charles and Washington Streets.*

Not only does it provide an outsider's view of daily life in Jefferson County during the 1890's but it adds to our knowledge of the response in Charles Town to the startling news of the John Brown raid at Harper's Ferry. Of especial interest is the interview with Henry D. Middlekauf, who fought with the militia at Harpers Ferry and served in the Civil War as a sergeant in Company G, Second Virginia Infantry, Stonewall Brigade. Middlekauf was a harness-maker by trade and had a shop immediately to the rear of the courthouse; he owned (and presumably built) the house on the southeast corner of South George and Hunter Streets. In 1896 he moved his family to Staunton, Virginia where he died at the age of sixty-eight. He was a fair representative of the rough but honest commoner of that age who comprised the backbone of Stonewall's immortal legions.

John Brown's Country
As it Appears 35 years after the Raid.

To the thoughtful traveler, meditating here at Harper's Ferry, in early September 1894, there still remain many features of interest, forever to be associated with John Brown and his deeds. When you stand on the high land back of the village, you may see the road down which he marched his faithful band from the Kennedy farm, on that rainy Sunday night of October, 1859; while the Loudoun and Maryland Hights [*sic*] still watch, from either side of the Potomac, over the spot where the armory engine-house,—"John Brown's Fort"—once stood,—before it went to the World's Fair at Chicago. More than one old resident of the village yet lives and loves to tell how, as he came down from the hill on some ordinary errand, that Monday morning he found the street picketed by

armed men; and was turned back, under curt, menacing orders, from the spot where the hostages, Allstadt, Washington and others, were imprisoned. But the great civil war did much, by the interposition of more exciting and tragical scenes, to blur the memory of John Brown's 36 hours at "the Ferry"; and to such as do not recognize the world-wide moral consequence of the drama enacted then, there is now but little to call attention to Brown's exploit, or arouse more than a momentary interest. The engine-house, into which he was driven, soon after noon Monday, October 17, was removed two years ago, and the spot where it stood is covered to the depth of five or six feet by the broken stone of the approach to the new Baltimore and Ohio railroad track. The building has been reconstructed on Wabash avenue, Chicago,—but its bell is said to hang from the wall in front of the Grand Army hall in Marlboro, Massachusetts.[1]

The man at "the Ferry," who could perhaps, under skillful cross-questions, recall more personal reminiscences of the raid than any other is Joseph Barry,—once a schoolmaster, lately in the service of the national government, but now discharged, and soon to begin again at a private school in the village. Apparently the key to unlock his lips is the coin with which you purchase two pamphlets that he wrote long since, on the subject, and of which the local price is high. Or, if any reader wants for a child "a good private school," taught by one who was once an instructor in the colored school on the hill, but where his child will not have to mix with those of a darker hue,—("Not that I should object,—but it would not do, you know,") I may safely recommend Mr. Barry, who began his term, no doubt, on September 10.[2]

Passing on, now, from the Ferry to Charles Town, where John Brown was tried and executed, you have a pretty straight turnpike road, with only two gates, over three steep hills,—in the valley between two of which lies Halltown, midway between the two villages, and four miles from either. There is no considerable public way opening into this turnpike from Harper's Ferry to Charles Town; at intervals of half a mile or so,

[1] In 1892 the engine-house had been re-erected among other curiosities on the Midway of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Unfortunately for its promoters, interest in John Brown had ebbed and the "fort" exhibit lost money. Through the efforts of Kate Field, philanthropist and writer, the engine-house was returned to Harpers Ferry and re-erected on the grounds of Storer College.

[2] During Reconstruction, Joseph Barry had once served as superintendent of Jefferson County schools. The pamphlet referred to is doubtless his *The Annals of Harpers Ferry* (Hagerstown, 1889).

you pass a red gate in the lines of a Virginia fence on either side, through which a cart path leads to a house and barn, from a quarter to half a mile away in the farm lands. Great fields of "southern corn," immense stacks of threshed wheat-straw, and mounds of upland hay line the road on both sides; were it not for the seared surface of the field, parched by the long drought, the general appearance is that of thrifty and profitable farming. But if one looked straight ahead in the road not turning his gaze either to the right or left, he never could believe himself to be in New England. Half the people he meets will be on horseback, and quite two-thirds will make some attempt at courteous salutations, whites as well as blacks. Then, at some gateways, the traveler sees a tandem two-wheeled vehicle approaching, and will soon make out that there are two molasses 60-gallon puncheons lashed on the axle on the way to "the run" for water; and that a white man sits on one for a saddle and a colored boy on the other.

Half a dozen rods ahead a flock of nearly full-grown quails flirts [*sic*] up from the roadside, quartering away into the brown field, alighting within easy gunshot; while beating the air with his barred wings, the mocking bird sails from a shrub to a roadside tree further on. More than once a stray wild pigeon runs along the wheel-ruts for a few rods, before again taking flight to the neighboring wheat field; and circling above with motionless wings, the turkey-buzzards wheel in the air and watch the world below.

Charles Town contrasts most favorably with Harper's Ferry in appearance, being as neat and thrifty as the other is shabby and down in the heel. The main street is half a mile long, with plenty of shade trees, and many tasteful houses on both sides. Of course you drive at once to the court-house, which is partly the building in which John Brown was tried; that is, the walls cover the same space, the pillars in front are in the same position, although higher; and walking through the lower hall to the rear you can pass over the very space where John Brown's mattress lay, when he was called upon to plead to the indictment. But all the lower floor is now devoted to offices, and the courtroom is up one flight. Standing in the doorway was a pleasant-looking gentleman, apparently 45 years of age, smoking in a corn-cob pipe, the fragrant, natural leaf. He proved to be the clerk of the court, and though taking no interest in the subject most interesting to the visitor, he was ready to put himself to trouble and help him on his way.[3] Going out through the rear door of the

[3] Gerard D. Moore was clerk of the County Court, 1889-1896.

court-house, and along a plank walk across the yard in the rear of which we came to the village harness-maker, and he was the man we had come from Boston to see, although we had never heard of him until we saw the clerk of the court. Sixty-four years of age, sergeant of the military company which marched to Harper's Ferry October 17, 1859,—one of the very first to hear the message of alarm on that Monday morning when the rider came bareheaded into town; one of the guard that stood around the scaffold, and of the 26 who marched around the body to Harper's Ferry in December;—in fine, a native Virginian who had forgotten nothing that he knew before the war, and learned nothing since. He also, like the scene at Harper's Ferry, of which Mr. Jefferson wrote, was worth coming across the Atlantic to see, if one could not otherwise get to him.

What follows in quotation marks is the substance of what was drawn from him by a hundred questions; and while there is little pretense of reproducing the original words, the sentiment is scrupulously preserved:—

"Just after daylight Monday morning A.B. came running his horse into the village, and said that hell was to pay down to the Ferry; that a gang of men had got Lew Washington and Allstadt prisoners and were trying to raise the niggers. I got him to go over to see Lawson Botts (brother of John Minor), and he said the man was drunk. But I saw that he was as sober in the eye as you are, and being sergeant of the company, went over to the house of the captain. He sent a messenger up to warn the colonel, who lived up the country toward Staunton. By noon we were on the way to the Ferry, and the colonel gave orders that we were to go over on the Maryland side to stop their retreat that way. We stayed there until the middle of the afternoon, when the boys got so hot for a fight that they drove Brown into the engine-house. They killed two niggers on the track; one was shot in the river trying to swim across; and two more in front of the rifle works—that made five niggers they killed.[4] All the afternoon our friends inside the engine-house kept sending out word for us not to fire in there, for we should kill them, and Brown kept saying he would give up only to United States troops, and not to Virginia soldiers. This was only to give him time to make holes in the walls through which to shoot.

"He was brought in a wagon to Charles Town jail Tuesday night, and he had a good bed to lie on and a soft hair pillow. It was more than a

[4] Only two Black raiders of Brown's original party were killed at Harpers Ferry—Dangerfield Newby and Lewis Leary.

month after he was brought here before he was hung. The laws of Virginia don't allow a man to be hung in less than a month." (Captured October 18, condemned November 2, hanged December 2.)

"Only one man, Cook, was hung at the same time Brown was; we don't hang niggers the same time we do white men in Virginia; but they went back to the jail and took out the others after. We in Virginia are just as we always were; we are willing the niggers should have all their rights, and be well treated. We have many here that are well thought of; but the niggers in Virginia will never be the equals of the whites,—not if they live here a million years.

"You find the place of the gallows at the end of the first street on the right, where Gibson's new brick house stands, right on the very spot. Some say it stood where the front of the house is, but it was where the gable end is. There was a plan to take Brown's body and drag it through the street, and so our government gave orders for 26 of us to go to the Ferry with it, and to shoot any one that tried to take it away; and we should a done it too. Our governor used pretty strong language about it. We put the body on the cars at the Ferry, and took a receipt for it. His wife was waiting at Philadelphia to take it.[5]

"The jail is new; no the wood-work wasn't burnt out solid logs in between the inner and outer layers of brick, in the walls,—and made into picture frames and canes and all kind o' things, by the soldiers that were here most all of the time. Them soldiers had a kind of stockade fence around the courthouse here and had holes in it for musketry. One day Imboden (a rebel general) drew up two pieces of artillery onto the heights over back here, and they were glad to get out of this."[6]

The clerk of the Charles Town court, though so young a man now, was "out" with Fitz Lee when only a boy of 17, in the last two years of the war, and he pointed out to me one of Mosby's men on the other side of the street.[7] Riding along this dusty West Virginia turnpike on the way

[5] Mrs. Mary Brown had visited her husband in the Charles Town jail on the night preceding his execution and on the following day she waited on the Maryland side of the Potomac to carry his body to North Alba, New York for burial.

[6] This engagement is briefly described in *Military Operations in Jefferson County, 1861-1865* (Charles Town, 1911), pp. 31-32.

[7] A 1902 reunion of Mosby's men in Leesburg was attended by these Jefferson County veterans: Robert Chew, William Fritts, Richard Moore, W.B. Alder, W.S. Merchant, H.T. Miley, Charles Engle, William McDonald, and Charles Rissler. But it is quite likely that the Mosby veteran pointed out by the clerk was Captain George Baylor, a Charles Town attorney and author of the Civil War memoir, *Bull Run to Bull Run* (Richmond, 1900).

back to the Ferry, if one for a moment shuts out the sight of wheat-ricks and singing birds, he sees with the mind's eye, an open cart in which lies a wounded old man surrounded by a ferocious mob, faring along toward Charles Town—a few weeks later, his body, protected by guards, carried in the opposite direction. And then, after some eventful years, this road is filled with armed men in gray, hurrying to victory at Harper's Ferry, or with hosts in blue, marching with Sheridan to Winchester. On all the way back to Washington he will think of Stonewall Jackson, carrying Loudoun Heights,—of Lee crossing at Frederick, or of Baker at Ball's Bluff,—all now become as silent as John Brown.

Along the Potomac, Sept. 1894. H.S.

Editor W.W.B. Gallaher of the Virginia Free Press *added the following commentary:*

The above has been handed us for publication. We take the liberty, for the sake of the truth of history, to make a note or two or three: The "village harness-maker" is not a native Virginian, though he has been a resident long enough to entitle him to the benefits of such distinction, and it is worth a trip across the Atlantic to hear him discourse on almost any topic under the sun.—Lawson Botts, referred to, was not a brother of the distinguished John Minor Botts, but a nephew; he was not then commander of the Charles Town company that responded first to the call to Harper's Ferry, though he did go there and improvise a company which he gallantly led to the front. Subsequently he commanded a company of boys, and later on the Botts' Grays of the "Stonewall Brigade," and later on, when Colonel commanding the 2nd Regiment, received a wound at 2nd Manassas that resulted in his death. No man was hung with John Brown—old Ossawattomie went it alone, but there was a very large and respectable audience. Cook and Coppic, white men, and Shields Green and Copeland, negroes, were hung two weeks after Brown, and all four at the same time.

Edited by Cecil D. Eby
University of Michigan

FRAGRANCE OF VIOLETS

Not many years hence it would be: "Let's take a ride," but back in 1915 it was usually: "Let's take a walk." On a Sunday in late March the afternoon weather was warmer with the sky rapidly changing from sunny and clear to cloudy, then back again to clear. Where shall we walk? "To the Fairgrounds" urged the girls, echoed by their little brother.

Morgan's Grove Fair held there the first week of September was an exciting time in their lives. School never started until September's second week. There was a long row of white tents near the big trees; a family would rent one and make it their headquarters for the duration of the Fair. There they ate, sat and rested, took naps and sometimes spent the night. Memory recalls that the tents cost a family $3.00 for the week, the charge including setting up and taking down.

Of course, there was a Merry-go-round (we never called it a carousel), usually a Ferris Wheel and other rides. The wooden buildings were filled with displays of sewing, of patch work quilts sometimes made of velvet put together with embroidery and many quilts made up of colored pieces of cotton cloth sewed with very fine stitches into eleborate patterns. They are highly prized today. There were jellies, jars of pickles and canned fruits, and, lucious looking cakes and pies. There were the "best-dressed dolls", a class the girls usually entered; and there were vegetables, beautiful the first day, later with a dried up look. There was the tallest stalk of corn, the largest sunflower head, and, the tray of grapes with the blue ribbon their father had won. There were many fenced-in farm animals, around the larger ones the girls would make a careful and distant detour. In Shepherdstown there was the excitement of the rows of horse-drawn covered vans drawn up on Main (then few said "German") Street. So long as anyone was around the drivers would loudly urge: "Hack to the Fairgrounds, going right out, 5 cents!"

Then too, Morgan's Grove Fairgrounds earlier in the summer was often the site of Sunday School Picnics with—or does memory play us false?—wicker clothes baskets of fried chicken, cakes with caramel frosting half-an-inch thick. Only a mile south of town the Fairground was a favorite place to walk anytime of the year and closer to many people in the town than the Canal towpath with its easy no-hills walk. But then it cost 3 cents toll to cross the river bridge on foot to even reach

the Canal unless you were lucky enough to belong to a family with bridge stock, which entitled you to cross the river free!

Morgan's Grove had other attractions too, not the least of which was the stone Spring House with its ample supply of cold water. By the time the children had walked down to the spring for a drink they were ready to sit down and rest. Their father led them into the ruin of the old burnt house, "Fountain Rock" named for the nearby spring, where they sat on the fallen building stones, except for one little girl who found it too tempting to pick the bluish-white violets that were growing in the small pockets of earth where the stones from the walls had not completely covered the ground.

"Oh, Daddy, smell these, they are just like the Sweet Violets of Rockland." Indeed they were, descendants of fragrant violets the ladies may have planted outside the walls of the house, probably long before the War Between the States. They had not gone wild but simply persisted by finding small areas where weeds and grasses did not choke them out. These English Violets are not only exquisitely fragrant, and bloom well ahead of the wild violets but move themselves around by means of long runners that make new plants as they send down roots. A few plants will almost always bloom again in the fall.

The children begged their father to tell again the story of the burning of Fountain Rock. How, toward the end of the Civil War when animosities were at their bitterest, a northern general began ordering the burning of the homes of well known Confederates. He appeared to especially deight in having the homes of his own kin burned. When the party arrived at Fountain Rock the men turned the family out of the house, and forbade the removal of any clothing, food, or other necessities. One of the daughters overcoming her fear and ignoring the fire, crept back into the house, opened her piano and played, attempting to sing through her tears. This the soldiers could not stand. They pulled the pianist to safety while others carried the piano outside.

This young pianist, the father told his children, was none other than the mother of a lady who had recently come back to live in Shepherdstown and who had already endeared herself to the children by gathering them around the big church organ on Sunday afternoons before the past Christmas and teaching them songs and carols entirely new to them. Help was always needed to "pump" the organ and the little girls were always pleased and proud to pump a short time.

Eventually the picturesque ruins of Fountain Rock were pulled down and the Fair Association had a pavillion with a dance floor erected. The English Violets vanished. Not gone, though, was the loyalty to the Confederacy the story had created in the children. The two girls were always alittle embarrassed before their grade school classmates because some of their ancestors had suported "the wrong side." As they were spreading flowers one Confederate Decoration Day, always until recently celebrated on the first Saturday in June, they chanced to decipher the inscription on an obscure grave in the family lot, and to their surprise found "Killed at Kernstown", and "Stonewall Brigade." This grave became their first stop on later "Decoration Days"; here they put the prettiest roses and such of the lemon lilies as had weathered their trip to the cemetery with unblemished petals, as well as any flowers winning their especial favor, all tenderly bestowed. Undoubtedly their action was more in gratitude for their counsin's having saved their faces than in memory of his noble sacrifice.

While there appear to be fewer people each year carrying flowers to Elmwood for "Decoration", and more artificial flowers and wreaths used, the day has not yet arrived when the delightful odor of Sweet English Violets fails to bring up memories of that long ago Sunday afternoon at Morgan's Grove.

Claire Schley Goulding

HISTORY OF BAKERTON

The earliest limestone quarrying operations in the area probably predate the establishment of Bakerton (1888) by more than a century. Limestone is needed in the smelting of iron ore, and the local quarrying of limestone probably began in the 1760's when John Semple established an iron mine at Friend's Orebank (east of Bakerton) and Keep Tryest Furnace at Elk Run.[1] Knott's and Flanagan's quarries along the Potomac River operated for much of the nineteenth century; and, according to local tradition, the foundation for the White House was built from blocks hewn at this site. Farmers also quarried and burned lime for agricultural use.

These quarries were manned by workers from both Washington County, Maryland, and Jefferson County. Thus an experienced workforce was available when new quarries began to open in the area.

Approximately 1883, Otho J. Keller of Buckeystown, Maryland, purchased 87 acres on the south side of the B. & O. Railroad tracks in the area known as Engle. A limestone quarry was established, and kilns were built to burn the lime. Portions of this operation continued to be owned and operated by the Keller family for more than a generation.[2] A post office and a store were established, and the area became known as Keller, West Virginia. Shortly after this quarry opened, D.R. Houser from Washington County, Maryland, became local superintendent of the Keller Lime Company.[3] Keller, Houser, and the Engle family were to play key roles in the Baker family's entrance into Jefferson County industry.

The founders of Bakerton never lived in West Virginia, but the Baker family played an important part in the industrial development of the Eastern Panhandle. Descended from German immigrants, the Bakers settled in old Frederick County, Maryland, in the eighteenth century and originally pursued the trades of farming and tanning. In 1832, brothers Daniel and Henry Baker bought the tannery operated by George Buckey

[1] For a history of local iron mining operations, see William D. Theriault, "Friend's Orebank and Keep Tryst Furnace," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society*, (1984), pp. 12-24.

[2] Kenny, Hamill. *West Virginia Place Names*. Piedmont, WV: Place Name Press, 1945, p. 230; Deed Book L, p. 310, Jefferson County, W.Va.

[3] *Shepherdstown Register*, March 3, 1916.

in Buckeystown, Maryland. The Bakers' tanning business flourished, and during the next half-century the family became one of the most prosperous and influential in the area. At the time, lime was one of the ingredients used in the tanning process, and the Baker family kept an eye open for suitable limestone deposits as they acquired land throughout the area.[4]



Figure 1. Baker Family. Front row, left to right: Sarah Baker Thomas (wife of C.F. Thomas and sister of Joseph, William, and Daniel Baker), Susan J. Baker (wife of William), William G. Baker. Back row: Charles F. Thomas, Virginia M. Baker (wife of Joseph), Joseph D. Baker, Lillie Bratt Baker (wife of Daniel), Daniel Baker II. Photo courtesy of Nancy W. Bodmer.

Early in the 1880's, Daniel Baker's sons, Joseph, William, and Daniel, Junior, decided to expand their involvement in the limestone business *(Figure 1)*. Since they were both neighbors and business partners of the Keller family, the Bakers' early knowledge of Jefferson County's

[4] Thomas, Carrie H. "Baker Family History," manuscript. Portions of this manuscript, as well as information on the Baker and Keller families, appear in Nancy W. Bodmer's *Buckey's Town: A Villege Remembered,* revised ed. Buckeystown, Md.: A-1 Dupli-Cat Printing, 1984.

limestone resources probably came from this association. In 1883, the Baker brothers purchased a half-interest in the land owned by Otho J. Keller at Keller, West Virginia.[5] About the same time, D. R. Houser left Keller's employ and formed a partnership with William Engle, who had found a high-purity limestone deposit on his property approxiamtely 2 miles north of Keller's quarry.[6] The area adjoining the Engle quarry was then known as Oak Grove, after the schoolhouse built in 1878 midway between the Orebank and Zion Episcopal Church.[7]

Houser and Engle built a small lime kiln near the railroad and hauled stone to it by mule and wagon from William Engle's quarry in the area now known as Bakerton. The two and one-half mile journey to the kiln markedly increased their costs and limited the amount of lime they could sell.[8] Before the operation could grow further, this transportation problem had to be solved. The Baker brothers, with their financial resources and business expertise, had the solution.

Joseph, William and Daniel Jr. had come by much of their original wealth and business acumen as partners in their father's tanning business during the 1860's and '70's. By the middle of the next decade, the brothers were a major financial power in Frederick County, Maryland, with Joseph being the owner of a second large tannery and president of Montgomery National Bank of Rockville and Citizens National Bank of Frederick. William and Daniel, Jr., were vice-president and a director of the Frederick bank.[9]

The Baker brothers' major entry into the limestone business occurred after their father died in 1886. By 1888, they had formed a corporation known as Standard Lime and Stone Company and taken a 3-month option on the Houser/Engle kiln. During the next year, the Bakers purchased William Engle's 8-acre tract (including the lime kilns) on the north side of the railroad tracks near Keller and Engle's 39-acre quarry property at Oak Grove. The Bakers then erected two new kilns near the

[5] Deed Book S, p. 31, Jefferson County, W.Va.

[6] *Bakerton Safety News*, January 1939. William Engle owned much of the land on which the Bakerton quarry was established.

[7] The school property was sold to the Board of Education by William Engle in March 1878; Deed Book G, pp. 491-492, Jefferson County.

[8] Notes of W.J.B. Houser (deceased) in the possession of Charles Knott of Bakerton, W.Va.

[9] Andrews, Matthew Page (ed.) *Tercentenary History of Maryland*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1925; 3:372-374, 428-434.

railroad tracks and formed a second corporation, Washington Building Lime Company *(Figure 2)*. The former company was organized to deal in stone products and the latter to produce crushed or burned lime. Daniel Baker II became president of both companies and the other brothers held directorships. Meanwhile, William Baker had assumed control of Daniel Baker & Sons tannery, Joseph continued to manage the family's banking interests, and William's son John began attending Eastman Business College.[10]



Figure 2. Furnaces at Engle, West Virginia, used by the Bakers late in the 19th century.

The Bakers solved the transportation problem by building a railroad track from their quarry near Oak Grove to the B & O Railroad line at Engle. The right-of-way for the railroad track was purchased by September of 1889[11]. However, construction must have started earlier in

[10] Deed Book S, p. 516, Jefferson County, W.Va.; *Shepherdstown Register,* August 11, 1921; *Bakerton Safety News,* January 1939.

[11] *Bakerton Safety News,* January 1939.

the summer, for Mr. Henderson of the Board of Education reported in July that "he had heard a great deal of clamor about the railroad track being built by the Messrs. Bakers near Engles Switch to his lime kilns, that they were encroaching upon the rights of the Board of Education by cutting off a corner of the school lot nearby..." By January of the following year, Daniel Baker II had purchased the school land occupied by the railroad for one dollar.[12] Construction of the track was supervised by D.R. Houser and C.F. Thomas, husband of the Bakers' sister Sarah. While the track was being built, the Bakers continued to use mules and wagons to haul stone from the Oak Grove area to the kilns at Engle Switch.[13]

The first known reference to the Baker quarry and vicinity as "Bakerton" is found in an article appearing in the *Shepherdstown Register* on November 28, 1890. By this time, the Bakers had

> opened up a large limestone quarry here and constructed four patent kilns for the burning of lime. Each week, 11,000 bushels of lime are burned—about 20 carloads—which is shipped to Washington and points of Maryland. From forty to fifty men are constantly employed. A steam drill cuts the holes into the great beds of limestone, and dynamite tears the masses asunder. Horses and carts carry the broken stone to the top floor of the large building containing the kilns. Here men feed them into the iron maws, from which, two stories below, the lime is drawn and wheeled into the cars that stand right in front of the kilns. An inclined plane, to be run by steam, will sortly be put in operation, thus doing away with the horses and carts. The stone will then be drawn directly from the quarry to the kilns.
>
> Already Bakerton is making a fair showing in a business way. There have been erected the large three-decked kiln-house; a cooper shop where five coopers turn out 200 barrels a day; a large store building, where Strider and Engle do a

[12] Board of Education Minutes, Harpers Ferry District, July 31, 1889, and January 29, 1890.

[13] Notes of W.J.B. Houser; *Bakerton Safety News*, January 1939. The Keller Lime Company and its successor, the Southern Limestone Works continued to operate for more than 30 years; see *Shepherdstown Register*, March 3, 1916, May 11, 1916, June 16, 1916, June 17, 1917, October 31, 1918, April 24, 1919.

big general merchandise business under the supervision of Mr. Jesse A. Engle, Jr.; seven new dwelling-houses for workmen.

In addition to transporting limestone to customers, the Bakers' railroad line served as a collection point for local agricultural products. It became a depot for loading wheat and the local distribution point for coal. The iron ore quarry at Friend's Orebank also benefitted from the rail line, for the owner, Thomas W. Ahl, was able to have a spur of the line built down the main street of Bakerton to his operation.

By this time, the population in the area had increased enough for Bakerton to have a post office (run by Jesse A. Engle, Jr.), and the following year an addition was made to the Oak Grove School because "the increase in the school population necessitated a house of large seating capacity to accommodate it."[14]

During this period, S.W. Bratt (the brother-in-law of Daniel Baker II) managed the Bakers' local business interests and D.R. Houser was placed in charge of quarrying operations.[15] The numerous financial interests of Daniel Baker II prompted him to move to Baltimore in 1893, and during the same year William Baker's son John married Lena Millard. By 1896, Lena's brother Preston S. Millard became a partner in the store with Jesse A. Engle, Jr.; eventually he became the sole proprietor.[16]

More lime kilns were added to the Bakerton operation in 1899, 1902, 1908, and 1913. Early in this century, a second quarry was started several hundred feet southwest of the original operation and a narrow gauge railroad was built to haul stone from Flanagan's Quarry (northeast of Bakerton on the Potomac River) to kilns located slightly east of the original Bakerton quarry. D.R. Houser was plant superintendent at this time.[17] After being discharged from the army in 1919, Daniel Baker III

[14] Board of Education Minutes, Harpers Ferry District, July 6, 1891.

[15] *Bakerton Safety News,* January 1939.

[16] Thomas, "Baker Family History"; Advertisements for local stores appear in the *Shepherdstown Register,* January and February, 1896.

[17] Notes of W.J.B. Houser; Diary of John Welsh, 1899, November 1902, 1908, November 1914, and January 1915; *Bakerton Safety News,* January 1939. The narrow gauge railroad can be seen on the 1916 map of Jefferson County published by the West Virginia Geological Survey. According to the diary of John Welsh, the narrow gauge railroad and the nearby pot kilns were dismantled in 1920. The railroad bed and the bases of the kilns are still visible.

became vice-president of the Standard Lime and Stone and Washington Building Lime Companies. John H. Baker, Joseph's son, assumed the presidency upon the death of Daniel II in 1921.[18]

New businesses sprang up to serve the workers and their families until, early in this century, Bakerton had four general stores, two restaurants, a boarding house, four churches, a school for black children, a garage and car dealer, a saloon, and a pool hall. A sizable black population lived adjacent to the quarry in the area known as Ten Row, and Italian quarrymen and blacksmiths settled west of the plant in an area that became known as Little Italy.

One could characterize Bakerton in the 1920's and '30's as a "mining town" or "company town," yet it does not appear to fit neatly the stereotypes that these phrases connote. On the one hand, the Baker family owned hundreds of acres of land near the original quarry, actively managed the businesses, housed many workers and their families in company-owned buildings, and sold workers a substantial amount of goods through brother-in-law P.S. Millard's company commissary. J. William Flanagan, a clerk in Millard's store in the 1920's and a long-time employee of Standard Lime and Stone, remembered that "Some of the people at the plant didn't know what money [was]. . . They never even knew how much money they'd made or how much they were to draw, because they took all the money they had made to pay their bill and there was nothing coming to them."[19] Serious, sometimes fatal, accidents did happen at the mine; and brawls and shootings were not uncommon.[20]

On the other hand, the Bakers were active philanthropists, both in Frederick, Maryland, and at their mining operations. The family founded the Buckingham School for Boys at Buckeystown in 1899 and gave it substantial administrative and financial support for almost 50

[18] Standard Lime and Cement Company, *Accident Round Table*, October 31, 1956; *Shepherdstown Register*, August 11, 1921; Andrews, *Tercentenary History*, 3:371-372.

[19] Interview with James William Flanagan, April 14, 1985.

[20] Diary of John Welsh, May 10, 1899 (serious mine injury); *Shepherdstown Register*, August 2, 1917 (serious mine injury), November 22, 1917 (serious mine injury), May 8, 1919 (mine fatality), September 20, 1921 (shooting), May 10, 1928 (murder); *Bakerton Safety News*, December 1935, July 1936, January 1939; Standard Lime and Stone Company, *Accident Round Table*, May 31, 1954 (serious injury and mine fatality), July 31, 1954, April 30, 1955, May 31, 1955, July 31, 1955, December 31, 1955, May 31, 1956, June 30, 1956, October 30, 1956; interviews with James William Flanagan (April 14, 1985) and Guy M. Moler (July 8, 1985).

years.[21] Several boys whose fathers were killed or disabled at the quarry entered the Buckingham School, where they were educated at the Bakers' expense and then given jobs at the Bakerton operation. President John H. Baker had the black church on the quarry property rebuilt and refitted to serve as a school when other efforts to establish a black school failed.[22] When the quarry operations were about to encroach on the grounds of the Bakerton Methodist Church, the company bought the church property, providing the congregation with enough money to construct a larger building at a better location.[23] The company also provided residents with a community center and donated the land upon which the Bakerton Church of God was built. Local residents remember that the rent for company houses was low and electricity was provided free for many years. Although some people became deeply indebted to the company store, P.S. Millard tore up employees' outstanding bills at the end of each year, urging these customers to spend no more than they earned.[24] Other general stores also operated in Bakerton, and workers were not coerced into shopping at the company store. Daniel Baker III organized plant safety programs in the 1920's, and the company appears to have been aggressive and responsible in the area of accident prevention.[25]

From its beginnings at Bakerton, Standard Lime and Stone Company grew to become the largest operating company in the eastern panhandle,[26] with other plants being opened at Millville, Kearneysville, Martinsburg, Keyser, and Bowden, West Virginia, and in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan.

Limestone was the key to Bakerton's decline as well as its rise. The high-calcium limestone deposit that brought Bakerton prosperity was dome-shaped and dipped sharply to the west. By the mid-1950's, the

[21] *Tercentenary History,* 3: 428-434; Meg Forbes, in Bodmer, pp. 158-161; interviews with Lowell Hetzel (June 1, 1985) and Guy M. Moler (July 8, 1985).

[22] Board of Education Minutes, Harpers Ferry District, October 12, 1917.

[23] *Shepherdstown Register,* August 2, 1917, and August 26, 1920.

[24] Interview with James William Flanagan, April 14, 1985.

[25] Standard Lime and Cement Company, *Accident Round Table,* October 31, 1956; interviews with Lowell Hetzel (January 15 and June 1, 1985) and Guy M. Moler (July 8, 1985). The company's safety programs are well documented in the *Accident Round Table* and *Bakerton Safety News* mentioned in note 18 above.

[26] Grimsley, G.P. *West Virginia Geological Survey* (Parkersburg: Scholl Publishing Co., 1939), 12:396.



Figure 3. View of Bakerton shortly before the plant closed in 1957. Ten Row appears at the top. Photo courtesy of Lowell Hetzel.

supply of high-quality limestone at Bakerton was nearly exhausted. The Bakers sold Standard Lime and Stone Company to American-Marietta Company in 1954, and Daniel Baker III died one year later. The Bakerton quarry *(Figure 3)* was permanently closed in 1957.[27]

William D. Theriault, Ph.D.

[27] *New York Times*, November 25, 1954, p. 50; Standard Lime and Stone Company, *Accident Round Table*, October 31, 1956; *Spirit of Jefferson Advocate*, March 7, 1957.

SHEPHERDSTOWN GRADED SCHOOL



Northeast corner, Social Science Building (Shepherdstown Graded School), Shepherd College, 1974.

The Shepherdstown Graded School, located on the northwest corner of King and High Streets, in Shepherdstown, West Virginia , occupied a site that has been employed for educational purposes since 1881. The original school building was a limestone structure that had served as the county jail from 1865 to 1871.[1] When the President of the County Court conveyed the lot, commonly referred to as the "old Jail property," for school purposes in 1880, he reserved "[t]he *iron* in the Jail Building" for county use.[2] The adapted school house, small and lacking proper

[1] *The Shepherdstown Resgister,* September 27, 1900: Clifford S. Musser, *Two Hundred Years' History of Shepherdstown* (Shepherdstown: The Independent, 1931), p. 107.

[2] Deed Book H, p. 570, Office of the Clerk of the County Court, County of Jefferson, State of West Virginia, Charles Town, West Virginia.

ventilation, was Shepherdstown's primary school until 1900. An increased number of children soon crowded the facility, forcing the erection of a small frame building on the same lot to accommodate the overflow.[3]



Southeast corner, Social Science Building (Shepherdstown Graded School), Shepherd College, 1974.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the citizenry of Shepherdstown recognized the inadequacy of the make-shift structures for education. (George Washington Banks, a principal, had attempted to beautify the location in the early 1890's by planting maple trees around the perimeter of the school property.)[4] Another major problem was the proximity of the town jail, a wooden building located in the intersection of King and High Streets. The effusions from the incarcerated had an edifying impact of questionable nature upon young minds; however, the daily witness of the correction of transgressors of town ordinances and other malefactors might have been beneficial. In response to pressure from Shepherd

[3] *The Shepherdstown Register*, September 27, 1900.

[4] A. D. Kenamond, *Prominent Men of Shepherdstown: During Its First 200 Years* ([Charles Town]: Jefferson County Historical Society, 1963), pp. 26-27.



Interior Front Hall, Social Science Building (Shepherdstown Graded School), Shepherd College, 1974.

College and Graded School officials, the town council in 1901 physically moved the jail to another location.[5]

In September 1900, the bidding process for the demolition of the old school buildings and the construction of the new facility began. Eight prospective bidders expressed interest in the project, and four submitted final proposals. By the end of the month, the board of education of Shepherdstown District, after considering the bids ranging to a high of $15,995 from a Baltimore firm, awarded the contract to Cushwa & Small of Martinsburg. The low bid was $10,588.98 with an offset of $300.00 allowed for removal of the old buildings. The work was to be completed within six months unless inclement weather interfered.[6]

The new building was a two-story, brick structure, divided by brick partitions, with ten rooms, eight cloak rooms, and large hallways. It rested on an Indiana stone base and a foundation of limestone taken from the original jail and was covered by a slate roof, trimmed by galvanized iron cornices. The building was 99 feet in length and 88 feet in width; the first story was 12½ feet high and the second was 12 feet. A basement existed under half the floor space.[7] A Martin's Ferry, Ohio, firm installed the coal-fueled, hot-air heating system at a cost of $1,300.[8]

The school board members responsible for the project were E.H. Reinhart, President, R.S.M. Hoffman, Secretary, Walter L. Herr, and Robert T. Banks. Reinhart and Hoffman composed the building committee. The architect and superintendent of construction was Samuel P. Humrickhouse, Jr., of Shepherdstown.[9]

Construction of the new school progressed very rapidly. Enjoying favorable weather, the brick- and stone-masons finished the walls by January 1901, when the carpenters framed and set the roof timbers.[10] During the following month, the roof was prepared for the "slaters," the installation of the heating system had begun, and the iron cornice was

[5] *The Shepherdstown Register*, May 16, 1901; Musser, *Shepherdstown*, p. 129.

[6] *The Shepherdstown Register*, September 13, 1900, September 20, 1900, and September 27, 1900.

[7] *Ibid.*, September 27, 1900. The number of bricks required for the structure was 290,000.

[8] *Ibid.*, February 14, 1901.

[9] *Ibid.*, September 27, 1900 and October 24, 1901.

[10] *Ibid.*, January 17, 1901.

attached.[11] By the end of March 1901, the local newspaper, noting that the slate roof was completed and that the flooring was in progress, declared the new school an imposing structure that would be "a model educational home" for children.[12]

The pupils and teachers of Shepherdstown, who had scattered over three locations for clases in the 1900-01 school-year, initially occupied the new Shepherdstown Graded School in September 1901.[13] The dedicatory ceremony was a public reception and entertainment held on the evening of October 24, 1901. Principal C. T. Smootz presided over recitations by Helen Link, Edward Barnhart, and Louise Welshans; a character sketch by May Hoffman; and, a duet sung by two teachers, Miss Bessie Licklider and Mrs. Annie Fairall. Remarks appropriate to the occasion were delivered by the principal, the Honorable George M. Beltzhoover, Principal E. F. Goodwin of Shepherd College, two ministers, and Mr. H. L. Snyder, editor of the *Shepherdstown Register.* Flowers, plants, flags, and Japanesse lanterns, suspended from the ceilings, decorated the classrooms.[14]

A few years after the completion of the Graded School, the board of education of Shepherdstown District added to the school grounds on the north side by acquiring a 193 feet by 99.5 feet lot for $200.00.[15] This lot provided a place of exercise for the school children.

The Shepherdstown Graded School served the community until 1957 when the Jefferson County Board of Education constructed a new elementary school in Little Run Acres from the proceeds of a bond issue and tax levy ratified by county voters in March 1955.[16] In June 1957, the West Virginia State Board of Education, in behalf of Shepherd College, purchased the lots and property for $40,000 for academic purposes.[17]

[11] *Ibid.,* February 21, 1901.

[12] *Ibid.,* March 21, 1901. During the same month, the main building of Shepherd College, located diagonally across High and King Streets, on the southeast corner, burned to the ground. *Ibid.,* March 14, 1901.

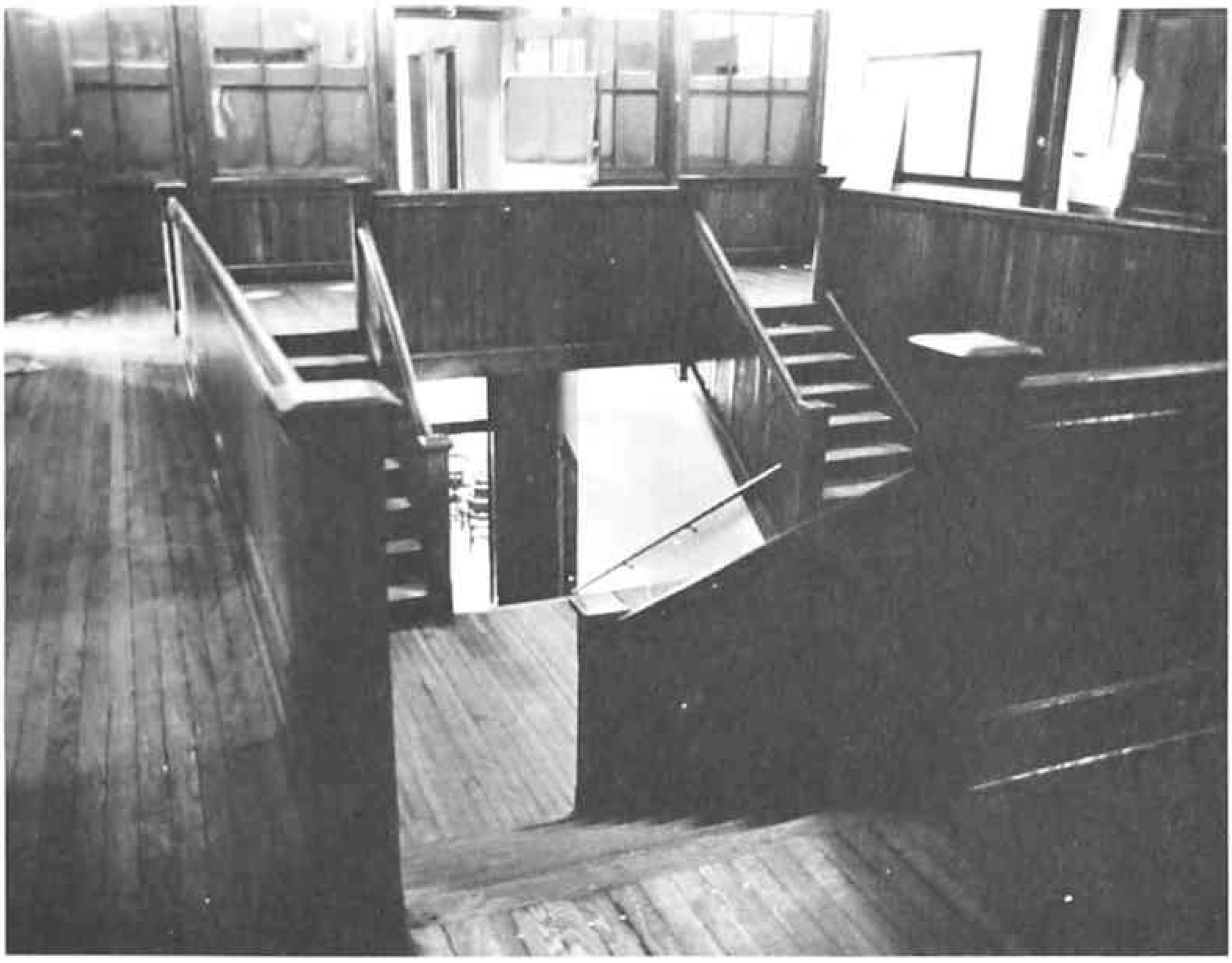
[13] *Ibid.,* September 20, 1900.

[14] *Ibid.,* October 24, 1901.

[15] Deed Book 96, p. 32, Office of the Clerk of the County Court, County of Jefferson. The transaction was dated August 8, 1906.

[16] Arthur Gordon Slonaker, *A History of Shepherd College, Shepherdstown, West Virginia* (Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Printing Company, 1967), p. 115.

[17] Deed Book 219, pp. 273-75, Office of the Clerk of the County Court, County of Jefferson. The instrument was recorded on August 2, 1957.



Interior Hall, Social Science Building (Shepherdstown Graded School), Shepherd College, 1974.

Shepherd College, already plagued by inadequate classroom space and experiencing growing enrollment, envisioned the facility as adequate for instruction of 400 college students. The structure was renamed the Social Science Building, but both the Division of Languages and Literature and the Division of the Social Sciences occupied the facility. The college immediately renovated the building's interior by repainting the walls, sanding and refinishing the floors, installing some new lighting fixtures, and adding some plumbing fixtures.[18]

Despite good maintenance and physical adaptation of the structure for academic use, the Social Science Building displayed the extensive wear of years of usage. In 1972, Wood and Tower, an educational facilities consulting firm retained by the West Virginia Board of Regents, surveyed the total Shepherd College campus and declared the Social Science Building, among others, as "old, dilapidated" and as representing

[18] *Shepherd College Picket*, September 20, 1957.

a substantial fire hazard.[19] The consultants believed the building to be "beyond repair or rehabilitation" and recommended its replacement "of first priority."[20] Wood and Tower recommended the construction of a two-story facility, designated "Academic Building B," to occupy the site of the Social Science Building.[21] In 1974, the old Shepherdstown Graded School was razed; in the following months, construction of Stutzman-Slonaker Hall occurred on the site. The limestone rocks which had been used for the county jail and the school building from 1865 to 1900 and as the foundation for the Graded School from 1900 to 1974 were reconstructed into a wall on the south side of the Shepherd College football field.

John E. Stealey, III

[19] Wood & Tower, *A Campus Facilities Plan for Shepherd College Prepared for West Virginia Board of Regents* (Princeton, N.J.: July 1972), p. 4.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 24, 26, 58-60.

SEPTEMBER 6 CELEBRATION MUSEUM OF THE BERKELEY SPRINGS

Editors Note: This presentation commenced construction of the museum at Berkeley Springs on September 6, 1985. Because of the subject, it will interest society members.

It is a day to be noted, when history reaches out and taps a man on the shoulder. And so it is that we celebrate 201 years later, the events of September 6, 1784 when History—in the form of General George Washington—visited here in Bath and ushered a struggling inventor, James Rumsey, onto its pages.

Washington set out in June for a several months journey to visit his western lands. He owned two lots in Bath and acreage along the Potomac. On his arrival at the springs, he was pleased to stay with his cousins the Throgmorton's, who announced in June, "the opening of a very commodious Boarding House" at the sign of the liberty-pole and Flag. James Rumsey was their partner.

It was widely known at the time, that General Washington had a burning desire to develop the expansive lands west of the mountains. Overland travel was slow and difficult. Navigation of the extensive network of inland rivers, beginning with the Potomac and continuing onto the Ohio and Mississippi, was a Washington dream. Rumsey believed he held the key to that dream. If he could persuade the General to support his plan for mechanized boats, the west could be open and Rumsey's future made.

For months Rumsey had worked on an idea for a boat that would use the reaction force of a river's current to turn a wheel that would power poles attached to the boat's underside. These poles would, in essence, walk the boat upriver.

Although notions of using the force of steam to power boats against the current had also been in Rumsey's mind since the previous winter, it was the pole mechanism he actually developed into a model. And on September 6, 1784 he was ready to show this model to General George Washington hoping that Washington would recognize the boat as the answer to his prayers for a means to navigate inland rivers.

Rumsey prepared a section of Warm Springs Run behind the Inn for the demonstration, creating a channel where the water ran swiftly. He collected his boat model and General Wasington, and prayed for success.

Washington was polite but skeptical about Rumsey and his boat. The model seemed simple: two boats lashed together with a wheel between them and long poles on the boat's bottom. Rumsey explained to Washington that certain mechanical principles would translate the force of the current into movement of the boat against the current.

Amazement and delight crossed Washington's dignified visage as he watched the boat model ascend, quite rapidly, the considerable stream of water flowing behind the Inn. Later that evening, Washington recounted the event for his diary:

> Remained at Bath all day and was showed the model of a boat constructed by the ingenious Mr. Rumsey, for ascending rapid currents by mechanism. The principles of this were not only shown, and fully explained to me, but to my very great satisfaction, exhibited in practice, in private, under the injunction of secrecy until he saw the effect of an application he was about to make to the Assembly of this State, for a reward.
> The model, and its operation upon the water, which had been made to run pretty swift, not only convinced me of what I before thought to be next to, if not quite impracticable, might be turned to the greatest possible utility in inland navigation, and in rapid currents that are shallow—and what adds vastly to the discovery is the simplicity of its works; as they may be made by a common boat building or carpenter, and kept in order as easy as a plow, or any common implement of husbandry on a farm.

Rumsey was elated with his success. Washington's support would be invaluable in Rumsey's quest for financial grants from State legislatures. He asked the General for a certificate verifying the demonstration's success.

Washington was only too glad to comply and on the following day presented James Rumsey with this document:

> I have seen the model of Mr. Rumsey's boats, constructed to work against the stream; examined the powers upon which it acts; been eye witness to an actual experiment in running

> water of some rapidity, and give it as my opinion (although I had little faith before) that he has discovered the art of working boats by mechanism and small manual assistance against rapid currents; that the discovery is of vast importance, may be of the greatest usefulness in our inland navigation, and if it succeeds (of which I have no doubt) that the value of it is greatly enhanced by the simplicity of the works which, when seen and explained, may be executed by the most common mechanic.
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> Given under my hand at the town of Bath, County of Berkeley, in the State of Virginia, this 7th day of September, 1784.
>
> George Washington

Throughout the Fall, Rumsey made good use of the Washington certificate to promote the cause of his boat. It was widely published in newspapers of the time and submitted to the Continental Congress along with a Rumsey request for a grant of 30,000 acres of Ohio land if he could produce a boat that would travel 50 to 80 miles per day against the current of the Ohio or Mississippi. Rumsey also used the certificate to support his patent requests to the Maryland and Virginia Legislatures.

An October letter from Rumsey to Washington clearly expresses the importance of this certificate to the inventor's future:

> The honor you did me at Bath by giveing me so ample a certificate I shall evermost gratefully acknowledge. It convinces every person that sees it and puts quite a new face on my scheme. I long to have the opportunity of convincing those that remain unbelievers that you are not mistaken in your opinion.

This successful boat demonstration on September 6, here at Bath, converted Washington to an ardent Rumsey supporter and involved him in Rumsey projects for years to come. That day however, Washington saw Rumsey's usefulness to him as more than simply an inventor.

Eighteenth century America provided such ample opportunity for hardworking people to obtain their own land and business that finding workmen to employ was a difficult task. Washington needed to have structures erected on his Bath lots in order to retain title to them. He also wanted the convenience of guaranteed lodging for family and friends while taking the waters each season.

Washington's diary entry for September 6 confirms that after the amazing boat demonstration, the General engaged Rumsey to build him a house, kitchen and stables at Bath.

> I have agreed with him to have them finished by the 10th of next July. The dwelling house is to be 36 feet by 24 with a gallery of 7 feet on each side of the house. Under the house is to be a cellar half the size of it, walled with stone and the whole underpinned. On the first floor are to be 3 rooms; one of them 24 by 20 feet, with a chimney at the end (middle thereof); the other two to be 12 by 16 feet with corner chimneys. On the upper floor there are to be two rooms of equal sizes with fire places; the staircase to go up in the Gallery—galleries above also. The kitchen and stable are to be the same size—18 by 22; the first with a stone chimney and good floor above. The stable is to be sunk in the ground so as that the floor above on the north, or side next to the dwelling house, shall be level with the yard, to have a partition therein. The west part of which to be for a carriage, harness and saddles, the east for grain or hay.

The saga of James Rumsey and the Washington house is another story filled with its own drama and concluding two years later in the summer of 1786—a saga to be told some future time. Also for another telling is the remaining story of Rumsey—his continued trials and ultimate success with steam powered boats, his journey to England, and his decade as an inventor producing more than 30 patented inventions.

Rumsey's initial steps on the stage of history were taken here in Bath, where connections were made with that group of 18th century giants who shaped America's future. Though unrecognized by popular tradition, Rumsey's inventive genius thrived today in the great steamships and power plants, and in giant water turbines that are direct developments from his early work in Bath.

by Jeanne Mozier

SUMMER PICNIC

Members and friends of the Jefferson County Historical Society gathered August 7, 1985 at historic Beallair for their annual summer picnic. Beallair was the home of Colonel Lewis Washington and was built by his grandfather Thomas Beall. The front of the house was added by Lewis Washington. It was from Beallair that Lewis Washington was taken and held hostage during the John Brown raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859.

The many changes of tenants and the elements of time had been very unkind to this stately and handsome home situated on a high hill not far from Harpers Ferry. Beallair was purchased in 1980 by Mr. and Mrs. Don Kennard of Texas from Butler Brothers of Martinsburg. The Kennards who plan to make this their permanent home have launched into a major restoration job.

The plastering as it was originally inside and outside has been repaired except the wall at the back entrance. Here the stone wall has been exposed and all necessary filler and pointing up has been done. An entire new electric wiring system and all plumbing throughout the house has been installed. Bathrooms and closets have been added wherever convenient without disturbing the architecture. The kitchen has been remodeled to bring it up to 20th century usefulness. The eight fireplaces have been opened, cleaned and conditioned for use. A hot water heating system with baseboard convectors is all new. During renovation the Kennards discovered an old stairwell in the section of the house built by Thomas Beall. This has been reopened. The brick patios are new. Using the original colors, the house at this time has a new coat of paint. The stone house, near the main house was apparently built in two sections. It has been put in excellent condition and has served as home for the Kennards during restoration work. It is thought this small house was built before Beallair, perhaps, serving as a home for the builder and later as a servant's quarters.

The Kennards have also done extensive restoration to the stone barn in the meadow and are now using it as an office and guest house. Many took advantage of the offer to tour the house and grounds.

The attendance at this meeting reached a record high.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE RUMSEY BICENTENNIAL

In the fall of 1984 a group of people, looking forward to 1987 as the 200th anniversary of the launching of James Rumsey's steamboat on the Potomac River at Shepherdstown, announced that a general meeting of interested citizens would be held to consider what might be done to commemorate that occasion. This meeting was held on December 3, 1984, at the James Rumsey Vocational and Technical Center near Hedgesville.

At that meeting an interim board of directors was elected to incorporate the organization. It was also directed to pursue the possibilities of building a half-scale replica of Rumsey's boat to be launched in 1987 and to consider educational and other means of commemorating Rumsey's achievements.

The society was incorporated as a non-profit organization in February of this year, after we had first ascertained from the secretaries of state of West Virginia and of Pennsylvania that they had no records of any other societies with that or a similar name. Another general meeting was held in March, 1985, at which time a board of directors was elected and the bylaws were approved. The IRS in September, 1985, notified the society that it had granted tax-exempt status to the society.

The society's ambitions include: the collection of copies of all available written materials concerning Rumsey's life and work and making that material available to the public through local museums; inviting speakers, and holding seminars and conferences to explore and expound upon those subjects, resulting, perhaps, in the publication of papers in appropriate journals and articles in popular publications; the awarding of prizes to students in high schools and colleges for research and essays on Rumsey; perhaps the commissioning of a biography of Rumsey; and, of course, the building and operating of a half-scale replica of Rumsey's boat. While plans can now be described as only tenuous at best, it is hoped that all of these activities can take place in June, 1987, at a festival to be held at Shepherdstown.

The society has obtained bibliographies of holdings on Rumsey from the Library of Congress, the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, and the British Library. From the British Library it has

obtained copies of the patents which Rumsey secured when he was in England and copies of some articles in British journals. It also has been in touch with one of the editors of the Franklin papers at Yale who provided a source for a Rumsey letter to Franklin.

It has received a letter from the Benedum Foundation stating that it was assigning a project officer to examine its proposal, but there was no commitment. It has also received a letter from the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia expressing interest in some of the ideas which the society proposed; the Foundation would be interested in exhibits, conferences, research and published material but could not sponsor something like a replica of Rumsey's steamboat.

The society has obtained the help of Senators Byrd, Rockefeller and John Glenn (through a Rumsey descendent in Ohio) and some other government figures in an attempt to get the U.S. Postal Service to issue a commemorative stamp in 1987, the 200th anniversary of the sailing of Rumsey's boat. Senator Byrd has consented to become an honorary member of the society.

At this stage it appears that it might be possible to achieve some success in the educational field; the society would in particular like the prizes for high school and college students to become an annual event. Raising funds for the building of the replica of Rumsey's boat looks like a more difficult task but one which is not impossible. The boat will be built to the extent possible with the methods and materials which Rumsey used. Rumsey left no complete plans or drawings of his boat, because he feared a competitor might obtain his ideas. Members of the society have, however, been undertaking research on this subject for several years and from a number of sources have put together what is believed to be a reasonably accurate picture of Rumsey's engine and boat and how they operated. Building a half-scale replica will permit it to be towed on the highways to fairs and boat shows where it would be displayed, operated, and Rumsey's role explained to the audience.

Those wishing to learn more of the society's activities or participate in them should write to The Rumseyan Society, Inc., Box 1787, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.

John M. Farrior