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Magazine of the

Jefferson County Historical Society

Volume LII
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Magazine of the

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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"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 $10.00 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.

A Reconstruction Philippic: George Alfred Townsend's Visit to Jefferson County, 1869.

In late November of 1869 George Alfred Townsend, a star journalist, perhaps better known by his pen-name "Gath," travelled to Jefferson County for a three-day inspection of Harpers Ferry and Charles Town. With him he brought one of John Brown's sons who was making his first visit to the place where his father had fought and died on the gallows only ten years before. It was an extremely bitter time. Repressive measures of the Reconstruction years were at their peak. There was a widespread belief (later resulting in a suit carried to the United States Supreme Court) that Jefferson County had been illegally wrenched from the Old Dominion and jammed into the new state of West Virginia without due process. There was in West Virginia a test act which effectively disenfranchised the majority of the pre-war electorate because they had participated in or expressed their support for the outlawed Confederacy. (During these years, for example, only twelve citizens of Charles Town were certified voters.) There was bitter animosity between Charles Town and Shepherdstown because the latter place had seized control of Jefferson County government and become the county seat without consent of the electorate as a whole. United States troops regularly patrolled the County at the least hint of dissension or protest.

Both Charles Town and Harpers Ferry were seedy and depressing. The Armory had been destroyed in 1861 by retreating Confederates and never re-established. In Charles Town the market house had been burned in 1862. The courthouse, which had been used as a fort by Federal troops, had been unroofed and abandoned, its lawn (perhaps appropriately) cluttered with the marbles of an enterprising tombstone cutter. On the other corner the jail which had once housed Brown and the raiders was gutted, many of its timbers whittled away by souvenir hunters among the Union troops who had swarmed over the famous structure during the four years of war. The streets and alleys were piled high with the accumulation of trash and offal, for the State made it unlawful for disenfranchised citizens even to re-establish their town government. The water supply was haphazard, for most of the pumps at the seven deep wells of the town were broken. Of the gas company which

had lighted houses and streets before the war, nothing remained except a gigantic cistern behind the courthouse.

It was not an auspicious time for tourists, but Gath had other matters in mind. He planned to write a retrospective article about those places indelibly associated with John Brown's last adventure, and his trump card (which for reasons unknown he never played) would be the impressions of his traveling companion, John Brown's son.

George Alfred Townsend (1841-1914), a native of Delaware, had already established himself as one of America's better known journalists, having covered both the Civil War and the Austro-Prussian War. (His Rustics in Rebellion, *republished in 1950, contains an invaluable insider's view of McClellan's peninsula campaign of 1862.) His sympathies were wholly with the Union during the War and with the Republicans after it. For Lincoln he had a devotion that amounted almost to worship, and he viewed Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry as wholly defensible. For these reasons one should expect that his impressions of Jefferson County and its populace will be less than enthusiastic. While generally accurate with respect to detail, Gath had a vindictive streak that is particularly noticeable in his characterization of men like Lewis Washington, Andrew Hunter, and C. J. Faulkner. But whatever his failings as an objective reporter, his account brings to light vivid details of the John Brown raid, trial, and execution, and it provides a rare glimpse of County personalities and events by an outsider during this turbulent period. A few years later Gath built his estate "Gapland" at Crampton's Gap above Burkittsville, Maryland, where he wrote a novel of regional interest,* Katy of Catoctin *(1886).*

Gath's account of his visit to Jefferson, originally appeared in the Chicago Tribune *(November 15 and 16, 1869), which is the source of the present transcript. Portions of it were promptly reprinted in the* Virginia Free Press *of Charlestown (November 25).*[1] *A rhetorically bloated introduction has been eliminated as an unnecessary infliction upon a reader. A few other omissions (none of them substantive) are marked by ellipsis.*

[1] Editor H. N. Gallaher of the *Free Press* in his issue of November 11 had noted the arrival of "the son of Ossawatomie Brown" in Charles Town on the previous Saturday but did not allude to Townsend. Gallaher said that the purpose of Brown's visit was to view the spot "whence his distinguished father's spirit began 'marching on.'"

HARPER'S FERRY

The Remains of the Raid
Fate of the Capturers of Brown's Men
Charlestown and the Gallows-Field

Washington, Nov. 8

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday I spent at Harper's Ferry and vicinity, willing to enjoy the autumn of mountain scenery, and curious to make a further study upon the footmarks of John Brown . . . .

I am loth to throw away a good deal of work upon a letter of column, but of the point of Harper's Ferry I may say that it has been next to dead ever since John Brown invaded it, and that it is now a village of paupers, who hang upon the approaching sale by the United States of the armory and arsenal grounds as their last and vital chance for existence.[2] This sale takes place in the latter part of the present month, November, and when we arrived on Friday night, at 9 o'clock, we were supposed to be the purchasers, and our names were carefully "eliminated" on the hotel book. There we learned the antiquity of the strange old "man-trap," as Robert E. Lee called it. Harper's Ferry remained the National armory sixty-seven years, having been selected by Washington. The government property consists of 430 acres, besides timber rights over 1,800 acres. In 1818 a Maine inventor, named [John] Hall, established a rifle factory here. In 1830 an armorer, named Cox, murdered the Superintendent of the post and was hanged in Charlestown.[3] Alfred M. Barbour, who commanded here during the Brown raid, was the eleventh Superintendent, and he went South during the war. These were the main incidents of the point prior to the Brown raid. When John Brown arrived here the two villages of the Ferry and Bolivar, which latter overhangs the other as the "Upper City" of Quebec overhangs the "Lower City," contained 5,000 people. The three great enclosures of government property, called respectively the Armory, the Arsenal, and Hall's Rifle

[2] The Federal property at Harpers Ferry, which included not only the Armory and Arsenal but many dwellings, went on the auctioneer's block later that month. Total sales amounted to $294,444.50. The principal buyer, Captain F. C. Adams, who represented northern interests, announced that his company would utilize the water power and arms factories for the manufacture of a variety of goods. This never happened. Adams never paid for the purchase, and Harpers Ferry lost its last chance for becoming a manufacturing center. Years later the Federal properties had to be sold again.

[3] For the murder of Superintendent Dunn by Ebenezer Cox and the subsequent trial and execution of the latter, see Cecil Eby, "The Execution of Ebenezer Cox," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society*, LI (1985), 14-19.

Works, were beautiful edifices, surrounded with shade trees, and a bell rang the call to work and to meals, its peaceful music stirring the sheep upon the two great ridges of mountain, while, during the heat of the day, the sound of steam hammers and whistles and the moving of feet made the deep solitude of the spot endeared to gregarious souls; and, when the human sounds ceased, the roar of the mingling rivers closed in upon the place; the lights went out; the railway engines glared past, shaking echoes from the ridge. Such was Harper's Ferry when the stern old John Brown regarded it from the opposite heights of Maryland.

Today Harper's Ferry looks like the ruined village of some ruined castle, such as one finds upon the upper Danube. And out of the ruins peep and creep some single hermits to tell you about John Brown, the greatest disturber of the peace that ever lived.

CHARLESTOWN

I took the train on Saturday for Charlestown, and spent four hours there. It is an inland town, four miles from the Shenandoah, and strange to say, is growing, and in the direction of the gallows of John Brown; for four new houses now stand on part of the site of his suspension. The gallows-spot is a corn-field, full of shocks of fine tall corn, and it has changed in few respects since the execution. The only ruined parts of Charlestown are the Court House and the jail. The former maintains its walls and outlines, and the four brick and plaster Doric columns before it are still standing; but the roof is reduced to a few beams; the whole interior is torn out, and the edifice has now only one floor,—the cellar,—and is, to speak truthfully, the cess-pool for all the vagrants in the village. To look into the interior is to feel revolted, yet to say: "The place is accursed!" At present, the seat of justice is removed to Shepherdstown, four miles from the seat of the battle of Antietam, and Charlestown is a straggling turnpike village. Opposite the Court House is the jail, also roofless and torn out; but the jail yard is perfectly enclosed by the stone wall, and many of the iron barred windows, iron gratings, etc. remain, while the jail interior exhibits accurately the sites of the floors, stairways, cells, etc.[4] I found a freed-woman hanging out clothes in the jail-yard, and ascertained that the gallows of Brown had been manufactured into all conceivable articles of furniture, and was so held in request that a part

[4] Erected among the ruins of the jail (currently the site of the Charles Town post office) was a temporary shack which housed the town supervisor, a Radical Republican whose principal function was drawing his salary.

of its lumber, which had been to make a tavern porch, was afterward torn out to supply canes at one dollar apiece.[5] The ruined Court House and jail had been despoiled by soldiers to make quarters, and tens of thousands of men have marched through Charlestown, singing:

> *"John Brown's body lied mouldering in the grave. His soul's marching on!"*

Captain [John] Avis, the jailer of Brown, a hearty fellow, now keeps a bar-room, with the sign, "Avis' Bar-Room," and he has, also, a distillery four miles out of town. He is a Republican.[6] [James W.] Campbell, the Sheriff who hanged Brown, is dead, and not much regretted.

The cemetery of Charlestown contains about two hundred dead disunionists, amongst whom are many officers, and one of these is endowed with a monument whereon is the pious effigy of a cocked Colt's revolver, full army size, with a hand on the trigger: this may be designated as "armorial bearings."[7] The handsomest of the tombs bears this inscription:

Fontaine Beckham
Died in the 64th year of his age
While mayor of Harper's Ferry,
He fell a victim to the raid on the memorable
17th day of October, 1859.

Judged by this inscription Beckham's heirs had good taste. We want to know the association of the dead man, and his tomb saves his fame in sentiment. But near by is the family lot of the man who is accused of riding to the gallows in the cart with Brown, the cabinetmaker [Wells] Hawks.[8] Here is an exterior evidence of how much a Massachusetts man can forget after living some time away from home:

[5] The gallows had been constructed by D. H. Cockrell, a master carpenter, who afterward removed the lumber and used it in constructing a porch for a house at the corner of Charles and Liberty Streets. The location of this lumber was a closely kept secret during the Civil War in order to save it from the knives of souvenir hunters.

[6] The libel was denied by the *Free Press*. John Avis had served in the Confederate Army, for which he had been disenfranchised by the Republicans in control of the State government.

[7] The tombstone in Edgehill Cemetery of Sam Wright, a member of Captain George Baylor's cavalry company, killed in the war.

[8] For further information about Avis, Hawks, and others associated with the John Brown raid, see Millard K. Bushong, *Historic Jefferson County*. 2nd edn. (Boyce, Virginia: Carr Publishing Company, 1972).

In memory of
Sarah W. S. Hawks
consort of
W. J. Hawks,
and daughter of the Hon. Enos Smith, of
Ashfield, Mass., who departed this life
August 26, 1855. Aged 32 years.
[*remainder of inscription deleted*]

Charlestown is probably the deadest place in the Valley of the Shenandoah, and it feels mean. Its very loafers shrink before the glare of day, and it is, although a town of two thousand people, as silent as the grave. I roamed through its graveyards, visited some of its people, and felt relieved at last to take the train and quit it.

Pontius Pilate and His Rabble

Judge [Richard] Parker, who tried and sentenced Brown and the rest, is still living at Charlestown a vegetarian sort of life, as he is off the bench and of little note even to his neighbors.

[Thomas C.] Green, the local lawyer assigned by the Court to defend Brown, was afterward a member of the rebel Congress, and occasionally he went to the field during the war. He is still practising law.[9]

Thomas Rutherford, foreman of the grand jury, is alive, and also Robert T. Rutherford, the clerk of the Court, and both of them held rebel commissions.

John E. P. Dangerfield, one of Brown's eight hostages, and an officer of the Armory, went into the rebel army, and is now alive, in North Carolina.[10]

One of Lewis Washington's negroes, who was carried off by Stevens, Cook, and the rest, was recently at the head of a Loyal League, at Halltown, and has more influence in the county than his former master.

Samuel Strider, Esq., the old citizen who went to the engine-house door, bearing the flag of truce for Lieutenant J.E.B. Stuart, died some time ago at his farm, one mile and a half above the Ferry.

[9] The *Free Press* noted that Green, who had been mayor of Charles Town during the John Brown trial, had not been a member of the Confederate Congress. Later he became a justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals.

[10] The *Free Press* noted that Dangerfield, deceased, had not been in the Confederate Army.

[Hiram] Griswold, the Cleveland lawyer, who defended Brown, is not well spoken of by the neighbors of the gallows, as they say that he made no "friends" at Charlestown, like Dan Voorhees, but rebuffed folks by his manner, and finally charged a fee for expenses.[11] [Samuel] Chilton, whom [James] Redpath, Brown's eulogizer, accused of having taken one thousand dollars as lawyer's fees from Brown, died at Washington, D.C. some time ago.

The lawyer who prosecuted Brown before the jury, Andrew Hunter, and Mr. [Charles B.] Harding came to different fates. Hunter keeps up his office directly opposite the Court House where Brown was tried, and next door to the jail where Brown was imprisoned;[12] while Harding, an old bachelor of dissipated habits, took up his gun at different times during the war, and went out to be of garrulous use to the rebels, and he took the rheumatism, or something, and died, tolerably worthless for good. Hunter had a son, Henry, who was a grand nephew of Beckham, the most respected life taken by the raiders at Harper's Ferry, and this Henry Hunter testified in court that he was one of the cowardly mob who dragged William Thompson out upon the Potomac River bridge, after Beckham's death, and killed him. Young Hunter's now a mere bummer around Charlestown, bragging to strangers of his feats in the rebel army, whereas he never had an accredited place in that army or any other, except the mob which assassinated Thompson, and a number of rebels assured me that Henry Hunter was worse off than the corpses of the raiders. His father is one of the huge pieces of mannerly conceit who degrade Virginia, while they impose upon it by their swaggering, posturing, and lordly pretension. A little village lawyer, of peacock airs, he is seriously believed around Charlestown to be a national man whose excursion through the States would call up the legal fraternity like the parading of the skeleton of Daniel Webster. With his thumbs in his button-holes and head thrown back like a terrapin's, he says: "By the bars sinister of the Old Dominion, sir, We'll fix this thing: We'll show this administration, sir, what we mean!" And so this poor being deludes himself, and deceives his townsmen,—forbidden by the laws of West Virginia to practice law, but doing it by proxy, and chiefly in chancery

[11] For additional information about the trial and the identity of Brown's accomplices and defenders, see Stephen B. Oates, *To Purge This Land With Blood: A Biography of John Brown* (New York: Harper & Row 1970).

[12] This was Hunter's Row, a one-story office building, once the county clerk's office before the completion of the present court house in 1836. The municipal offices of Charles Town now occupy the site.

cases; so that it is said he has more income now than before the war. The most unfortunate place Mr. Andrew Hunter ever had to fill was to prosecute John Brown, and still, but for this prosecution, we might go through his village and never think of reading Mr. Hunter's sign on his window-shutter. The most honorable association he has is his cousinship to General David Hunter. Beyond these incidental considerations he is of no consequence to anything.[13]

[George A.] Hoyt, the boy lawyer, who was Brown's original counsel, is well remembered, though he remained here but a little while. Dan Voorhees is looked upon, in the intervening distance, as a magnificent Mark Anthony, who caused tears to flow while he hanged his client; and when I told the folks in Charlestown that he was a member of Congress from Indiana, as eloquent and wrong as ever, they assumed a business countenance, and said they had forgotten both how to be grateful and to hate.

The condition of the South in Virginia I took to be this: the attitude of a man caught up in the ridicule of a rot. A few poor ragged devils trying to bear up against the laughter of an age! And there they are, like owls by day, solemn amid guffaws.

Take the case of Hawks, already referred to. Hawks has had a good bringing up, and is an agreeable Yankee, who went into a rebel Quartermastership, and served till he took a rheumatism which will hold to him till he dies. He said to me, with avidity, that it was a libel that he had ridden to the gallows with Brown. "Mr. Saddler [Leonard Sadler], the undertaker, on Main Street, is the person," he said. "I never saw an execution in my life. I think Brown was crazy on that one question."

Mr. Hawks son [Arthur] told me that he heard Wilkes Booth repeat Shakespeare and other poems at his father's house the night Brown was hanged: for Booth was a guardsman around the gallows, and learned from Brown's method of warfare the secret of murder which he executed six years afterward upon the body of Lincoln.

[13] Townsend's view of Harry Hunter would have been echoed by many citizens of Charles Town, who never condoned the brutal murder of Thompson, but his characterization of Andrew Hunter is unnecessarily harsh, motivated largely by Hunter's role as prosecutor of John Brown's band. Andrew Hunter was a prime mover in Charles Town during the antebellum period. Moreover, Townsend's contention that Andrew Hunter was "honored" by his cousinship to General David Hunter is foolish, considering that the General put the Hunter house on the eastern edge of Charles Town to the torch in 1864.

The Witnesses of the Raid

In a few years there will be few collectable witnesses of this notable raid, and I improved the chance at Harper's Ferry to hold interviews with most of them. The resolute, though motley, raiders who were killed at the Ferry lie interred across the Shenandoah River, in Loudon [sic] County, and are eight in number.[14] First, Oliver Brown was thrown in upon his back, and the negro Dangerfield Newby, laid in his arms. To get the boots off the feet of Watson Brown, his leg was partly wrenched off. In the same grave was placed Kagi, Stuart Taylor, William Lehman [Leeman], Lewis Leary, and Thompson, the latter two negroes. Anderson, another slain raider was "prepared" for the Winchester School of Anatomy.

The grave was opened when Mrs. Brown, after her husband's execution, wished to recover her sons; but their bodies could not be identified, and there they lie, on the banks of the Shenandoah; and I stood on the site of their sepulture last Sunday, feeling that I was upon a hallowed spot.

The only guide books published in Virginia are one for Mount Vernon and one for Harper's Ferry, the latter written by a genial Irishman named Josephus Barry, whose chief pride is that John Brown shot at him with a revolver.[15] It is from conversations with Barry that I derive these notes. He was the village schoolmaster and having been up late the night started out to get his morning bitters about daylight. As he turned down the street called High, which comes from Bolivar, he saw at the gate of the Arsenal three men wearing shawls strapped about them and carrying "short guns." They hailed him, and asked if he were a slaveholder. He replied, "No." The response was: "Very well, this movement is for your interest. Pass on quickly." Quite dumbfounded, Barry went to the tavern and took his gin, and asked the landlady what it all meant. The gin warming him up, he concluded to test the matter, and with his lighted

[14] The site of this mass grave was in the vicinity of the eastern edge of the present Shenandoah River bridge. In the 1890's some of the remains were exhumed and buried elsewhere, in the North.

[15] Joseph Barry, a colorful Harpers Ferry antiquarian, became the self-appointed historian of the town and local authority on the Brown raid. As a Unionist he qualified for post of County Superintendent of Schools in 1867, but because of his politics received scant support from the bulk of the citizenry and less funding from the State of West Virginia. (Between 1862 and 1870 public education in Jefferson virtually collapsed.) Barry later authored *The Strange Story of Harper's Ferry* (Martinsburg: Thompson Brothers, 1903).

pipe in his mouth proceeded directly to the Armory fence, and looked through the iron-railing, where he saw an old man issuing orders quite soberly. This was Brown himself.

"Keep off the street, sir!" cried Brown; "don't you know better than to loiter there?"

"It's a free country," said Barry, "and it's me that's harming nobody?"

"Well, sir! I'll teach you whether it's a free country!" and with that Brown poked a cocked revolver at the Irishman, who dodged about a brick pillar, and the pistol chased him from side to side, till finally Brown, hailing the three men who were at the Arsenal gate, told them to "shoot that man." With this [Albert] Hazlett raised his short rifle, and Barry turning the Armory wall, ran up an alley. A negro woman ran from a doorway, placing herself before him, and shouted: "Don't shoot that man!" Thus covered Barry got off, but Hazlett pursued him to the last, and it was mainly this pursuit which enabled Hazlett to be recognized and hanged, Barry testifying much against his will.

Colonel [Robert W.] Baylor, who commanded the whole militia, from Charlestown, Martinsburg, Halltown, and the Ferry, went into the rebel army, was shot through the lungs, had two sons killed, and he still lives in the valley, a mouldering monument to the greater raid which ended in no hangings.

Minor People of the Raid

The two canal locks opposite Harper's Ferry were kept, formerly, by John E. Cook and George Hardy. The latter is still at the lock, and spoke to me freely about Cook. It was while keeping the lock at the bridge that Cook married the girl who bore him a child, and while the child was still a baby, he had his little family removed to Brown's Kennedy farm, five miles up the mountain gorges of Maryland, and thence they departed, two days before the raid, for the North. The widow of Cook is now married to a mechanic named Johnston, a soldier of the Union army, and the couple have moved to the Western country. It is the impression, at Harper's Ferry, that Cook's child is still alive, in New York.

[Archibald M.] Kitzmiller, who was walking by the side of [Aaron D.] Stevens, reconnoitering, when Stevens was shot down, is alive and idle. He is a lawyer, clerk, scrivener, etc., and he was one of the picked hostages. When Stevens was shot, as he was in the act of firing, he lay upon the ground howling, and amongst other things, he cried:

"My God! If I have a friend in the world, if there is anybody who can pity a dog, let him come carry me away!" One of the numerous shots he received had opened up an old wound. When he was hanged, blood and pus flowed from his ear. He was the most hated and most obdurate of Brown's party, and, it is said, proposed to burn Harper's Ferry; yet he never reproached John Brown, and seemed to have for the old man the reverence of a disciple.[16] This Stevens is supposed to have been a deserter from the United States army, and like the most of the party was a Kansas borderer, but with such wild schooling and so desperate a raider, he was yet, like all Brown's folks, perfectly abstinent, as this anecdote shows. One of the hostages who was captured on the street had always been an early drinker, and he was on his way for a cocktail when taken up. Being quite unnerved he said to Brown:

"Captain, for God's sake let me go and get a drink. I swear I'll come back."

"No, sir!"

"Cap, you don't know what it is to be a slave to whiskey, and then be shut up here before breakfast without a drop. Let one of your men go get us a bottle."

Brown looked pityingly at the old debauchee and ordered one of the men to obey.

When the whiskey was brought,—a full bottle,—Lewis Washington asked Brown to have a drop.

"You don't drink, Captain, do you?"

"No!" said Brown; "that kind of stuff isn't fit for a hog to drink."

Charles J. Faulkner, ex-Minister to France, was assigned by Judge Parker, jointly with Lawson Botts, to defend Brown, but the former afterward withdrew. He lives at Martinsburg, the town of Belle Boyd, but practices at the new county seat of Shepherdstown, and has a business of at least $25,000 a year—the largest, probably, in West Virginia. Lawson Botts was afterward Colonel of the Second Virginia rebel regiment, and was killed at the second battle of Bull Run. I shall speak of Faulkner in another letter.

[16] Various local accounts of the raiders disagree with Townsend, for they are nearly unanimous in expressing admiration for Stevens' stoicism and affability while awaiting execution in Charles Town.

Outrages

One of the filthiest pro-slavery wretches was George Schoppart [Schoppert], a militia man, who, when William H. Leeman tried to escape across the Potomac, and had been wounded by a dozen balls, waded out with a cocked pistol to where Leeman lay unarmed and bleeding on a rock. The latter threw up his arms and pleaded:

"Don't shoot me! I surrender!"

Schoppart held the pistol a yard from his face and blew out the poor fellow's brains.

This Schoppart suffered a death almost exactly similar in the Confederate army, and his carcass was interred with less regard then Leeman's.

When William Thompson was dragged out of the hotel to the bridge after the death of Beckham, the Mayor, he pleaded in these terms:

"Oh! Don't kill me, men! I have a wife and child. I have given myself up. Don't murder me!" As he spoke they were shooting him through with ball, buckshot, bird shot and slugs, and when he dropped into the river they practised on the different features of his body with their arsenal of weapons.

Osmond Butler, at whose boarding house at Sandy Hook, Md., two miles from Harper's Ferry, John Brown and sons boarded some months before the raid, is living and is in the employ of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Phelps, the conductor of the first train which Brown stopped at the Ferry, detained three hours, and then himself conducted across the bridge to Baltimore, is now in the service of some Virginia railroad and conductor yet. Phelps sent a very alarming despatch to the officers of the road in Baltimore, which those cool managers kept to themselves, while they telegraphed to the agent, George Koontz, at Ellicott's Mills, to overhaul the train outside of the town and ascertain the calm particulars. It was upon the faith of Koontz's response that the President of the United States and Governor Wise were advised. Prescott Smith was sent up to the Ferry to take charge of the railroad interests there, and he is now a railway man of national reputation, while Mr. Koontz is the agent and manager of the railroad at Washington City.

Koontz told me a story to exhibit the good memory of Brown. Two years before the raid he had been riding from Cumberland to Piedmont, and had been seated beside an interesting old man, who inquired of him

as to the towns, &c., of the Alleghanies. After the raid he recognized in the published portraits of Brown the companion of the excursion, so one Sunday he slipped up to Charlestown and visited Brown in his cell.

"Mr. Brown, did you ever see me before?"

"Yes, sir, I recognize you as a gentleman who sat at my side on the railroad, nearly two years ago."

The jurymen who found Brown guilty were nearly all obscure people, and I could not trace up the fates of any of them. At least three are alive. Kelley, the armorer, who fired the second shot on the part of the citizens, is alive and poor. Throckmorton, who fired the first, is also living, and was pointed out to me. Williams, the bridge watchman, the first who was arrested by Brown, is dead. Hector Tyndale, of Philadelphia, accompanied Mrs. John Brown to the Ferry when she paid the last visit to her husband, and he was a candidate for Mayor of Philadelphia in 1868, and was defeated by reason, amongst others, that he had compared John Brown, in a speech, to Jesus Christ, which comparison was used to great effect amongst people who are nothing, if not respectable. Corporal Pollack, who searched the prisoner, was in the Marine Corps, and is believed to still be alive. Lieutenant [Israel] Green is living at Berryville, near Harper's Ferry. He is the man who struck Brown over the head after carrying the engine house.

The Chicago Tribune (November 16, 1869)

LIFE IN THE VALLEY OF VIRGINIA.

Sketches of Lewis Washington and Charles J. Faulkner

Washington, Nov. 10

At the peril of exhausting your patience, I wish to put in preservation a few more matters relating to the raid of John Brown. The witnesses of those scenes are passing away, and defective memory is losing hold upon many subjects which elucidate that mad, mysterious, yet portentous invasion. Already the Harper's Ferryans are in doubt whether the thing happened in June or December, and forget whether Brown was hanged separately or with a comrade.

Notes upon John Brown's Character

It is sure that Brown had a good deal of the human, whatever of the divine attributes may be claimed for him. In the first place he was

vindictive. While living on the Kennedy farm he dealt mainly with Harper's Ferry shopkeepers, and there received his letters and newspapers. He bought a horse of one of the citizens, and the said horse proved to be a different animal from the representations made. Brown went to a lawyer to prosecute the seller, but the lawyer advised that he could recover nothing. When the old man and his band made the raid, some of them set off at once to find the swindling jockey, and Brown told the hostages that if he were caught he should be made to smoke. Fortunately the man was missing.

Again, Brown upbraided Cook when the former left the jail for the gallows, not so much on account of Cook's confession, as because Cook had, out of the giddiness and tergiversation of his nature, deluded Brown as to the actual state of affairs at the Ferry and roundabout, amongst the negroes. Cook, indeed, was estimated too importantly by Brown; but as the poor chap had to die on the same gallows it might have been well for his Captain to have said adieu kindly to him. The old horse that Brown was swindled in was given to Mr. Kirwan, of the present Shenandoah Hotel, in payment of a bill. It is not believed that Brown killed any of the citizens at Harper's Ferry with his own hand, though he ordered some shooting. His son killed Beckham, the Mayor, and two of his negroes, [Shields] Greene and [Dangerfield] Newby shot [George W.] Turner and [Thomas] Boerly, both of the latter having guns in their hands. Beckham was killed because he had a cane in his hand, which was mistaken for a firearm. The prisoners heard Watson Brown say:

"Father, that man on the platform has a gun. If he puts his head around that water tank again I'll shoot him!" and directly he shot.

The old man seemed to have no special pity for his sons while they lay wounded, but after his capture he asked anxiously how many were dead, and learned that one had escaped. This escaped son was formerly in Ohio, but is thought to be now in California with his mother. Brown showed altogether the superior manhood to [Governor] Henry A. Wise, and after the capture Wise upbraided the Harper's Ferryans, and said

"You would never hev taken me, sir."

"No!" said Brown, "but I'd hev taken your head, Governor!"

Wise shut up. He thought to be made President by this *alarum*, and Jeems [Senator James M.] Mason and [Clement L.] Vallandigham were promptly there to saddle the matter upon the Republican party, the latter trying particularly to implicate Joshua R. Giddings. Mason is living in the

[D]istrict of Columbia. "Val" is nowhere particularly. What a set was round that old man's couch and gallows: J.E.B. Stuart, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Wilkes Booth, James Mason, Jeff. Thompson, Turner and Dick Ashby, Vallandigham, Lewis Washington . . . .

Washingtons of the Fourth Generation

Lewis Washington is a great grand nephew of George Washington, descended from Charles Washington, who settled west of the Blue Ridge many years ago. His house is near Halltown, five miles from Harper's Ferry, and is a square white house upon a green lawn, with an older house built behind and against it. He is now past 60 years of age, and during the war he was an honorary rebel agent in England, sent there to give the Confederate cause the countenance of the name of Washington. And such a Washington! And how fit for such a renegade work! While gone his furniture was carried off to Washington City, but recovered afterward, and now he is going about the country, between drinks, denouncing the age and the administration. Some days ago he said to King, an independent Connecticut settler:

"Grant President! What are the Grants to be Presidents?"

"Well," said King, "what of the Washingtons? The world never heard of more than two—George, the General, and Lewis, who was made illustrious by John Brown's capturing him. Now, perhaps, a hundred years hence, when the family's pretty well run down, some John Brown or other will capture another Grant. There will then be as many Grants as Washingtons."

Lewis Washington is the only man, hostage or otherwise, who says that John Brown was not courageous. He says that Brown was a coward, and shook like an aspen when he saw the marines coming. Says Lewis:

"I was getting ready for him. All Tuesday night I was whetting my penknife on my boot, ready to go at him at the first chance."

Proportionate to the formidableness of that penknife, as compared with George Washington's sword, is the size of the two men.

Lewis Washington is the possessor of a good deal of land, plastered with mortgages, and of a brother, Dick Washington. I heard a whole room full of men, last Monday night, howl with laughter at anecdotes of Lewis Washington's self related prowess. He says that Dick is the only man on the earth who can tackle him, that once he and Dick resolved to

clinch and wrestle with the object of settling once and for all this grand topic of physical ability. They took hold, they felt of each other, they looked at each other, they hauled, they tugged, they scrambled, they ducked. In vain; Castor had met his Pollux. Milos had encountered a root-bound tree. By mutual consent they hauled off, and mankind will never know exactly which of the two Washingtons is the better bruiser.

Lewis is full of these autobiographies. His conversation is a "Bell's Life" of himself. Sir, when he was in England, representing his country, he visited a noted pugilist. They set to in the presence of the nobility, this pugilist and this dignified Washington. Sir, this pugilist put on his coat, and gave up the impossible task of fetching him one blow, saying as he did so: "Sir, I might have known that I could never get in my bunch of fives upon the features of a Washington!" Sir, moreover, a stalwart mechanic was at my house doing some work. I often talk to that kind of people, kindly. Said he, "Mr. Washington, it would tickle me much to have a wrestle with you; for I never yet saw a man of your build, and I've thrown everybody else in Jefferson County." I told him to try it on, sir! When we began he was here on the right. Directly he was off there against the washboard, to the left. He had to quit work, sir, for three weeks, and I paid his wages till he got well.

When this sort of George Washington as a captive met John Brown in the engine-house, you had the wild fruit of Plymouth Rock and the Jamestown gentleman run to seed in the same bouquet, for John Brown's grandfather was a Captain in the revolution, and he was a direct and proven descendant of the first shipload of pilgrims. A hundred years of slavery had made the Puritan a raider of freedom, and the Washington a pompous old nuisance, sharpening his pen-knife on his boot.

The matter with all the Valley of Virginia is Washingtonianism in the third generation,—played out country squires trying to hold vast tracts of land. I am informed that the Valley of Virginia is getting no immigration, as, with land at $100 and $150 an acre, the Pennsylvanians will not buy. Mr. Washington brags of his English clothes, his English appearance, his Englishness, and he is certainly not an American. A man can be a good many kinds of fool and retain his nationality, but not his kind.

Faulkner

The State of West Virginia, as I have said, now comprises Harper's Ferry and Charlestown, and all the region of the raid, and the county seat is not at the gallows of Brown, but at Shepherdstown, where Rumsey

sailed the first steamboat, before Fulton, and where the rebel army crossed and made their hospitals after Antietam. Shepherdstown is a more picturesque place than either Martinsburg or Charlestown, and here the leading ex-rebels at the bar are [Alexander R.] Boteler, who is a sensible man, and Faulkner, who has been a radical politician since the peace. The other lawyer is Stanton. At present, Faulkner is a Republican trimmer, and, as I have said, is making $25,000 a year, charging enormous fees, and by his grandiose gentility hushing the protests of his clients. He is the noblest instance of "deportment" west of the Blue Ridge, and a politician of the cold splendor of Fernando Wood. A man to illustrate him said to me:

"He lives for Charles James Faulkner. If his wife was standing over yonder on the precipice of Loudon [sic] Heights, and it was necessary to push her off, he would do it very tenderly but she would have to go, if she was in the way of C.J.F. After every court he gives a banquet to the bar, and puts wine on the table. But once he found that Judge Hall disliked to encourage wine; so he put it off his banquet board till a new judge came, who liked a nip. Then Prince Charles James restored the rosy, and the course of justice went on."

Human Nature in the Raid

On Saturday night a man came in from the railroad full of grime, washed himself, and took supper, and then entered into conversation with me. He was a freight engineer on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and had been so at the time of the raid. He told me his personal experiences with that crude geniality which was honest.

"Had John Brown any friends in all this country after he was captured?"

"Yes, sir. We were not educated enough in our liberty to excuse his raid, even if we dared express ourselves. But there were plenty of people here who admired him, and our hearts bled for him. I say right here! Men and women, who disliked slavery, and some of us said, when we met together, that no jury of slaveholders was qualified to try John Brown."

"Yes," spoke up a young Irishman. "I was standing with my father when they checked the bodies in the cart to bury them, and I said aloud, 'That is damned brutal!' says my father: 'John, mind when you speak and where you speak it.'"

A third spoke up: "I shot at them raiders,—Mexicans or Indians I thought they was—a hundred times. I was a boy of fifteen, and I climbed

up into the Catholic Church steeple and fired. But if it was to do now, just the same, I wouldn't fire a shot. Old Brown would have harmed nobody unless interfered with. There was one fellow who gets drunk and cusses, and he mounted a horse and rode all round the streets in the hottest fire, cussing and damning Brown. Brown asked, inside the Engine House: "Who is that crazy fellow?" They told him he was a drunkard, and not a shot was fired at him.

The engineer spoke up: Now, I'll tell you, I carried off in my tank—my tender—one of them escaped raiders. We met him up here at a turnout near Sir John's Inn. He had been wandering in the hills two days, and had not eaten a crust. My fireman and I agreed that we would take care of him, both of us being tired of slaughter and blood. We got our tin buckets full of dinner, and gave him all he wanted, but his stomach was so empty that he would not take food. He said he thought he could chew a piece of tobacco, and afterward he got down a piece of pie. At Piedmont he was able to get to work with his fork, and then he eat [sic] like a wolf. We passed him on to Wheeling, and saw that he was put across the Ohio River. He admitted to us that he was one of Brown's men, and we saved him out of human nature."

"I tell you," exclaimed another, "that in the brutal time there were little acts of kindness, and kind looks bestowed upon Brown's party, right here. Few of us hate him now. He died for what he set out to do, and if you would poll Harper's Ferry today you would find two men who would hang Governor Wise to one who would hang John Brown."

The best relics of the John Brown raid in existence are Porte Crayon's sketches, never published, which he has at Bath, Virginia.[17] They depict the old man at every point of view.

To him,—the first soldier of the grand army who passed the bridge of Lodi,—there is no Waterloo. He lies imperial at Elba, amongst the mountains, wrapped in the purple of their atmosphere, and to vision waving the sword of Frederick and Washington,—a more gigantic spectre as every sunset full upon him.[18]

GATH

Edited by Cecil D. Eby

[17] Some of David H. Strother's stetches of the John Brown raid and trial were published in *Harper's Weekly* (November 5 and 12, 1859).

[18] In this extravagant finale, Townsend places John Brown in the company of Napoleon Bonaparte, knit together by the Elba connection—Elba being the place where Napoleon escaped from exile, and North Elba (New York) being the place where Brown was buried.

The Weis Pottery and the Genealogy of the Potters

John George Weis* (1721-1804), a German emigrant, came from Pennsylvania in the 1700's and settled in Hagerstown, Maryland, formerly known as Elizabeth Town. He was a schoolteacher and a potter; he taught German 30 years prior to his death.[1] John George established a pottery in Hagerstown and one in Shepherdstown, Virginia, now West Virginia. He was the son of Rev. George Michael Weis, a Reformed Church minister, who came from Germany in 1727 and settled in Pennsylvania.[2] Young John George was only 6 years old when he and his father, Rev. George Michael, came to this country.

George Weis (1782-1857) of Shepherdstown was the son of John George Weis of Hagerstown, Maryland, and the grandson of Rev. George Michael. Rev. George Michael Weis was the son of Michael and Maria Frank Weis. The book, *18th Century Emigrants,* traces the genealogy from George Weis of Shepherdstown through several generations in Germany.[3] When John George Weis died in 1804 at the age of 83, George, his son, took over the potteries which he had established in Hagerstown and Shepherdstown.[4]

Weis tradition states that John George of Hagerstown started the pottery in Shepherdstown in the late 1700's.[5] Tradition would have George in Shepherdstown before the death of his father, John George in 1804.[6] These assumptions are correct; in fact, George Weis is listed in the 1850 Census as being born in Virginia (West Virginia). It is assumed that John George and his wife, Eva Christina, were renting at the time they lived in Shepherdstown when George was born. The Grantee and Grantor books of Jefferson County do not reveal any property holdings.

* There are several variations in the spelling: Weis, Weise, Wise, Weiss, etc.

1 Moler, M. S. R. "Weis Pottery." *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society.* 6 (1940), p. 16.

2 Burgert, Annette K. *Eighteenth Century Emigrants, The Northern Kraichgau,* Vol. 1. Breinigsville, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Society, 1983, p. 388.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Bushong, Millard K. *Historic Jefferson County.* Boyce Va.: Carr Pub. Co., 1972, p. 79.

5 Moler, *lo. cit.*

6 Kenamond, A. D., Editor. *Prominent Men of Sherpherdstown 1762-1962.* Shepherdstown: Jefferson County Historical Society, 1963, p. 113.

Furthermore, the Census of 1850 will verify that George was born in Virginia (West Virginia.)

The U.S. Census 1850, Jefferson County page 312

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George Wise (Weis)	68 yrs.,	potter,	value $3100,	born Virginia
Elizabeth (wife)	67 yrs.,		value $3100,	born Virginia
James (son)	23 yrs.,	potter,	value $3100,	born Virginia

Family tradition would place the beginning of the pottery in Shepherdstown around 1780. John George would have been in Shepherdstown no later than 1782 when his son, George, was born. Birth records indicate that John George and Eva Christina were still living in Hagerstown in January 1780 when their previous child, John Adam, was born. It would seem that the family tradition of his arrival around 1780 is a correct assumption. Further support for John George's presence in Shepherdstown is suggested by his obvious absence from the list of Hagerstown potters from 1800 to 1805. *Scharf's History of Western Maryland* lists early residents and their occupations. The potters listed in *Scharf's History* are shown below.[7]

Potters 1800-1805	**Potters 1805-1815**
John Crumbach	Henry Adams
Conrad Crumbach	Peter Bell
Christian Fechtig	Daniel Richard
George Vogelsand	John Snavely

John George's name would not be expected to occur here because he would have been in Shepherdstown a large part of the time from 1780 until his death in 1804. A footnote in *Scharf's History* states that the pottery business carried on by Christian Fechtig and George Vogelsand, near the courthouse, had formerly been controlled by Eichbaugh, and afterwards by Leisinger and Bell.[8] This rules out the possibility that Weis shared the pottery with Fechtig and Vogelsand, or that he previously rented there. An advertisement by Conrad Crumbach which appeared August 9, 1805 in the *Maryland Herald* makes no mention whatsoever of a partner. *The Newspaper Index* of Hagerstown papers from 1790 to 1819 does not mention John George Weis, and this is exactly what would be expected if he came to Shepherdstown in 1780 and remained there except for visits to Hagerstown.

[7] Scharf, J. Thomas. *Scharf's History of Western Maryland.*, Vol. 2. Baltimore: Regional Pub. Co., 1968, pp. 1061-65.

[8] *Ibid.*

Family tradition says that John George operated both potteries. He must have had someone to care for the pottery in his absence. The Weis family operated a brickyard in Hagerstown, and it is possible that they attended to the pottery in his absence.

In the last list of occupations from 1805 to 1815, there is a John Weis who is a blacksmith, and a George Weis who is a cabinetmaker. Neither of these refers to George or John of Shepherdstown. The town meetings of Shepherdstown and the 1810 Census would prove that George Weis was in Shepherdstown at least a great portion of that time. Furthermore, he was never a cabinetmaker. John Weis, son of George, would be only 8 years old in 1815, therefore, Scharf's list probably refers to relatives. There is a George Weis listed in the taxpayers of Hagerstown for 1790. It is believed that this is the same George Weis as the cabinetmaker. The 1810 Census for Hagerstown shows a John Weis which is most likely the blacksmith. The following is a list of John George's children, possibly there are more.[9]

Ann Elizabeth	born 4/28/1774, Hagerstown, Md.
John	born 8/13/1776, Hagerstown, Md.
Anna Mary	born 6/28/1778, Hagerstown, Md.
John Adam	born 1/24/1780, Hagerstown, Md.
George	born 1782, Shepherdstown, Va.
Samuel (possibly a brother)	born 1783 or 1784, location unknown

Samuel Weis is said to have been a brother of George.[10] It is thought that he was born in 1783 or 1784. If this is correct, he would have been the youngest of John George's children, and Eva Christina, his mother, would have been 51 or 52 years old when he was born. Samuel had an interest in the Weis pottery, but he sold his interest at an early date. A record of the town meetings shows that Samuel was still living in Shepherdstown in 1847. His name appears on a petition to the Town Council opposing the taxes levied on the citizens. There are also records in 1844-45 where he received pay for work performed for the city of Shepherdstown. His name was listed among those who intended to

[9] Fisher, Charles A., Compiler. *Early Pennsylvania Births.* Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1977, p. 86.

[10] Kenamond, *lo. cit.*

petition the Legislature of Virginia to repeal the act incorporating the town of Shepherds.[11]

Samuel and Catherine Weis had two children, Samuel, Jr., and Lavina. St. Peter's Lutheran Church records mention that Samuel, Jr. was born July 10, 1821, and that he was baptized in 1825. Lavina was born February 22, 1824. No baptismal records were available for her. Samuel's wife, Catherine, died in 1846; she was buried in the old Lutheran Cemetery on East German Street. No tombstone records were available for Samuel. Catherine's tombstone reads as follows:[12]

Weis, Catherine, wife of Samuel Weis died Nov. 17, 1846, age 55 years, 9 mo., 10 days.

Elizabeth Weis, wife of Albert Humrickhouse, is believed to be a cousin of George, not a sister as is sometimes assumed. He had a sister named Ann Elizabeth who was born in Hagerstown, April 28, 1774. Licklider history mentions that Elizabeth Weis married Albert Humrickhouse and that she was born in 1792 which is much too late to be the child of John George and Eva Christina.[13] Albert Humrickhouse served as an Alderman for the city of Shepherdstown in 1822; he was elected to the office of Assessor in 1854.[14] His name appears on various petitions and committees for the town meetings. Humrickhouse was born May 25, 1786; he died July 12, 1864.[15] Elizabeth Weis Humrickhouse was born December 13, 1792; she died February 8, 1847.

Humrickhouses had several children. St. Peter's Lutheran Church records reveal a son Judette, born May 3, 1822; a daughter, Augusta, born September 1, 1817; and still another daughter Amanda Samanna born November 4, 1824.[16] Licklider history lists other children: Albert born 12 March 1811; James Joseph, James Reeside, and Henrietta for whom no dates are shown.[17] The 1870 Census lists James Humrickhouse, 40 years old as a potter. He must have worked for the

[11] Musser, Clifford S. *Two Hundred Years History of Shepherdstown.* Shepherdstown: The Independent. p. 78.

[12] Daughters of the American Revolution, Compiler. *Tombstone Inscriptions of Jefferson County, West Virginia 1687-1980,* p. 277.

[13] Netherton, Alene L. and Thurman, Diane S., Compilers. *Leichleiter and Variants.* Carlisle, Ohio: McGregor-Werner, Inc., 1978, p. 189.

[14] Musser, *op. cit.,* pp. 68, 84.

[15] Netherton, *lo. cit.*

[16] Netherton, *lo. cit.*

[17] Netherton, *lo. cit.*

Weises. It is not known whether this was James Joseph or James Reeside.

Amanda Samanna Licklider married Gratison (Grandison) Templin Licklider.[18] There were fourteen children from this marriage. Amanda and Gratison T. Licklider were the grandparents of the late Mary Licklider. This makes Albert Humrickhouse and Elizabeth Weis Humrickhouse, the great-grandparents of the late Mary Licklider. Mary was the daughter of Edward and Ellen Entler Licklider.

The name of George Weis appears several times in the early records of Shepherdstown. A financial record of St. Peter's Lutheran Church dated July, 1809 bears his name; it was written in German. Eisenberg mentions the name of George Weis in the minutes of the Virginia Conference on church officers for Shepherdstown in 1809.[19] The Census lists John, the oldest son of George, as being born in Virginia in 1807. September 4, 1809, George and his wife Elizabeth, purchased lot number 9 on the northwest corner of German and Duke Streets. Thereafter, this became known as the pottery of Weis's Corner. Weis paid John Boyers $700 for this property.[20]

The name George Wise (Weis) appears in the U.S. Census Index of 1810.[21] By this time he must have been well-known because he was elected to the Town Council, April 3, 1810.[22] He continued to hold a position there for some time.[23] He also served on a grand jury inquest for the Court of Hustings.[24] This court functioned from April 1820 to 1823. The purpose was an inquiry into the incorporation of Shepherdstown. All business matters such as legal proceedings, criminal hearings, and transfers of property were referred to this court.

George Weis continued to live in Shepherdstown with occasional visits to Hagerstown. He died in 1857. He and his wife, Elizabeth, were buried in the old Lutheran Church Cemetery across the railroad tracks on East

[18] Netherton, *lo. cit.*

[19] Eisenberg, William E. *The Lutheran Church in Virginia 1717-1962.* Lynchburg: J. R. Bell, Co. Publishers, 1967, p. 91.

[20] Weis, George purchased from John Rogers. *Deed Book 5,* p. 234, 1809. County Court Clerk's Office, Charles Town.

[21] Crickard, Madeline, Compiler. *1810 Census Index, Heads of Families.* Parsons: McClain Printing Co. 1971, p. 146.

[22] Musser, *op. cit.* p. 47.

[23] Musser, *op. cit.* p. 55, 68.

[24] Musser, *op. cit.* p. 65.

German Street. They are buried in the Weis plot, and their tombstone inscriptions read as follows:[25]

Weis, Elizabeth, Consort of George Weis, d. Feb. 20, 1866 in her 82nd year.

Weis, George, d. April 29, 1857 in his 75th year.

The baptismal records of St. Peter's Lutheran Church list eight children for George and Elizabeth. There are two more names which do not appear in the records, but who are most likely their children. Those not shown in the baptismal records are baby Mary who was rescued from the Weis home during the fire of 1815, and Catherine who married Joseph Snyder in 1839. Her marriage records to Joseph Snyder are in the Presbyterian Church of Shepherdstown. She would have been born around 1817 or 1818. Notice in the list of children there is a child born about every 2 years until a gap occurs between the names of Elizabeth and Joanna. Presumably, baby Mary and Catherine belong in this gap. The names have been inserted with an asterisk.

Name	**Date of birth**
John	1807
Henry	June 30, 1809
George (Jr.)	Nov. 30, 1811
Elizabeth	Sept. 30, 1813
*Mary (infant at the time of the 1815 fire)	1815
*Catherine (approximate date)	1817
Joanna	Mar. 23, 1820
Ellen	Jun. 27, 1823
William	1825
James	Dec. 6, 1827

Soon after the corner lot was purchased at German and Duke Streets in 1809, a small frame house was built with a pottery shop beside it. The pottery shop was a story and a half, later remodeled to make it a two story house. The kiln was located in the backyard along a boarded fence. The late Nellie Hendricks Moler has left a detailed account of how the boarded fence and the small frame house burned in 1815. Fire in the kiln got out of control and ignited the wooden fence which extended to the house. The frame house was engulfed in flames and completely destroyed.[26] Two different accounts of the fire of 1815 state that James,

[25] DAR, *lo. cit.*

[26] Moler, *op. cit.* p. 19.



Above: Weis's Corner at German and Duke Streets, currently the home of Sam and Margaret Skinner. This house was built in 1818 to replace the frame house which burned in 1815. To the extreme left, the white house was once a potter's shop.



Left: A rear view of the potter's shop, currently owned by Sam and Margaret Skinner. When the Weis family owned it, this was only a story and a half; it has a full story added. The kiln was located in the backyard just a few feet from the house.

the youngest son of George, was in charge of the kiln the night of the fire. It could not have been James because he was not born until 1827. It was most likely one of the brothers of George. His oldest son, John, would have been only 8 years old in 1815.

The original frame house was replaced by a brick house in 1818. This house is currently owned by Sam and Margaret Skinner. The Skinners purchased the property in December of 1945. It was previously owned by George M. Beltzhoover who purchased it April 23, 1901, following the death of William Weis. This corner at German and Duke Streets was known as Weis's Corner for a period of over 100 years.

There were four of George Weis's sons who followed in his footsteps as potters. The oldest son periodically spent time in Hagerstown, but he was in Shepherdstown in 1850. The U.S. Census for Jefferson county appears as follows:

208/211	John Wise (Weis)	43,	potter, born Virginia
	Adeline (wife)	34,	potter, born Virginia
	Ann Susan (dau)	11,	born Virginia

Although there is a variation in the spelling of the name, St. Peter's Lutheran Church records confirm this was the correct John Weis. John and Adeline had another daughter, Mary Virginia, who was born January 26, 1832, and died at the age of 14 in 1846. She was buried in the old Lutheran Cemetery on East German Street.[27] Furthermore, the Lutheran Church records state that she was baptized April 8, 1832. There was a John Wise who married Elizabeth Bishop in 1823. This is believed to be a brother of George, not a son.

Henry Weis, next to the oldest son of George and Elizabeth, spent most of his life in Hagerstown. Communion records of the Lutheran Church indicate that he and his wife, Sarah, visited Shepherdstown occasionally and took communion with other members of the Weis family. The Census for Washington County Maryland for 1850 lists the Henry Weis family as follows:

71/79	Henry Weis	42	M,	potter, $2,400,	born Virginia
	Sarah (wife)	32	F,		born Virginia
	*Arthur J. (son)	11	M,		born Maryland
	Ann C.	7	F,		born Maryland
	Sophia C.	2	F,		born Maryland

*Name is not clear. It might be Luther or Arthur.

[27] DAR. *lo. cit.*

William E. Weis, the fourth son of George and Elizabeth, spent his life in Shepherdstown. There was a George Weis, Jr., who was born in 1811, who was the third son, but his name does not appear in any of the records in Shepherdstown or in Hagerstown. He probably died in infancy. As years passed, and George and Elizabeth grew older, most of the responsibility of the Shepherdstown pottery was assumed by William. Both William and James, the youngest son, managed the pottery for a while, but in later years James moved to Martinsburg, leaving the full responsibility of the pottery to William. The 1850 U.S. Census gives the following account of the William Weis family.

581	William Weis	36 potter, $400,	born Virginia
	Jane (Emma Jane) (wife)	34,	born Virginia
	Edwin (son)	11,	born Virginia
	Bertha (dau)	9,	born Virginia
	William (Jr.) (son)	8 months,	born Virginia

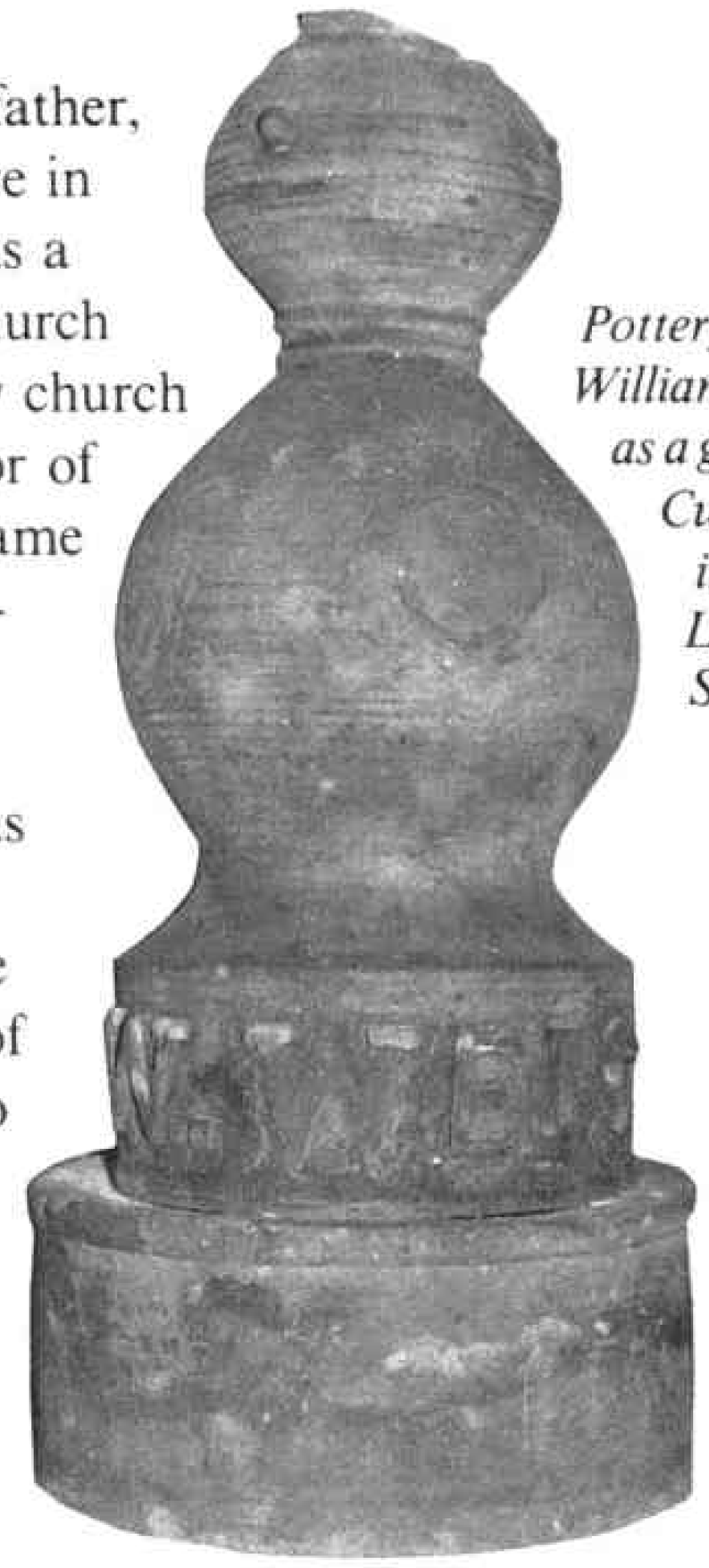
St. Peter's Lutheran Church records confirm the following information on the William Weis children. Edwin Kealhafer Weis was born February 13, 1849, and was baptized July 2, 1853. The 1870 U.S. Census for Jefferson County lists Edwin K. as a potter. This would make him the fourth generation of potters here in Shepherdstown. The marriage books of Jefferson County record the marriage of Edwin K. Weis to Anna Alice Turner, January 29, 1877.[28] Anna A. Turner was a widow at the time she married Weis. Edwin K. Weis died in Martinsburg, Berkeley County, July 18, 1919.[29]

The marraige records of Jefferson County reveal the marriage of Bertha E. Weis to George R. Yontz, April 13, 1882.[30] Bertha Weis Yontz and George R. Yontz had a daughter, Blanche, who died in Shepherdstown in 1971. Elmwood Cemetery records state that she was buried in lot 175 along with her mother, Bertha (d. 1935), and her grandfather, William Weis (d. 1901). Her uncle, Edwin, was also buried in the Elmwood Cemetery. Many of the present-day residents of Shepherdstown recall the late Blanche Yontz as an active member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church.

[28] *Weis, Edwin K. and Turner, Anna Alice. Marriages of Jefferson County 1801-1890.* Book 3, p. 610.

[29] Weis, Edwin K. *Death Register Berkeley County, Martinsburg,* West Virginia. July 18, 1919, p. 456.

[30] Weis, Bertha E. and Yontz, George R. *Marriages of Jefferson County 1801-1890.* Book 3, p. 646.



Pottery urn made by William Weis and used as a grave marker. Currently located in St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Shepherdstown.

Both Edwin K. and his father, William E., were very active in Church affairs. William was a deacon in the Lutheran Church and was in charge of many church activities. He was supervisor of Holy Week in 1872. His name is listed as Assistant Superintendent of St. Peter's Church along with that of his son, Edwin K., who was the Assistant Librarian. A pottery urn used as a grave marker bearing the name of W. WEIS was presented to St. Peter's Church by Blanche Yontz, October 31, 1965.[31] The urn was made by William Weis, her grandfather. It remained in the Elmwood Cemetery from 1901, at the time of her grandfather's death, until its presentation in 1965. In addition to this grave marker, there is a stained glass window in St. Peter's Lutheran Church which was dedicated in 1908. According to the book, *On This Rock,* William and John Weis were memoralized in the dedication services of that window.[32]

James Weis was the youngest of the children of George Weis. The Presbyterian Church records show that he married Catherine J. Snyder, November 20, 1849. The 1860 U.S. Census gives the following account of the Weis family:

582/568	James E. Wise (Weis)	33, potter, $100, born Virginia
	Catherine (wife)	30, born Virginia
	Silas	10, born Virginia
	Alice	8, born Virginia
	Charles	1, born Virginia

[31] Hartzell, Gladys. *On This Rock: The Story of St. Peter's Lutheran Church of Shepherdstown,* 1765-1965. Shepherdstown: The Register Publishers, 1970, p. 316.

[32] *Ibid.* p. 140.

Lutheran baptismal records confirm that Silas Clinton Weis was born July 30, 1850, and Alice was born May 18, 1852. No baptismal records were available for Charles. Birth records of Berkeley County indicate that another son, William A. was born July 17, 1868, to James and Catherine Weise (Weis) of Martinsburg.[33] James is listed as a potter in these birth records. Presumably, Spring Street was the location of the pottery in Martinsburg. This is the only address shown in any of the records. Ketchum, in his book, *Pottery and Porcelain Collector's Handbook,* lists James Weis in Martinsburg as of 1870.[34] These records would indicate he was already there in 1868.

The U.S. Census shows that Silas Clinton Weis, a potter, was married and had two children. The 1880 Census for Berkeley County reads as follows:

2-M-349	Spring Street, Martinsburg		
	Weise (Silas) Clinton	29, potter,	born Virginia
	Rose (wife)	23,	born Virginia
	Walter	3,	born Virginia
	James	1,	born Virginia

The life of Silas Clinton Weis was filled with sorrow and tragedy. On January 4, 1876, he married Rosa M. Freeze, daughter of Benjamin and Mary E. Freeze.[35]. In 1876 their infant son, W. Wilson Weis died.[36] Tragedy struck again in 1878; another son, James, named for his grandfather, died. James who is shown in the 1880 Census was the second child named for his grandfather.[37] Clinton and Rose had still another child, Ida, born April 2, 1881.[38] This child lived only a few months; Ida died July 21, 1881.[39] Meanwhile, Rosa, wife and mother,

[33] Weis, William A. *Birth Register Berkeley County, Martinsburg,* West Virginia. July 17, 1868, p. 28.

[34] Ketchum, William C., Jr. *The Pottery and Porcelain Collector's Handbook.* New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1971, p. 191.

[35] Weis, Silas C. and Freeze, Rosa M. *Marriages of Berkeley County, Martinsburg, West Virginia,* Jan. 4, 1876, Book 16, p. 53.

[36] Weis, W. Wilson. *Death Register Berkeley County, Martinsburg,* West Virginia. March 4, 1876, p. 79.

[37] Weis, James. *Death Register of Berkeley County, Martinsburg,* West Virginia. Oct. 15, 1878, p. 95.

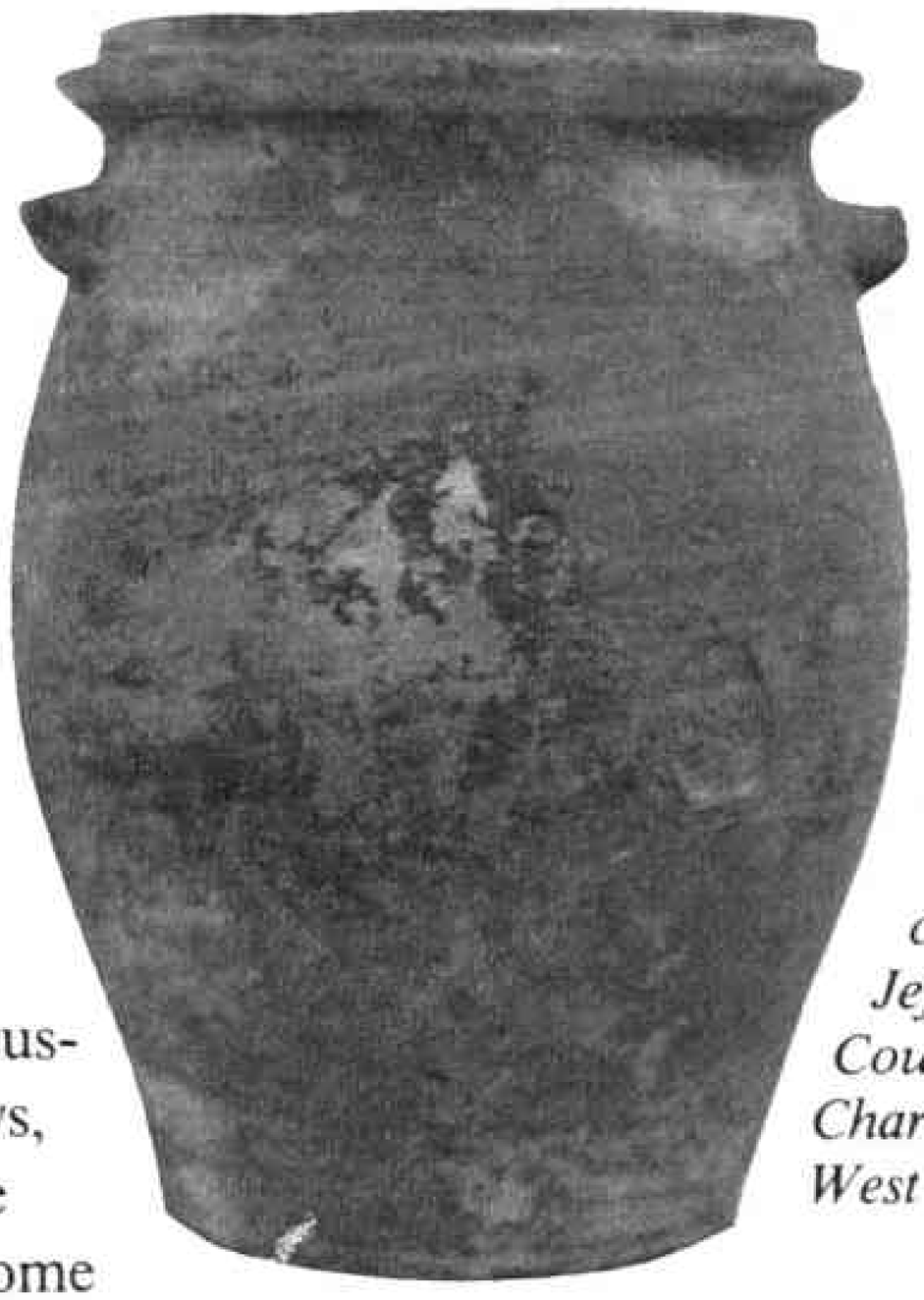
[38] Weis, Ida. *Birth Register Berkeley County, Martinsburg,* West Virginia. April 2, 1881, p. 124.

[39] Weis, Ida. *Death Register Berkeley County, Martinsburg,* West Virginia. July 21, 1881, p. 51.

died of tuberculosis on May 20, 1881, just prior to the death of Ida.[40] Silas Clinton Weis left the pottery business in 1881 to become a railroad worker. There is nc evidence that he or his father worked the Martinsburg pottery after this date.

The type of kiln located at the Martinsburg pottery is not known. It is assumed to be the same as the one in Shepherdstown. Judging from Moler's description, the Shepherdstown kiln was a groundhog type lined with fire brick.[41] The source of clay for the Martinsburg pottery is not known. That for the Shepherdstown pottery was obtained from the Willoughby Newton Lemon farm, later owned by Henry Shepherd.[42] The clay was ground by a stone bur, then hand thrown on a potter's wheel. The stone was pulled by a horse to pulverize the clay. Brooks Lucas, an antique dealer in Shepherdstown, currently owns the stone bur from the Weis pottery. Lucas said when his mother was a child she recalled leading the horse around the circle to grind the clay for the Weis pottery. This was a fun thing for the children of the community.

The Weis pottery at all three locations was red earthenware, chiefly without decorations. Some decorated pottery known as *Sgraffito* ware has been reported in digs at the Weis pottery in Shepherdstown.[43] The major products produced were crocks, pitchers, baking pans, cuspidors, jugs, dough trays, cups, bowls, vases, cake molds, pie plates and some



Left: Large urn from the T. T. Perry collection, Jefferson County Museum, Charles Town, West Virginia.

[40] Weis, Rose. *Death Register Berkeley County, Martinsburg,* West Virginia. May 20, 1881, p. 50.

[41] Moler, *op. cit.* p. 17.

[42] Parziale, Reynolds and Pamela. "Pottery in the 1800's: The Weis Pottery, Shepherdstown, West Virginia." *Studio Potter,* (Sept. 1980) p. 62.

[43] Dahlhamer, Gloria. "Hagerstown." *The Hagerstown Sun,* October 7, 1984, Section B-3.

novelties. With the advent of the new grey stoneware, the demand for the red earthenware declined, and the excess was dumped into the Potomac River.



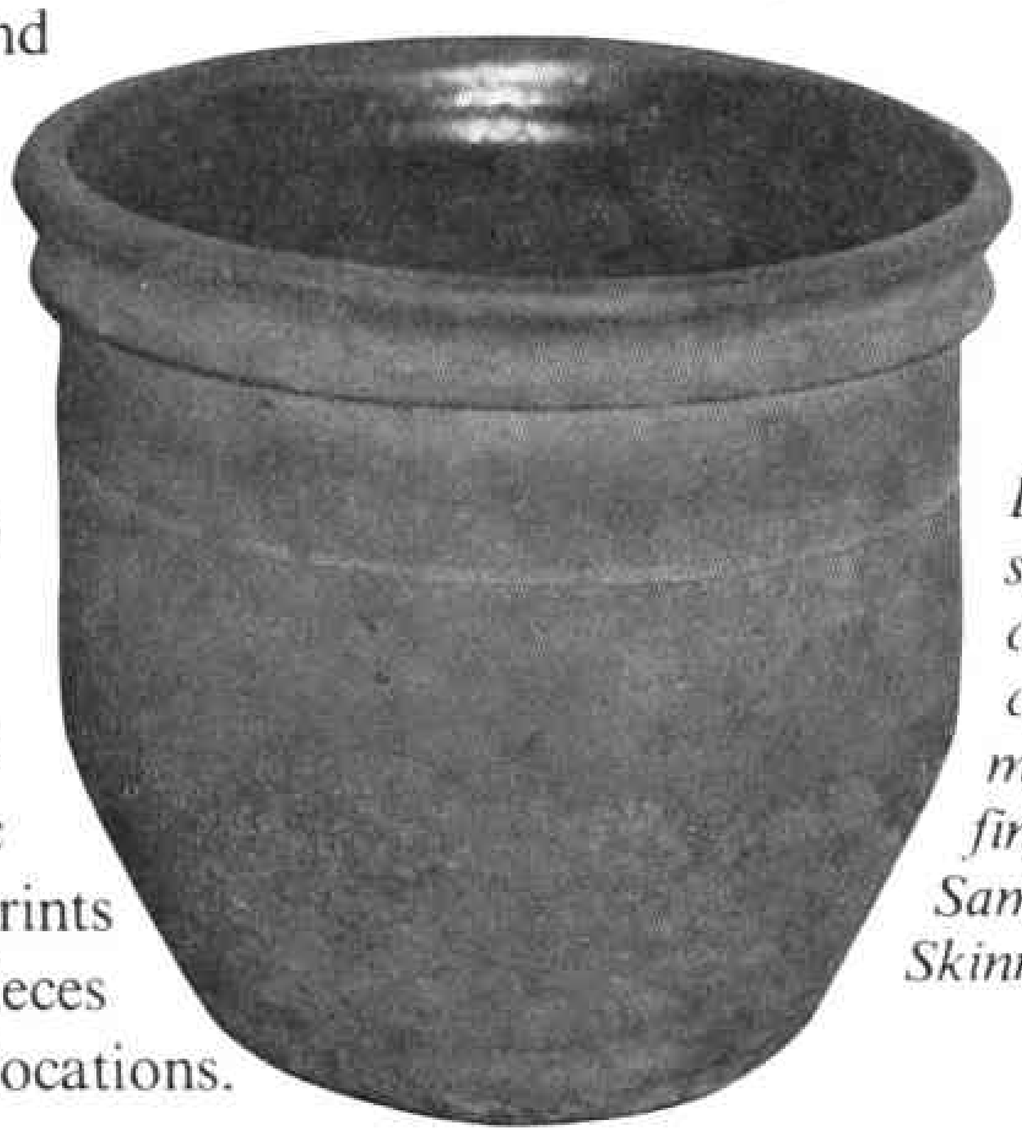
Above left: A tiny lead glazed pot from the T. T. Perry collection, Jefferson County Museum, Charles Town, West Virginia. Right: Crock from the Historic Museum of Shepherdstown, Entler Hotel.



Above: Weis crocks from the private collection of Sam and Margaret Skinner.

Weis pottery is rather unique. Although it was not signed, the potter's techniques have dramatically marked each piece to such a degree that it can generally be identified without difficulty. Each pot or vessel has a small line or groove which is a cogle band near the top of the pot. The

fingernail was used to make the mark or line. The finger tip marks and the thumbnail marks are typical of the Weis pottery of Hagerstown, Shepherdstown, and Martinsburg. All of the sons and grandsons were trained in exactly the same manner. The fancy scrowls, lines, and twirls were made with the fingernails and these characteristic markings and imprints were present on pieces made at all three locations.



Left: A crock showing the characteristic cogle band made with the fingernail. From Sam and Margaret Skinner's collection.





Above, left: A cake mold owned by Sam and Margaret Skinner, formerly owned by the late Lucy Schoppert, a Weis descendant. Right: Pitcher shaped like a crock with a handle. Also from the private collection of Sam and Margaret Skinner.

With the death of William E. Weis in 1901, the Shepherdstown pottery closed. The Martinsburg Pottery is believed to have closed in 1881 when Silas Clinton started working for the railroad. The Weis potteries covered a period of over a hundred years with four generations of potters.



Right: A variety of Weis crocks from the private collection of Betty Snyder Lowe, previously owned by her mother, the late Sarah Folk Snyder.

There were at least three other potters who were in Shepherdstown, but who apparently did not find the business profitable enough to remain there for long. The names of John Criswell and Daniel Byers appear in the 1850 U.S. Census as potters in Shepherdstown. A third potter, George Cressinger advertised his wares in the *American Eagle*, July 3, 1817.

The Weis pottery is probably the oldest pottery in West Virginia. Hough's article on the Morgantown pottery states that the Thompsons came to Morgantown in 1785 when John W. Thompson was only 4 years old, but according to the Census, John W. was not born until 1785.[44] If John W. Thompson was 4 years old when the Thompsons arrived in Morgantown, then the pottery at Morgantown would have started around 1789 or possibly 1790. Callahan says that the manufacturing of pottery was not started in Morgantown until after it was incorporated (1786).[45] The earliest potter mentioned in the county records was John Scott who purchased lot 7 in Morgantown in May 1800. Jacob Foulke is generally credited as the first potter in Morgantown, but his presence there isn't shown in the county records until 1803 when he made an agreement with David Bayles to purchase some land. The purchase was to be paid in crockery. All of this seems to support the idea that Shepherdstown probably had the oldest pottery in West Virginia, and that Morgantown had the oldest pottery west of the Allegheny Mountains.

Clyde D. Morton

[44] Hough, Walter. "Ann Early West Virginia Pottery." *Report of the U.S. National Museum*. Washington: Govt. Ptg. Office, 1901. p. 513.

[45] Callahan, James M. *History of the Making of Morgantown*. Morgantown: West Virginia University, 1926, p. 130.

The Potts-Hobart Correspondence: The Local Iron Industry in the 1790's

An article in a previous issue of this magazine has explored the roles of Friend's Ore Bank and Keep Triste Furnace in the early industrial development of Jefferson County.[1] However, documents located in the Hagley Library (Wilmington, Delaware) have been found to provide additional insight into these and other local industries in the last decade of the 18th century.

The relevant documents consist of approximately 60 letters, receipts, and memoranda written between 1788 and 1801 and kept by Robert E. Hobart, a Philadelphia merchant and a relative of the founders of Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Some time in the 1780's the Potts family acquired iron and copper mines in Pennsylvania and began erecting a furnace, forge, and grist mill to support the mining operations.[2] Shortly thereafter, John Potts, Jr., probably through his acquaintance with Wiliam Wilson, established himself as a merchant in Alexandria, Virginia. Wilson, also a merchant, was a friend of George Washington and General Henry Lee, and he was probably responsible for getting Hobart and Potts involved with Lee in a series of land speculation and development schemes that included the Keep Triste Furnace.

In 1788, Henry Lee had acquired several thousand acres of land in payment for debts owed to his relatives by John Semple, the original builder of Keep Triste Furnace.[3] Lee's acquisitions included approximately 2,000 acres in eastern Jefferson County, a tract of land at Great Falls, and a nearby iron ore bank. By the time Potts settled in Alexandria, he had begun construction of a mill and a furnace at Great Falls (probably through a long-term lease with Lee) and he had joined Wilson in buying and leasing parts of the Keep Triste Furance land.[4]

[1] William D. Theriault, "History of Friend's Orebank and Keeptryst Furnace," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society*, 50: 12-22; Dec. 1984.

[2] John Potts, Jr., to Robert E. Hobart, April 29, 1789, Potts Papers, Hagley Library, Wilmington, Delaware. Unless otherwise indicated, all correspondence cited between John Potts, George North, Henry Lee, and Robert E. Hobart is from this source.

[3] Deed Book 10, pp. 187-190, Berkeley County, W. Va.; George Washington to James Madison, November 17, 1788, John C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of Washington*, (GPO, 1939), Vol. 30, pp. 128-130.

[4] Potts to Hobart, April 29, 1789.

Wilson and Potts obtained from Lee "three acres of land upon the river Potomack with three quarters of an acre front on said river including the Keeptriste Furnace," 20 acres of adjoining meadow ground, 20 acres of high ground," also one acre of ground near the old mill dam including a mill seat, with a full, undisturbed, adequate and exclusive use of the water for the said iron works now or hereafter to be erected, and mill, together with land for a race from said mill dam by the said mill and furnace or other works to be erected."[5] Lee also appropriated three acres of Friend's Ore Bank for their use at the rate of one shilling eleven pence per ton of ore mined and gave them a long-term lease of 200 acres nearby that could be used for farming. If the 3-acre ore tract ever became exhausted, Lee agreed to sell them ore at the same price. Potts and Wilson on their part agreed to "complete the said furnace as soon as possible, to preserve it in use, and to work the ore of Friend's Ore Bank entirely excepting a small proportion which may be necessary for castings . . . ".

This description of the Keep Triste Furnace area contains several references to the location and condition of the mill and iron works which are further described in later correspondence. First, the original furnace appears to have been located on the Potomac River just above Elk Run rather than on Elk Run itself. Second, a mill seems to have existed a short distance up Elk Run and to have been destroyed or in ruins by 1788. Third, Potts and Wilson intended to build another mill and a furnace on Elk Run near the site of the original mill. Fourth, Lee was apparently worried about Potts and Wilson buying iron ore from competitors. (Ross and Company owned the Maryland Orebank across the river from Keep Triste Furnace.) Finally, the ore from Friend's Ore Bank was apparently not suitable for some kinds of castings.[6] The location of two furnances at Keep Triste would help explain the ambiguous and often conflicting references to this site on nineteenth century maps.

Shortly after this business arrangement was concluded with Lee, Potts and Wilson decided to form a partnership to develop and operate the Keep Triste Furance. By the spring of 1789, Hobart had agreed to become a partner and George North, a Pennsylvania ironmaster, had been found to manage the furnace. North was to receive 100 Pennsylvania currency per year, provisions for his family, two horses fed

[5] Articles of agreement between John Potts, Jr., William Wilson, and Henry Lee, December 19, 1788.

[6] Articles of agreement between Potts, Wilson, and Lee, December 19, 1788.

at the company's expense. The formal partnership agreement between Potts, Wilson, Hobart, and North was signed on January 1, 1790. A few months earlier, the four men had acquired an additional 221 acres from Lee; this deed appears to contain some of the land Potts and Wilson had purchased from Lee one year before.[7] In 1790, Lee transferred title of the 100-acre Friend's Ore Bank to Wilson as security until his other debts to Wilson were paid. The men also obtained a 230-acre tract of land from Gersham Keys which the partners intended to use as a source of wood.[8]

The work of rebuilding the Keep Triste Furnace operation was begun by North in the spring of 1790. One millwright, two stone masons, and numerous laborers worked through the summer and fall getting the place in shape. By November of that year, a new furnace and blacksmith's shop had been erected, the old "coal house" had been torn down and a new one built, and the furnace stack had been repaired.[9] Construction work seems to have continued through 1791, and the first batch of charcoal was probably burned the following spring. During this period and throughout the operation of the furnace by the partners, a substantial part of the supplies and skilled labor were obtained by John Potts from Hobart in Philadelphia.[10]

The new Keep Triste Furnace had been in blast at least twice by the fall of 1792, when Potts reported to his Philadelphia partner that North had built a house over the water wheel so that he could continue his operation through the winter.[11] By this time, Keep Triste Furnace appears to have become a substantial operation that included a working farm, a new barn, and a functional grist mill. The inventory of the Keep Triste property made at the beginning of 1793 (Figure 1) suggests that the operation may have employed as many as 50 people.[12] The company

[7] Potts to Hobart, April 29, 1789; Memorandum of agreement, August 1789; Articles of Agreement between Potts, Hobart, Wilson, and George North, January 1, 1790; Deed Book 10, pp. 174-176, Berkeley County, W.Va.

[8] Charles W. Snell, *The Acquisition and Disposal of Public Lands of the U.S. Armory at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia: 1796-1885,* 2 vols. (Denver, Colo.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, December 1979), 2: 107-119 (Final Draft); Potts to Hobart, November 3, 1792.

[9] North to Hobart, July 20, 1790, October 6, 1790, October 25, 1790; Francis Warrant to George North, November 10, 1790.

[10] North to Warrant, April 1, 1791; Potts to Hobart, March 2, 1792. North's order of supplies in April 1792 included 23 pounds of steel, 85 pairs of shoes, 6 mine riddles, and stove patterns.

[11] Potts to Hobart, November 3, 1792.

[12] Memorandum, January 1, 1793, Potts Papers, Hagley Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

Inventory of Property at Keep Tryste Furnace 1st Jany 1793 Compared valuation

3 Teams	@ £120	£360
2 Colts	@ £10	20
20 Cows & Oxen	@ £4	80
5 Sheep	@ 10/	2.10
40 Hogs	@ 15/	30
3 Mares	@ £40	120
Farm & its Improvements viz 100 Acres Land		
80 Acres Winter grain	@ £120	
Barn & Stables	320	
Orchard	81	
Planting meadow	2210	
		549.10
Household Furniture		240
Provisions		
3 Bbl Rum	£6	
24000 lb Beef	300	
13200 lb Pork	198	
		504
Farming Utensils		50
Smith's Shop Tools		30
Waggon, Patterns & Farming Tools		400
3 New waggons — wood work of them		25
3 Road Sleds		15
Iron & Steel,		20
Work in Coals		35
Goods, Castings & Bar Iron		1041
Castings on hand at Rbx & supposed		120
Grain		135
		£3777

Figure 1. Inventory of Keep Triste Furnace, January 1, 1793

store, which seems to have served more than just the workers, included 37,000 pounds of meat. No mention is made throughout the correspondence to the use or ownership of slaves. The company did provide blankets and axes for the wood cutters and their predecessor,

John Semple, is known to have used slave labor for cutting wood and making charcoal at this location. At the same time, some members of the Potts family appear to have been Quakers, and the owners of the furnace could have found other workers to perform these tasks.

The year of 1793 seems to have been a productive one for the company, for the inventory of tools and provisions in January 1794 had increased and included 85 tons of pig iron, 150 cords of wood, 200 loads of charcoal, and stove plates, ovens, and various other castings. Bills for raising the mine as well as mining tools and carts appear on the inventory for the first time and indicate that pit mines were opened at Friend's Orebank in 1793.[13] Boats appear to have been used to move the ore downriver to the furnace.

Some time during 1793, George North discovered another source of mineral wealth—marble. Samples were sent to Potts in Alexandria and then forwarded to Hobart in Philadelphia for examination. In the spring of 1794, Hobart enthusiastically answered Potts' query, noting

> I have had the Keeptryste marble polished by a stonecutter of eminence who pronounced it to be as good as any man need set his eyes on and it really appears very fine and beautiful and has been very generally admired. If it could be got round it would meet with a good market at Pottsgrove in particular. The stonecutter thinks it would be well to open the quarry as probably as much might be disposed of at present as would defray the expense and then the best of the stone would be ready against the demand as the Federal City should require a large supply.[14]

The exact site of this marble deposit is not known, although it was probably located near the mining operation on Friend's Orebank. The land approximately one mile north of the orebank contained marble that, according to tradition, was quarried and shipped to George Town for use in Federal buildings. However, this site, later known as Knott's quarry, was not owned by either Lee or the operators of Keep Triste Furnace at that time. Wherever it came from, "Keeptryste marble" became a frequent topic of discussion between Potts and Hobart, and several finished marble chimney pieces were eventually shipped to Potts

[13] Memorandum, January 1, 1794, Potts Papers, Hagley Library, Wilmington, Delaware.

[14] Potts to Hobart, March 3, 1794.

from Philadelphia.[15] Despite the keen interest in this resource, the marble desposit does not seem to have been worked extensively while Potts was associated with Keep Triste Furnace.

The activities of Great Britain in the West Indies in 1794 and their seizure of neutral American vessels put merchants like Potts and Wilson in a precarious position, for many of their goods were often aboard vessels and would have been subject to search and confiscation. The dangerous condition on the seas plus the threat of an embargo encouraged the partners to put additional effort into mining and processing local resources. Writing to Hobart in April 1794, Potts remarked that

> I shall be among the number ready to embark in a war tho' it would be perculiarly injurious to my business at this time & also diminish the value of property I have in vessels at least one half tho' at the same time the iron concern could I think receive benefit. . . . If war is the result & commerce will cease, of course we must search after some other hopes & penetrate the bowels of the earth in quest of something to live on when the usual sources fail to supply it.[16]

Despite the institution of an embargo in April 1794, the hopes of Potts and his associates were raised by Congress' decision to order Alexandria and several other places fortified against invasion and a quantity of cannon and shot produced for the defense of these sites. Although Potts noted that cannon could not be made at Keep Triste Furnace "on account of the rocky bottom of the pig bed," he believed the operation could supply the government with shot, bomb shells, and grenades. Potts' hopes were short-lived, for they were substantially underbid by the "Jersey furnace" and John Rutter & Co. of Pennsylvania. At the same time, the iron business in general appeared to be thriving, for Potts was trying to speed up the construction of his forge and slitting mill at Great Falls and to increase the capacity of the Keep Triste operation. During the spring of the same year, Hobart noted that "the old furnace is again in labor" at Keep Triste.[17] His comment suggests not only that the iron works at Keep Triste was growing but also that the partners first built a new furnace and then refurbished the old one.

[15] Potts to Hobart, April 26, 1795.

[16] Potts to Hobart, March 25, 1794.

[17] Potts to Hobart, April 7, 1794; Hobart to Potts, April 21, 1794; Hobart to Potts, June 27, 1794.

Throughout the correspondence of Potts and Hobart, the men express their frustration over the lack of skilled labor in the Virginia area. Millwrights, masons, and founders appear to have been in short supply in the vicinity of Alexandria, Great Falls, and Harpers Ferry, for the men continually attempted to import materials and tools and to recruit workers from the Pennsylvania area. The large investments required to develop these new industries plus the difficulty of taking care of Potts' needs from Philadelphia finally took its toll on Hobart. In February of 1795, he agreed to sell Potts his share of Keep Triste Furnace in exchange for 20,000 acres of land that Wilson and Potts had obtained near Clarksburg, West Virginia. Hobart may also have been motivated by the need to develop a promising copper mine in Pennsylvania. The exchange of property was completed by July of that year, although Hobart continued to supply his old partners for several years.[18]

During the summer of 1795, Potts' improvements at Great Falls and Keep Triste almost came to a standstill because there were not enough skilled workers to carry on the jobs. The appearance of yellow fever in Norfolk and the fear that it would sweep up the Potomac River seems to have been one factor in the labor shortage. Looking in Pennsylvania for workers to aid his ex-partner, Hobart wrote to Potts in October of that year that the man who was to travel south to put the new forge, furnace, and mills in order "positively declined and urged as an excuse that he heard it was sickly at this season of the year and that he could not get hands."[19]

Most of the correspondence relating to Keep Triste Furnace ceased when Hobart sold his portion of the operation. However, the Furnace seems to have continued in operation until it was sold to the United States in 1800.[20]

As a whole, the Potts-Hobart correspondence on Keep Triste Furnace is extremely valuable for the information it reveals about the relationship between industry in the Eastern part of Jefferson County and commercial centers such as Philadephia and Alexandria. In addition, it helps to explain some of the developments taking place in Harper's Ferry

[18] Hobart to Potts, February 25, 1795 and April 19, 1795; memorandum of agreement between Potts and Hobart, July 9, 1795. Potts was also unable to find a suitable locksmith and a person capable of making tile moulds in Alexandria.

[19] Potts to Hobart, September 24, 1795; Hobart to Potts, October 1, 1795.

[20] Snell, *Acquisition and Disposal,* 2: 107-109, 111-119. The 1,600 acres to which Lee referred was probably the land he acquired from the auction of the Semple estate.

at approximately the same time. For example, the Armory's tendency to hire skilled workers from Pennsylvania appears to be due to a scarcity of local help rather than to some sort of regional prejudice. Similarly, the Armory's importation of iron ore from Pennsylvania, like the occasional use of imported ore at Keep Triste Furnace, suggests that local iron was not suitable for some aspects of arms manufacture.[21]

At the same time, several other major questions about the local iron industry remain unanswered.[22] For example, there seems to have been a lack of communication and commerce among Keep Triste Furnace, Antietam Furnace, and the Harper's Ferry Armory that went deeper than the type of iron ore needed for certain operations. Political differences among the major figures may have been a contributing factor. In addition, to be fully understood, the growth of industry in Jefferson County during the 18th century needs to be examined in the context of commercial development along the Potomac River. Finally, the influence exerted on early development in Jefferson County by large landholders and speculators such as Henry Lee, George Washington, and Gersham Keys should be a fruitful topic for local historians.

William D. Theriault

[21] Merritt Roe Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1796) 24-55.

[22] Smith's *Harpers Ferry Armory* explores the relationship of the Armory to technology in other parts of the nation but does not discuss Harpers Ferry in the context of industry in Jefferson County or western Maryland. Michael D. Thomson's *The Iron Industry in Western Maryland* (1976) includes some discussion of the early iron industry in Jefferson County but does not deal in depth with activities in Harper's Ferry or other sites along the Virginia side of the Potomac River.



The Halltown Chapel

The Halltown Chapel is located on the old Smithfield, Charles Town and Harpers Ferry turnpike. The land was carved from the Lucas Farm, "Rion Hall". The deed for this property was made November 29, 1901 between Daniel B. Lucas and his wife Lena T. Lucas, parties of the first

part, and the Trustees of the Halltown Union Sunday School, parties of the second part, for the sum of one dollar. Those Trustees were T. C. Green, George S. Eyster, Daniel B. Lucas, Frank Nichols, Morton Shelton, Roy Allison and William White.

This small chapel was designed and built entirely by the black community of Halltown. The exterior, the interior, including the altar, the pulpit and the pews were all the work of local people. The lovely stained glass windows were given as memorials.

This chapel was first used as a Sunday School and eventually it grew into a Community Chapel used by all denominations. Later it fell into disrepair and was abandoned for twenty years.

Olive Braxton had attended Sunday School in this chapel. She and her husband, Francis Braxton, thought it should be restored. All of the original Board of Trustees were gone but some of their children and grandchildren were available. A new Board of Trustees was formed consisting of Ernest Lewis, Rev. Walter Newman, George King, Francis Braxton, and Olive Braxton. The newly elected board borrowed $10,000 to start the project.

It was found that the West Virginia Historical Preservation Commission would give a grant of $5,000 if the building could be restored to its original form. The rafters were repaired and a new shake roof was put on. Then the windows were rebuilt just as they had been before. Meanwhile, the Trustees and interested people were busy in fund raising activities. The local garden clubs helped with the landscaping. Friends and neighbors donated time and money.

Though funds are still needed to retire the debt, to restore the stained glass window beind the alter, and to install electrical wiring and other conveniences, enough of the work was finished so that the proud Halltown community could reopen its chapel on May 23, 1983. Again, it is available for community projects. A number of weddings have been performed here recently. Visitors are welcome to see this Jefferson County Historic Landmark.

Betty Davis

The Historic Shepherdstown Commission

The people of Shepherdstown have long been proud of the town's historical and architectural heritage. The history of the Historic Shepherdstown Commission provides ample evidence of that pride and the commitment to preserve that heritage.

The minutes of the Historic Shepherdstown Commission for September 21, 1958, state that "several interested citizens of Shepherdstown met at the home of Frank Trump, Jr., to discuss the improvement and restoration of Shepherdstown. The group included: Dr. and Mrs. O. S. Ikenberry, Arthur Prather, Albert Kave, Donald Fuss, and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Trump, Jr."

It is interesting to reflect on the goals of this group in 1958. Many of these goals have been accomplished for so long that they are taken for granted today. The first goal was the improvement of the community appearance with an emphasis on painting and cleaning, the town lighting system, flowers, street signs, historic markers, and historic markers on buildings. The second goal was to open and improve the Old River Road from Harpers Ferry to Shepherdstown. The third was to establish a small museum "to house displays of local historical interest and to serve as headquarters for out-of-town tourists who wish to tour this section." The publication of a brochure and postcards were the fourth and fifth goals. The sixth goal was to purchase the mill on High Street and convert it into an inn where meals and lodging would be provided. (The Bed and Breakfast boom anticipated!) The seventh goal was to interest the State of West Virginia in creating a state park in this area. The eighth goal, which continues to be elusive today, was "to see Greater Shepherdstown incorporated within the city limits in order to facilitate the building of city streets, etc."

The Historic Shepherdstown Commission next met on October 13, 1958, in McMurran Hall with Chairman Frank Trump, Jr., presiding. The goals of the Commission were discussed and committees were formed. Present at this meeting were Mr. and Mrs. Frank Trump, Jr.; Arthur Prather; Tyler Brown; Lester Staley; William B. Snyder; Boyd Widmyer; Mr. and Mrs. K. W. Eutsler; Albert F. Kave; Miss Eleanor Potts; Mrs. H. H. Williams; Dr. O. C. Stine; Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Welshans; Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Kenamond; Mrs. H. P. Schley; Miss

Linnie Schley; Miss Katherine Van Metre; Ray Harris; A. G. Slonaker; Llewellyn Potts; Dr. and Mrs. O. S. Ikenberry; F. W. Buckles; Joseph Shifman; and Rev. John Link. Shepherdstown's educational institutions were well represented. Mr. Welshans was principal of Shepherdstown Elementary School, Mr. Eutsler was principal of Shepherdstown High School and Dr. Ikenberry was President of Shepherd College.

Other active members in the Commission's early years include Mrs. Veda Smith, Miss Elise Billmyer, Mrs. O. C. Stine, Miss Helen Goldsborough, Miss Rachel Snyder, Mr. and Mrs. Russell White, and Dr. Hiram Sizemore.

During the first two years, the Commission published a brochure entitled, "Greetings from Historic Shepherdstown" and encouraged the placing of bronze plaques in the Shepherd Burial Ground and on the house where James Rumsey lived.

In 1960, the Commission considered purchasing the school house, now known as the Free School, on the corner of Princess and New Streets, for headquarters and the Historic Shepherdstown Museum. The building was eventually purchased by the West Virginia Board of Regents and is now used by Shepherd College for graduate school programs of West Virginia University.

The Commission also took on the U.S. Post Office Department and objected to the proposed design for the Town's new post office. The Commission characterized the design as "an ultra modern structure with a flat roof." A letter was sent to the Postmaster General requesting a design more in keeping with the Town's architecture. With the help of Senators Jennings Randolph and Robert Byrd, the design was revised.

In 1962, the Bicentennial of Shepherdstown was celebrated in conjunction with Shepherd College's Homecoming Celebration. The minutes report the event as a "great Success".

Frank Trump, Jr., served as president for two years and was succeeded by Dr. O. C. Stine in November 1960. There is a gap in the minutes through 1963. Rev. John Grissinger, Jr., presided over a meeting on July 13, 1964. He served as president until 1973.

In 1964, the Commission conducted several successful walking tours of Shepherdstown. The 8th grade class of Elm Street School in Frederick received a royal treatment. Dr. James Price conducted a walking tour. The Reverend John Grissinger and Edward B. Rogers, principal of Shepherdstown High School greeted the group. Members of the Rumsey

Climbers 4-H Club, dressed in costume, met the group at the historic locations in the town. Betty's Restaurant and Max Jordan treated the boys and girls to cokes. About 50 people attended a walking tour for the public in October.

The Historic Shepherdstown Commission found a new focus in 1972 when West Virginia Board of Regents revealed its intention to tear down Rumsey Hall on the corner of German and Pincess Streets. Over 100 people met at the Men's Club on August 1 to protest the decision and formulate strategies for overturning it.

Governor Arch Moore interceded and delayed demolition until alternatives could be explored. In 1973 Rumsey Hall was named to the National Register of Historic Places.

Donald Patterson headed the reactivated organization from 1973 to 1978. The saving of Rumsey Hall became the group's first priority and the minutes describe an active search for state or federal funds for restoration. Ben Schley, Charles Boseley, and Gen. William Van Ryzin investigated many funding sources.

In 1977, the Shepherdstown Beautification and Preservation Committee, appointed by the Town Council in 1970, and the Shepherdstown Bicentennial Commission, organized in 1974, merged with the Historic Shepherdstown Commission. This consolidation gave the Commission new energy and purpose.

Mayor Charles Boseley and the Town Council sought to acquire Rumsey Hall by lease or purchase. In 1978, an act of the West Virginia legislature provided for the sale of the Rumsey Hall by the Board of Regents to the Town of Shepherdstown for one dollar. At a town meeting on March 30, 1978, the townspeople voted that the town accept the building under these conditions. The Historic Shepherdstown Commission took the responsibility of accomplishing the building's restoration and offically leased the building from the town. Rumsey Hall was renamed following a suggestion by Miss Helen Goldsborough that Entler Hotel, the original name, was most appropriate.

The subsequent activities of the Historic Shepherdstown Commission have been well documented in this publication. Aaron Browning served as president from 1978 to 1979, Terry Farrior from 1979 to 1982, and Ben Miller from 1982 to 1985. John Farrior is presently serving as president.

Under the direction of John Farrior, the Entler Hotel has been extensively restored, although there is much yet to be done. State grants,

private grants, contributions from the public and hundreds of hours of volunteer labor have erected space for community activities and the Historic Shepherdstown Museum.

Although changes of focus have occurred over the years, the members of the Historic Shepherdstown Commission have remained committed to the "improvement and restoration of Shepherdstown."

Ben Miller

Trivia

Being a collection of historical material and relevant observations on Jefferson County offered by the Editor for the delectation of his readers on occasion as pieces come to hand. The editor respectfully urges readers to submit contributions to Trivia.

THE WONDERS OF CHARLES TOWN

Charles Town, as we all know, is a remarkable little place, but it is doubtful whether we realize just how wonderful it is in many ways.

First, there are few towns in these modern times which can Bragg of a Wall around them, and Hedges, too. Not only Kahn we do this, but also of Lockes and Barrs, not forgetting the fine Light, which shines Dailey as well as at Knight. We believe in outdoor exercise and explore the country in various ways, some of us being Riders, some Walkers (but not "hikers") while others are Striders and Amblers, and Travers Moreland than one Wood think. Some, though are Turners and get over Noland at all. We combine business with pleasure, Furr work is a Grimm necessity to us, and we have Merchants, Painters, Smiths, Millers, Taylors, Masons, Braziers, Bakers, Cookes and Butlers, also a Coleman, who always gives a Fulton, never a Littleton. So let no one Mock at us for a lazy community.

As for our diversions—some of our Fellers like to Hunt, and Luke out for game which is found very Handy in the Bowers and Bush near the

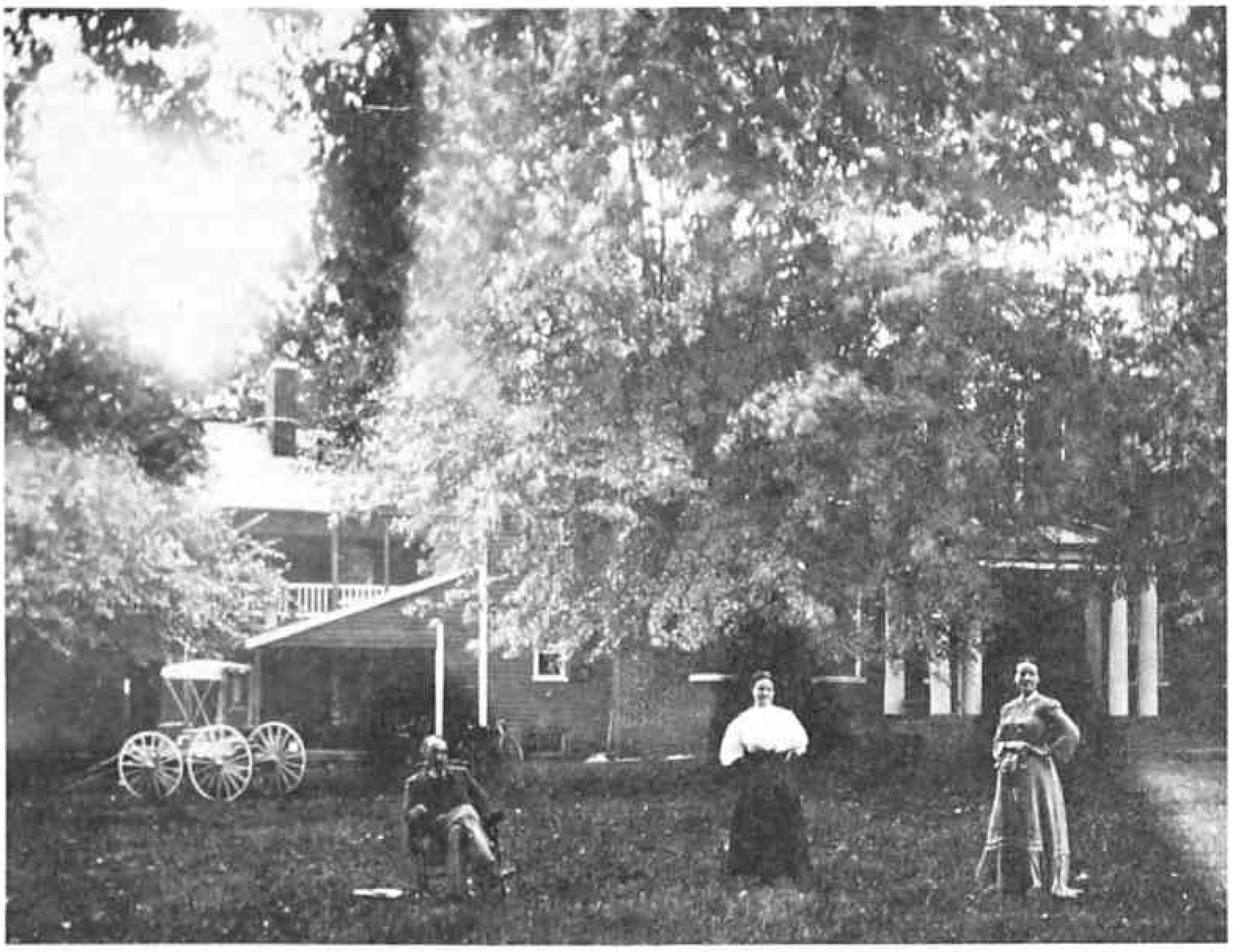
Timberlake, just across the Brooke at the Eddy. Campbells, and an occasional Fowle and Wolfe are seen, with some Cranes, Martins and Hawks, which the Hunters Riddle with shot. We Grantham Moore liberty in regard to this sport than is common in most communities (perhaps because we have a Grandstaff of town officers) for usually the authorities get "Hooff-y" if one tries even to Ronemous, and would Landis in jail Wright Quick. Our inhabitants (who are of several Hughes, being White, Green and Brown) are in most respects like those of other places. Some of the men Ware Beards, tho' a majority do not, and most of them either Chew or smoke, some of the ladies sing and Carroll; some Reed light literature, while others are interested in the Pages of history. Just now most of the children Beller, for recently they have Albin vaccinated. One fond mother insists that Herz do not. We Aisquith Hall respect that this doting parent Wire or Kable us her Childs name. We welcome Alfriends to our Holmes. No hate Burns in our hearts, (which is indeed a Blessing) only kindly feelings Blume there, tho' we will not attempt to Glaize over the fact that we can always Perry a blow from a stranger. Finally—we acknowledge no Pryor claim to our affections, nor Neill at any shrine except that our our "Fust Love."

Charles Town
"X.Y.Z."

Farmers Advocate, Charles Town, W. Va., April 5, 1913.

Cecil D. Eby

Summer Picnic



Front Yard, Richwood Hall, 1906

The Historical Society annual summer picnic was held August 6, 1986 at Richwood Hall, home of Mr. and Mrs. Brower Murphy. Located off Route 51, on O'Sullivan Road, members and guests enjoyed the gracious hospitality of the host and hostess. A tent on the beautiful lawn added comfort for those wishing to eat outside. Food was plentiful and had a taste of the "down home" variety.

After roaming the grounds, visitors were invited to tour the lovely home which the Murphys have restored, redecorated and furnished with period furniture. Some additions have also been made.

Richwood Hall has been the home of several members of the Washington family. The land was deeded to George Washington from Lord Fairfax. George sold it to his brother Samuel who deeded it to his son Lawrence Augustine Washington who took over the plantation in 1796. It is not known exactly when the mansion house was built but it must have been around that time as letters from Lawrence to his children

years later state that he met their mother at that time and soon became engaged in farming his estate and housekeeping.

In 1802 Lawrence sold Richwood Hall to Smith Slaughter. It is possible that Slaughter added to the old brick house and made such improvements as to raise the taxes considerably.

This property has seen many changes in ownership. Among them Mr. and Mrs. John (Jack) Ramey shown in the picture with their daughter Mazie Ramey (Watson). This picture was taken about 1906 on the front lawn of Richwood Hall during the approximately forty year period the Rameys owned the estate. A row of five or six carriage houses with a blacksmith shop attached was located at the left side of the house. Dr. Millard K. Bushong in his book, *Historic Jefferson County,* says, "it is believed that the house received its name from the handsome woodwork in the interior."

Jefferson county is indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Murphy for their interest in the preservation of this county Historic Landmark.

Florence H. Moore

Editor's Notes

The editor renews his plea for contributions of articles to the periodical. By this time, all Society members are aware of the delays in compiling this issue because of the dearth of timely contributions by September 30. Society members who have or who will have produced worthwhile written articles on any phase of Jefferson County history are encouraged to submit them for consideration. It is a truism to note that the quality of the *Magazine* will only be as good as the articles that are considered for publication.

Because of the potential of this periodical as an outlet for materials about Jefferson County that might never be printed, the editor has instituted in this issue a Trivia section. Your attention is directed to his new feature.

Finally, members are reminded of the excellent genealogical publication on the Hendricks family, entitled *Descendants of Albert(us) Hendricks(on),* by Florence Hendricks Moore. Mrs. Moore, a stalwart member of the Society, has produced a model genealogical publication.