



The Millrace

June 2018

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A survey map of Willoughby Newton's land recently digitized by the Library of Congress gives us a glimpse of the Centreville area in 1748. Claudette Ward's article on early settlers helps to expand our knowledge of that period and highlights what we have yet to discover. This quarter also introduces "Off the Shelf," a new book recommendation section. Have you read a historical book you'd like to share with HCS? Submit your comments to the editor at MillraceHCS@gmail.com.

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UPDATE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greetings to all the members of the Historic Centreville Society (HCS)!

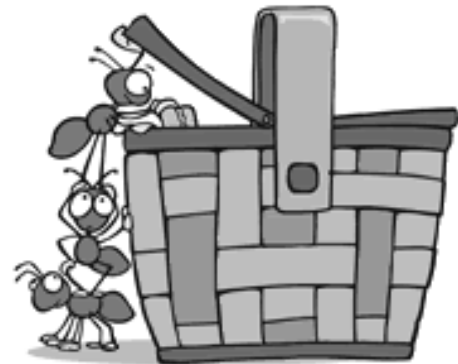
Our quarterly event in March began with an election. Every two years, we elect (or reelect) the officers of the Society. Once again, all five of us were reelected. The lineup continues with me as President, Ted McCord as First Vice President, Cheryl Repetti as Second Vice President, Claudette Ward as Secretary, and Linda Mellott as Treasurer. As I remember telling someone that evening, I would have been very embarrassed if I had lost this election, especially since I did not have an opponent.

After the election, the real history began. Our speaker, Michael F. Johnson, the former Senior Archaeologist of the Fairfax County Park Authority, did a presentation with projected slides titled,

SUNDAY JUNE 24TH HISTORIC TOUR, POT LUCK PICNIC & 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION FOR MILDRED DEBELL

Meet at Sully Historic Site
at 1:00 pm for an Exclusive
Tour for HCS members.

Meet at Mount Gilead for a
Potluck Picnic & Birthday
Celebration at 3:00 pm



Update continued ...

“Environment and Prehistory at Thoroughfare Gap.” To give you an idea of the breadth and scope of his experience in the area of local archaeology, he said he has discovered about 2,500 Indian sites in this area, and some of those go back as far as 18,000-20,000 years. He began this presentation chronologically, starting with a time long ago when glaciers created the topography and the continents of Africa and North America separated from each other. He described the systematic approach that involved digging test pits with shovels and trowels in order to discover artifacts that tell the story of what happened in each place. He uncovered much evidence of Indians but it was not enough to reveal how the Indians got there. He was able to determine that the study area, a square west of the Chesapeake Bay that includes Centreville, was a rendezvous area for Indians during the period 1,000-6,000 years ago and it also served as a seasonal living area. At the conclusion of this presentation, members of the audience of 14 people asked him many questions. I found this to be an interesting and informative evening.

Our next event will be a tour of Sully Historic Site. Rumor has it that this will be cost free. Following that tour, we will have our usual potluck picnic at Mount Gilead. So, come on out and join us!

— Paul Hancq, President



The Early Settlement

By Claudette Ward

A 1748 map of Willoughby Newton's land shows the names of the earliest settlers and where they lived. Two of the houses shown on the map are still in existence.

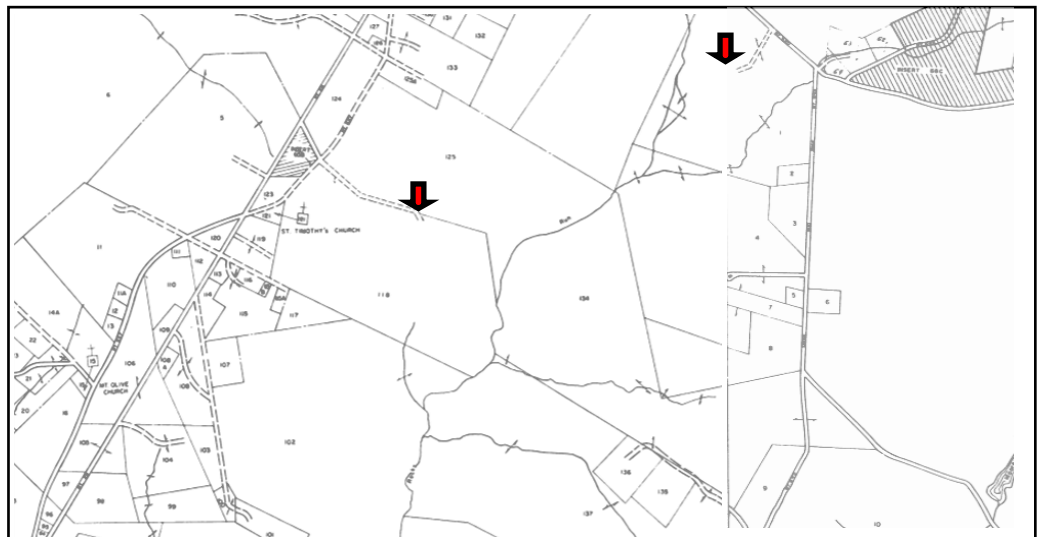
"Samuel Garner's house" is Level Green. In March 1748 Samuel Garner bought 239 acres of land from Willoughby Newton. The deed stated that it was the same land "where Richard Omohundro had lived." Samuel Garner and Tamar, his wife, sold the place back to Newton in July 1749.

In 1741 Richard Omohundro, Ann his wife, Richard his son, and Mary Omohundro, their daughter, leased 200 acres of land "on Little Rocky Run where one Richard has built a small house, for the life of the longest liver of them for 500 pounds of tobacco annually, he will build one dwelling house 20 feet by 16 and a tobacco house 32 feet by 20 feet, plant one hundred apple trees, also pay 4 shillings sterling money yearly for the quit rent."

Ann was Richard's second wife, the widow of Jacob Remy. His first wife was Mary Browning. She was alive in 1726 when her father named her in his will. He also mentioned her sister, the wife of Andrew Hutchison. Sometime between 1726 and 1739, Mary died and Richard remarried. In 1739 he sold the land in Westmoreland County that he had inherited from his father.

The Omohundro and Remy (sometimes spelled Ramey) families were long time residents of Westmoreland. In 1698 Jacob Remy and Mary

Arrows point to the locations of Level Green and Orchard Hill (right) on a 1970 property map. The map was created by overlapping two property map sections and overlaying them on a 2018 map. Property maps from 1960 through 2018 are available on the Fairfax County GIS Digital Map Viewer website: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gisapps/DMV/Default.aspx>.



Early Settlement continued

Remy witnessed the will of Joseph Hardwich. They were most likely the parents of Ann's husband. Richard Omohundro and Ann were probably married in Westmoreland before they moved up to this area. Ann's son Jacob Remy had a lease from W. Newton in 1739 for land near Level Green (He also had a son named Jacob).

Richard Omohundro died in 1745. He either added to the original small house or built a larger one, but the present day house is believed to have been built by him (others may have added on to it later). Richard Omohundro, Andrew Hutchison, Thomas Brown, and Coleman Read (Brown's father-in-law) were on a jury in Westmoreland County in 1735 and 1736 to decide a land issue. Andrew Hutchison patented 1,119 acres of land on Salisbury plain (between present day Centreville and Chantilly) in July 1726.

Richard Omohundro, Andrew Hutchison, Thomas Brown, Jacob Remy, John Goram and William Buckley were on the Poll list of 1744, for the election of Burgesses for Fairfax County.

The other house on the 1748 map that still exists was marked "John Goram's house." It is the house we now know as "Orchard Hill." (I don't know when or by whom it acquired that name.)

In October 1739 Willoughby Newton leased 200 acres to John Goram "where one Paul Howell formerly built a small house, on Little Rocky Run, a little above the rolling road." The present house may have been built by Goram in 1740. There are many references to Goram in the Loudoun County records.

1762 - John Goram testified for Joseph Brown (this was the case where Joseph Brown said his father Thomas Brown gave him two slaves.)

1764 - Thomas Goram was added to the list of tithables (meaning he was now 16 years old)

1766 - John Goram, Jr. was appointed Constable to replace Jacob Remy, Jr.

1766 - Orphans Zachariah Jenkins, 10 years old, and Elizabeth Barrett, 6 years old, were bound out to John Goram, a shoe maker.

In 1764, a 3 year old orphan, James Buckley, was bound out to William Buckley to teach him the trade of a Cordwainer. This is interesting, there were two shoe makers in the area as early as 1764 and 1766. Was there a tannery that early?

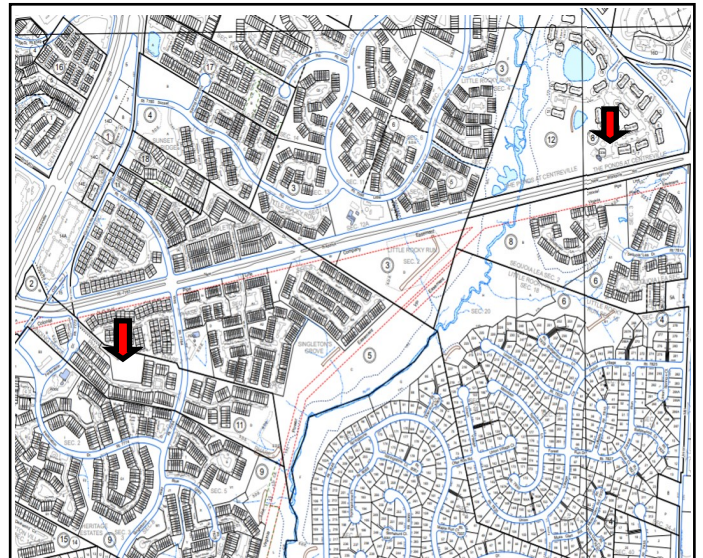
More interesting though is that a license for an ordinary "on the mountain road near Little Rock Run" was issued to Sanford Goram for 1766-1768. Other ordinaries on the mountain road were John Peake 1752-1768: "John Peake a resident of the area above the Mountain Road to the west of the Rocky Run Church founded an ordinary in his house in 1752."

The Newgate Tavern site was purchased by William Carr Lane from John Newton in 1761. Lane's license to keep an ordinary was recorded in 1768 and 1769.

In 1760 John Newton, Willoughby Newton's son, sold the Level Green property to William Carr Lane.

The earliest settlers lived here before it was Centreville or even Newgate. The early land patents were issued when this was part of Stafford County. From 1731 to 1742 it was Prince William County. Fairfax County from 1742 to 1757, when the area west of Difficult Run became Loudoun County until 1798 when it was given back to Fairfax.

Thus you may find, as I did, that someone who lived in Prince William County, then Fairfax, and died in Loudoun County, didn't move at all!



Arrows point to the locations of Level Green and Orchard Hill (right) on a 2018 property map. The straight road that cuts across the image is New Braddock Road. Fairfax County GIS Digital Map Viewer website: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gisapps/DMV/Default.aspx>.

Yes, 'You Can Learn Something from Anything'

By Margo Khosravi

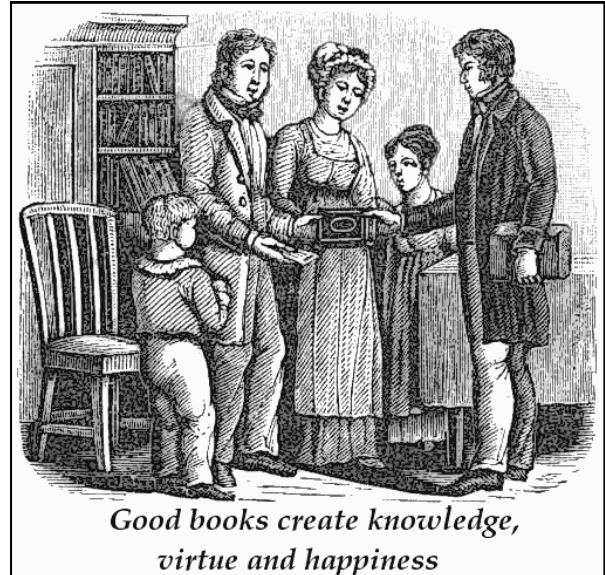
The [Washington Post] April 16 front-page article "[Expanding the Civil War's narrative](#)" reported on Christy Coleman's efforts at inclusiveness in relating Civil War history as the new chief executive of the American Civil War Museum. She said "you can learn something from anything." I agree.

Many years ago, as a young bride, so proud of my new diamond-and-gold band, I was captivated by a wedding ring carved from a peach pit by a Southern soldier. It was in a small Confederate museum in Front Royal, Va., and was accompanied by a note from the groom to his intended stating that he had nothing left to give her but his love and a humble little peach pit of a ring. I hope she said yes because I've carried the spirit of that ring in my heart ever since.

As a privileged child of suburbia, it made me think about what it means to be human — and American. As Americans, we may have many points of view, and we may fight for what we think is right, even though it might not always be, but, if or when we lose, we pick ourselves back up and persevere. Love and the human spirit can endure. Life can go on even when one loses all, and there's always the hope for a new and better future. Somehow, that dried-up Confederate ring conveyed the essence of the American ethos better than any great seal or billowing flag.

You can indeed learn something from anything, even a peach pit.

Reprinted Letter to the Editor, Washington Post, April 20, 2018. Printed with the permission of the author.



OFF THE SHELF: Where Readers Recommend & Share Books on History

Remembering the 1950's. When I was three years old, in 1955, my family moved from Annandale, Virginia to a small farm in Centreville. It was a good place to grow up. I stayed until college, jobs, and a husband moved me further south. My parents, grandparents, and aunt were residents of Centreville until their deaths.

So, imagine my surprise when at my local library book sale, I found a book titled *From a Country Boy's View: Clifton, Virginia - the 1950's*. It was written by Michael (Mike) Foley, Sr. His family moved from Falls Church to Clifton, Virginia on February 1, 1951. That was the day before his third birthday. His family lived in Clifton until he was fifteen. Then the family moved to a subdivision in Fairfax.

It has been enjoyable reading Foley's experiences, which mirrored many of my own. If you are interested in life in western Fairfax County in the 1950's you might enjoy this book, too. I looked at the on-line catalog and it is available at the Fairfax County Library, but I don't think it can be checked out. Some of you longtime residents might even recognize some of the people mentioned in this book, but I did not.

—Bonnie Wood Garber, Spotsylvania County, VA



Photographers in March 1862 captured the only known image of the original St. John's Church, showing some of the damage it had sustained. Photograph by George Barnard and James Gibson, March 1862, Library of Congress.

The Desecration of Saint John's Church

By Cheryl Repetti

In the days following the first Battle of Manassas, journalists in the north and the south were seeking to define the character of their enemy. The discovery that a modest church in a small town had been desecrated by soldiers thus became a newsworthy subject, debated on the front page of New York Times.

Seven days after the Confederate victory on July 21, 1861, the *London Morning Herald's* special correspondent to the *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, took a tour of the battleground and General James Longstreet's camp at Centreville. Though his name is never given, the correspondent was likely Samuel Phillips Day. During the course of the visit, General Longstreet escorted Day to "the little Episcopal church on the hill." There, Day "was perfectly horrified upon

beholding the sacrilegious manner in which a building devoted to the worship of the Omnipotent had been desecrated and polluted by the enemy." Drawings and inscriptions written in charcoal covered every wall, even "the very neighborhood of the altar ... for in close proximity to it I read the words 'Death to Traitors — thus saith the Lord!' This sentiment was accompanied by a sketch of Jefferson Davis hanging from a gallows. Outraged, Day concluded that "there can be no palliation for such a crime."

After reading Day's account, a *New York Times* reporter, who wrote under the name "Leo," denied that Union soldiers were responsible for vandalizing Saint John's Church and asserted instead that the names scrawled on the walls, "were there before the Union troops ever reached Centreville." Leo's story, printed on the front page of the paper, recounted how he had arrived with General McDowell's column before the battle and found that the church vestry room had been used as a headquarters and the main body of the church had quartered troops: "for around the church were evidences that

Saint John's Church continued ...

horses had been picketed there, and in the pew-seats were the remains of straw beds, or litter upon which the men had slept. There were bits of bridles and one old saddle on the floor, and scraps of paper upon which had been written memorandums relating to cavalry service." Leo, "having been educated to some respect for the Episcopal service" asked that a guard be placed to protect the church. Noting that there had been a Confederate camp nearby, Leo concluded that those who had desecrated the church, were those who had also desecrated "the altars of patriotism."

Leo didn't comment on the anti-Confederate sentiments described by the British journalist, he simply asserted that Day had "perverted the facts" (a few days later the Times did reprint part of Day's account, including the anti-Confederate epithets). Another Richmond correspondent, however, also saw the church and added new details that supported Day's description:

The chancel had been torn to pieces. Nearly every spot on the walls, as high as it was possible for a man to reach, was covered with large fire coal sketches and inscriptions, a few specimens of which I will give you. Jefferson Davis is represented as hanging on a gallows with a most disgusting inscription below. In another place he was represented with his arms stretched out, as if nailed to a cross, and lastly he was portrayed as if dropping into a coffin, with the words above, "Old Jeff. going into the box." Above the pulpit, in large letters was "Death to traitors – thus saith the Lord."

This reporter, who went by the initials H.R.S., also visited the Old Stone Church, which had been used as a hospital by Federal troops:

As I walked from the church with a sad heart, meditating on the deep degradation of fallen nature, I stepped into the hospital where were collected a large number of the wounded Yankees; and there I saw our own people striving to the extent of their ability to retrieve their sufferings and promote their comfort. ... I need not say how deeply I was impressed by the contrast which these two churches – less than two hundred yards apart – presented.

But Leo's account of Centreville also rings

true. He gives a detailed description of how he found the church copy of the Bible and some prayer books and then walked through town, knocking on doors, searching for someone willing to care for the books until the church once again resumed its function as a house of worship. Eventually he found "Mrs. Alexander, ... a lady, wife of the resident physician, who not only joyfully received the books, but warmly thanked me for having brought them to her." The Alexanders occupied a house on Braddock Road near the present location of the Centre Square Professional Park.

Soon enough, the desecration of an unoccupied church would no longer be regarded as newsworthy. Atrocities would overshadow petty vandalism, and pain and weariness would replace self-righteousness and the rationalizations for war. But in the summer of 1861, the thought of men deliberately damaging a sacred place of worship still had the power to outrage and disturb. This was apparent not only on the front pages of the Times, but in the stories that circulated in the camps that summer and appeared in letters home. In one version, a Union soldier who raised his gun up to smash one of the church windows and was killed when the gun suddenly discharged. A variation of this tale was recounted by a member of Longstreet's staff, Thomas Jewett Goree, who wrote to his sister that, "it seems like a just retribution that the man's name written the oftenest was killed in the battle and buried within steps of the Church he had so desecrated."

Historic sites with Civil War graffiti are prized today, as the inscriptions create a palpable link to the common soldiers who fought the war. By war's end, however, much of "the little Episcopal church on the hill" was destroyed. Had the old church and the graffiti been preserved, historians today could trace the names and perhaps determine objectively who had desecrated the church. But perhaps it is better that the passions that fed the war have been lost, while Saint John's remains. Rebuilt beginning in 1867 on the foundations of the old building, the new church, as one of Saint John's pastors once expressed it, is testament to how people in Centreville were "still faithful after the ravages of war."

The author is indebted to the Reverend John Kempel for the "still faithful" phrase that also serves as the title for the Civil War Trails sign located at Saint John's Church.

Do you have a friend who might like to join the society?

Pass on our newsletter and bring potential members to meetings.

Members receive The Millrace four times a year.

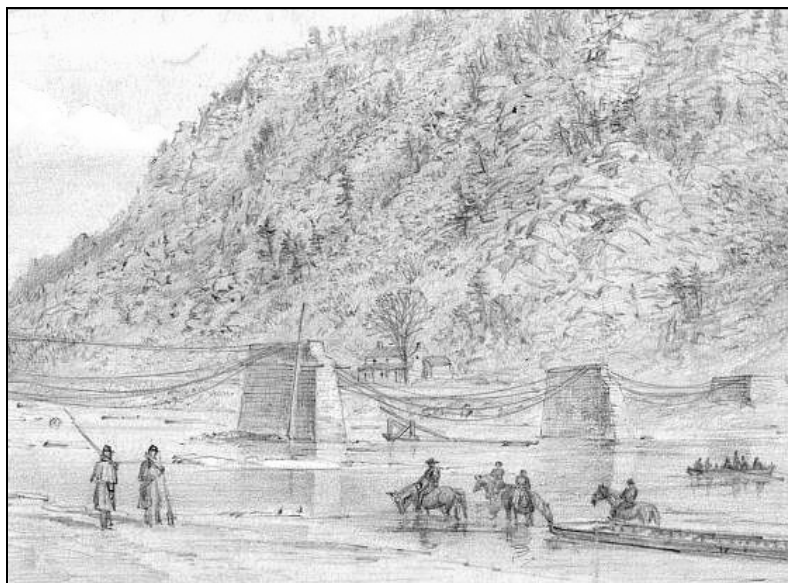
If you have an article or a book review or recommendation that might be of interest to our members, please send it to the editor.

Deadlines for submissions are the 1st of February, May, August and November.

Send to: to Cheryl Repetti at MillraceHCS@gmail.com

or by US mail to:

The Historic Centreville Society, P.O. Box 1512, Centreville, VA 20122



Detail from "Ruins of the bridge over the Shenandoah. Loudon Heights beyond." By Alfred Waud, Fall, 1864. Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/>

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Paul Hancq, President; Ted McCord, First Vice President; Cheryl Repetti, Second Vice President; Claudette Ward, Secretary; Linda Mellott, Treasurer; Joan Orvis, Debbie Robison, Michael Frey



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