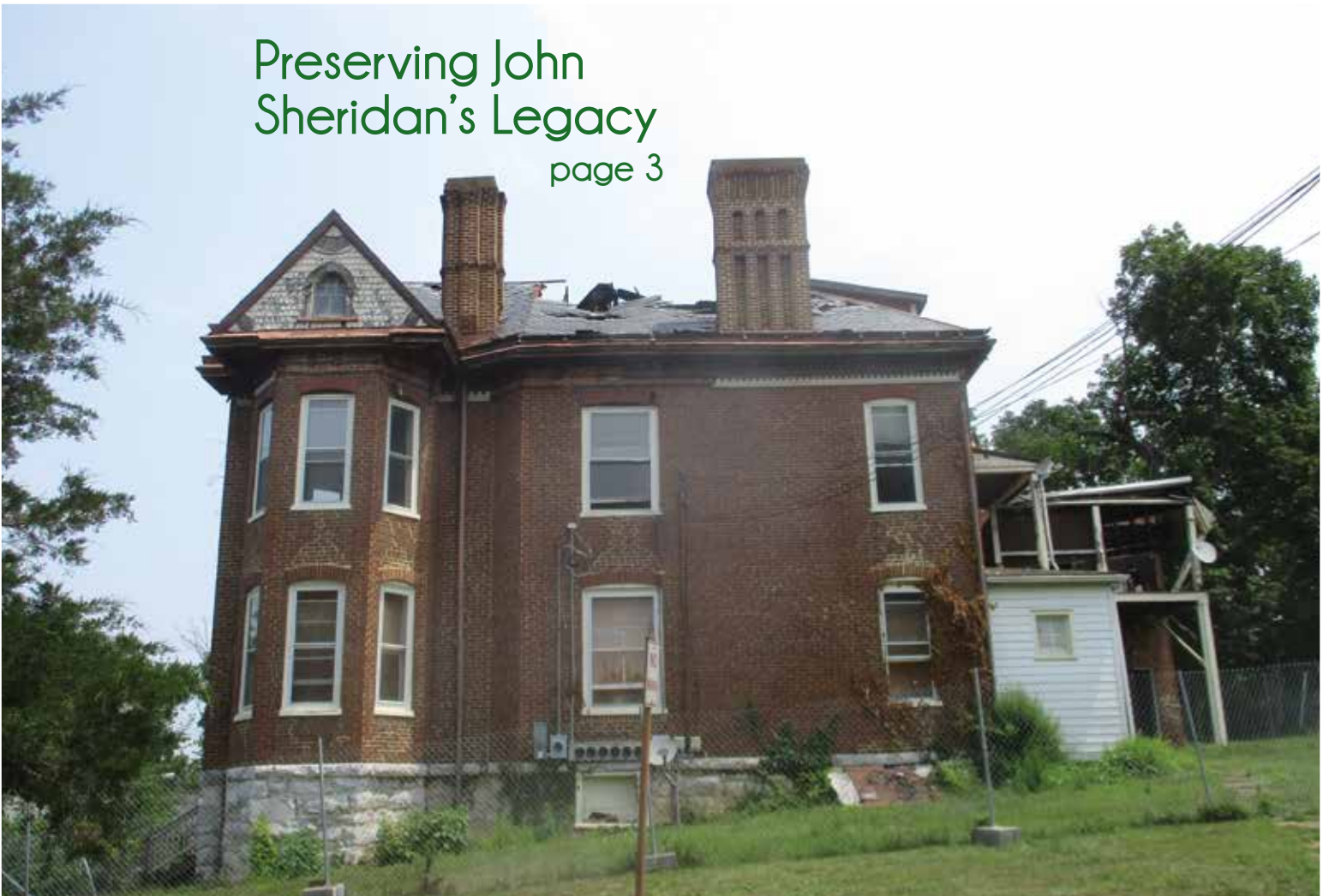


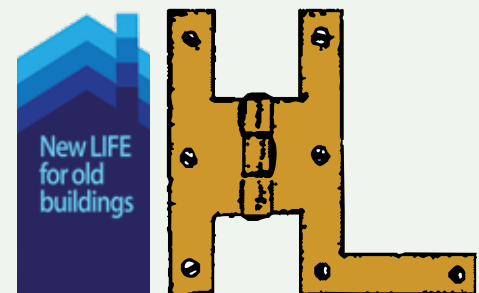
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From the President's Desk

Greetings from the Historic Lexington Foundation. While we continue to hope for the end of the pandemic, it seems obstacles to a return to normal life remain. While the pandemic lingers, the work of HLF continues with a focus on continuing projects. We are proud of the exceptional work being done at Evergreen Cemetery funded by grants from HLF and using donations raised in Professor Ted DeLaney's memory. Additionally, we continue in our work to document and aid in preservation of slave dwellings in Rockbridge County. Our partnership with our neighbors in Brownsburg has been instrumental.

One project that needs our attention and that of the community at large is the preservation of the historic Sheridan House. Also, HLF continues in its effort to find a sympathetic buyer for the Reid-White-Philbin House on Nelson Street. It is imperative that we preserve this important home.

I was quite pleased and honored to help recognize our friend and inspirational leader, Beverly Tucker, with the Founders' Award. It is very much deserved.

As I close this note, I want to remind us all that Lexington and Rockbridge County are special. My work requires travel, sometimes significant, and I am always struck when I return home just how special our home is and how lucky we are. But, special places don't just happen. They require involvement, work, and effort. Sometimes these are unsung and unknown to many of our neighbors. But, everything we do contributes to our home. I want to thank you, our donors and volunteers, who have continued to support HLF and contribute to our community through your preservation efforts. Whether sending a contribution or doing actual work in preservation, every effort, no matter how small, is crucial. And, I conclude with an ask: please consider doing more, get involved, ask your friends and family to help. Only by working together can we preserve our history and this community we are blessed to all call home.

Larry Wiese

*Cover image:
Sheridan House*

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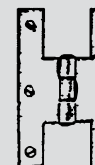
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 Post Office Box 901
Lexington, VA 24450
540-463-6832
hlf@rockbridge.net
www.historiclexington.org

Preserving the Legacy of Lexington's John Sheridan

John Sheridan, together with his Irish parents, moved to America in 1847 when he was four years old. In his teens, he voluntarily enlisted in the Confederate army. He was captured by Union forces in 1863 and released on an oath of amnesty in 1865. He died in 1929 at the age 82, but not before a remarkable career in Lexington.

An astute businessman, he founded the Sheridan Livery Stable on North Main Street. From there he sold and traded horses. The business also delivered the mail and ran a stagecoach line between Lexington, Hot Springs, and Staunton. The Livery is now a restaurant and hotel at the corner of North Main and Henry streets.

With a growing Catholic community in Lexington, largely associated with transportation and industry at Jordan's Point, Sheridan played a major role in the founding of St. Patrick's

Catholic Church and the construction of a church on Henry Street in 1874. The church is now home to the African American Gospel Way Church of God in Christ. As reported in the HLF Summer 2020 newsletter, HLF undertook major improvements to the church's façade in 2020. For her leadership in this project, Beverly Tucker received HLF's 2021 Founders' Award.

In 1893, using the design of Lexington architect William McDowell, Sheridan had an impressive home built at the top of North Randolph Street at the intersection with Massie Street. With views of Washington and Lee University and House Mountain beyond, the Victorian house was a veritable showplace of 19th century finery and a site for Sheridan to entertain.

As noted in a 1989 term paper by Washington and Lee student Chambers Henry, "The many peaks, gables, and decorative, bracketed chimneys break the continuity of the roofline, and the chimneys themselves indicate numerous fireplaces, implying hospitality and warmth." Sadly, the home lost much of its integrity when it was converted to apartments in 1969. Nearly 50 years later the home would be severely damaged in a 2016 fire. Without an intact roof the interior received major water damage.

But sometimes things do rise up from the ashes. HLF is pleased to report that the building was purchased by Chy Clark, Realtor/ Owner of City & County Real Estate. Together with her family, she plans to rehabilitate the house into a one family dwelling once again. HLF is extremely grateful to her and her family.



Sheridan House from front.



Sheridan House fire.



Documenting and Preserving Former Slave Dwellings in Rockbridge County

Since 2019, HLF has been working with organizations such as the Brownsburg Museum to focus public attention on the importance of preserving Rockbridge slave dwellings. The effort began with a visit to four such dwellings in the Brownsburg area by Peter Hedlund and Justin Reid of Virginia Humanities and Jobie Hill, architect and founder of “Saving Slave Houses.”

This was followed a year later by the visit of University of Virginia Professor David Green to the McChesney farm in the Brownsburg area. Green’s ancestor, Anne Redd, was enslaved at the farm by Robert McChesney. McChesney later gifted Redd to his daughter

Anne McChesney McBride and her husband. Dr. Green’s visit concluded with a visit to Asbury Methodist Church Cemetery where ancestor Marie Redd (1841–1925) is buried.

In April of this year, Maurice Miller made his way from his home in New Jersey to Rockbridge County, the home of his ancestors, including those who were enslaved in the Brownsburg area. He had previously travelled to Lexington to visit family graves in Lexington’s Evergreen Cemetery. On this trip he would also visit the McChesney farm.

Before coming to Rockbridge County, Miller made an internet search of the county and the McChesney farm where he knew that an enslaved ancestor had lived. There he discovered an article in the *News-Gazette* about the visit to the McChesney farm by Dr. Green. With some further research, Miller determined that he and Green are descendants of the same enslaved person at the McChesney farm.

The first morning of this trip, Miller visited the farm. The visit was arranged by Brownsburg-area residents Paul and Nancy Hahn, who also arranged for Miller to meet with HLF’s Don Hasfurther at Evergreen Cemetery. There Miller told Hasfurther more about his research.

Robert McChesney (1768–1842) owned the farm where Miller’s ancestors had been enslaved. Through McChesney’s will, Miller determined the names of some of those that had been enslaved there, including Hanah Kenney, the daughter of Anne Redd.



Don Hasfurther and Maurice Miller by gravestone of Levi Miller.



Hasfurther and Miller discover gravestone of Hanah Kenney.



Nancy Hahn, Maurice Miller, and Mary Kay, owner of the McChesney farm. Slave cabin is the brick structure behind the log house.



Jobie Hill and participants in the 2021 Virginia Black Public History Summer Institute at the McChesney slave dwelling.



Dr. David Green, Cinder Stanton, Karen Sleezer, Paul Hahn, Victoria Wasser, and Jobie Hill at the Brownsburg Museum.

Hanah was Maurice Miller's 5th great-grandmother. She married Samuel Miller. One of their sons, Levi Miller, was a 4th great uncle of Maurice Miller. Levi Miller is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

Commenting to Hasfurther on his visit to the McChesney farm, Miller stated, "It was a very emotional moment for me when I drove into Brownsburg, walking in my ancestor's steps and seeing the slave cabin which is still standing. It is testimony of my family's resilience, and through their story, they are standing too."

Regarding HLF and others' efforts to document the history of the area's slave dwellings, Miller stated that HLF and the Brownsburg Museum need to remain active. "If they do not stay on it, the stories and histories will be lost."

The most poignant point in the visit to Evergreen Cemetery was the stop at the gravestone of Levi Miller, which in addition to his name reads "C. S. A." According to Miller, Levi Miller was what would have been called a "man servant" for his master J.J. McBride during the Civil War. He noted that he was compelled to serve, but there is evidence that Miller was proud of his service and often served in combat. When McBride was seriously wounded in 1864 and taken to a hospital in Charlottesville, Miller stayed with him until October 1865, well after Emancipation.

In his will, Levi Miller made provision for his mother, her two sons, and husband to be buried in Lexington. Maurice Miller noted that

the gravestone might not have been the original stone, as there is no reference to other family members. At that moment, Hasfurther and Miller looked behind a large yucca plant in front of Levi Miller's stone. There they found another stone that read Hanah Kenney. This was another emotional moment for Maurice Miller.

On July 17, David Green and Jobie Hill returned to Brownsburg together with a delegation affiliated with the 2021 Virginia Black Public History Summer Institute to visit the Brownsburg Museum, the McChesney farm, and the Asbury Cemetery. Five institute participants have been able to identify enslaved ancestors, including some enslaved in places like Berkeley Plantation on the James River in Charles County and Pharsalia in Nelson County. Members of the group were able to meet with representatives of HLF and the Brownsburg Museum at a luncheon hosted by Chris and Julie Fox. Maurice Miller was not able to come from New Jersey, but looks forward to meeting David Green.

HLF plans to continue its work on documenting and preserving former slave dwellings. With a preservation grant from HLF, the slaving dwelling at Verdant Acres now has a new roof. HLF is considering additional funding to preserve other former slave dwellings in Rockbridge County. Notes HLF Executive Director Don Hasfurther, "We hope that people aware of other extant slave dwellings in the county will contact us so that we can have the dwellings documented."



The Ted DeLaney Cemetery Fund at Work in Lexington's Evergreen Cemetery

Historic Lexington Foundation would like to thank the many friends, former students, and present and past faculty members of the History Department at Washington and Lee University for their generous contributions to the cemetery fund established to honor the memory of Ted DeLaney. The fund supports gravestone preservation and other work at the African American Evergreen Cemetery.

HLF has been working with Hamric Memorials to undertake much needed gravestone repair at Evergreen and Oak Grove cemeteries. Shawn Hamric has led this effort. This spring, Hamric and HLF's Hasfurther walked through Evergreen Cemetery to prioritize stones for repair. On the basis of their priority list, stone repair work at Evergreen continues.

Another project undertaken by HLF with financing from the Ted DeLaney Cemetery Fund for Evergreen Cemetery was at the cemetery's entrance. The entrance gate at Evergreen Cemetery was erected in 1928 by the Highway and Hedge Club of the Colored Women's Federation, using precast concrete copings and caps atop walls and piers of rock-face concrete blocks. The clearance between the center piers was only 12 feet, which was adequate for occasional one-way traffic. With the increase in traffic and the size of vehicles over the ensuing decades, there were inevitable brush-ups that dislodged the piers from their foundations. The block on the wing walls also began to deteriorate from normal exposure to weather over the years.

Historic Lexington Foundation facilitated a careful examination of the entrance gates and walls by Robbie Faulkner, a masonry contractor with considerable experience in stone and concrete block work, along with Jeff Martone, director of the Lexington's Department of Public Works; HLF Executive Director Don Hasfurther; and architect Skip Ravenhorst, an HLF board member. It was determined that the only feasible way to preserve the entrance would be to salvage the precast concrete caps and copings and rebuild the masonry walls and piers. An advantage of this approach was that the piers could be relocated with a slightly wider clearance between them, enhancing vehicular access in the future.

The new walls were constructed of standard concrete block, faced with thin stone veneer in an ashlar pattern. A crew at Public Works carefully cleaned the salvaged copings and caps with a pressure washer and restored the wrought iron pedestrian gates that hang between the piers. The City of Lexington made a donation to HLF's Ted DeLaney Cemetery Fund, and HLF employed Robert L. Faulkner & Son, Inc. to perform the work described in drawings prepared for HLF by H. E. Ravenhorst, AIA. Replacement of the entrance culvert, new asphalt paving, and installation of appropriate plantings will complete the project.



Shawn Hamric prioritizes a gravestone for restoration.



Walls before work commenced at Evergreen Cemetery.



Completed gate and walls at Evergreen Cemetery.

Of Note



The new display and walking tour brochures reflect Oak Grove Cemetery's new name.



Honor your home and your neighborhood with an HLF historic marker. The Christensen family is the latest to receive a marker for their home on Jackson Avenue, c. 1884. The marker reads 305 Jackson Avenue Godwin's Row. Top row: Meagan Christensen, Ruby Christensen, Andrew Christensen. Front row: Oakliss Christensen, Selkie Christensen. Photo by Afshad Irani.



Beverly Tucker receives HLF's 2021 Founders' Award from Vice President Elizabeth Boetsch, President Larry Wiese, and Executive Director Don Hasfurther.



Thanks to an HLF grant through the Lyle-Simpson Preservation Fund, the former slave quarters at Verdant Acres now has a new roof.



The facade of the new pilates business on West Nelson Street was the recipient of an HLF facade grant.