

# The CHRONICLE

## Black History Committee Creates New Partnerships, Historian Compares 1918 Influenza and 2020 Covid-19 Pandemics



Cautionary poster published in national newspapers, above left; patients and nurses in infirmary, above; below, then-Senator Warren G. Harding announces campaign to fight influenza.

### Pandemics: “Déjà vu all over again”?

Terry Sharer, Ph.D., Waterford, VA.

We can only wonder what words of wisdom would have come from that great philosopher Yogi Berra in the face of this pandemic. “Nobody goes there anymore. It’s too crowded.” “The future ain’t what it used to be.” And his immortal “It’s déjà vu all over again.” But is Covid-19 déjà vu of the 1918 “Great Influenza?” Let’s see if Loudoun’s experience answers that question, starting with the World War I memorial to “Our Glorious Dead” by the Courthouse in Leesburg.

Thirteen of the 30 names on that plaque died of disease, out of 59 Loudouners who served in the

war. Of these Pvt. Linwood Payne, from Lovettsville, was “the first of Loudoun’s Fighting Sons to Die Upon French Soil,” though it was “pneumonia” that killed him. Pvt. Edward Nalle, from Leesburg, succumbed to “influenza” while in training under Major Dwight D. Eisenhower at Camp Colt in Gettysburg, PA. Gilbert Gough, Harry Milstead, Ashton Shumaker, Harry Smallwood, and Leonard Dawes died of disease at Camp Lee, before ever embarking for France, and Charles Bell and Leonard Hardy died similarly but in France after the Armistice.

The dates and places of death show that the great influenza reached Loudoun County before the troops brought *(continued on page 3)*

### SWAT THE FLU IS SLOGAN FOR 1919 CAMPAIGN AGAINST DREAD DESTROYER THAT AGAIN LOOMS

Measure Introduced in Both Houses of Congress Would Appro-  
priate \$5,000,000 for Investigation of Epidemic Which Swept  
Over America in 1918, Costing Thousands of Lives.

#### HELP FIGHT THE FLU

By asking the congressman from your district, and the senators from this state, to work for and vote for the anti-flu bill introduced in congress by Senator Harding and Congressman Foa.

#### THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR HASTE.

A recurring flu epidemic is feared this autumn and winter. It may be more serious than the one of 1918.

Fighting the flu NOW may head off the epidemic. It will save lives.

#### WRITE TO WASHINGTON THIS EVENING.

N. E. A. Washington Bureau.

Washington, D. C.—Congress is being told plainly, clearly, and straight from home, that the people want their government to get busy immediately in a nation-wide campaign to head off a recurrence of the dread influenza epidemic.

Letters and telegrams by the thousands are coming to members of both houses urging them to work for and



SEN. WARREN G. HARDING

#### THE FLU BILL.

A measure introduced in both houses of congress to set aside \$5,000,000 for investigation of the influenza epidemic, its cause, methods of infection, and the

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\_\_\_\_\_

## Historian Compares the 1918 Flu and 2020 Covid-19 Pandemics

*(Continued from page 1)* it home from overseas. It spread wherever people gathered—in churches, the Purcellville Community Association (formerly the “Bush Meeting”), the school in Round Hill where neighbors came to watch silent movies, at the three draft registration centers where 2,224 young men come in, and at war bond rallies, Woman's Christian Temperance Union meetings, and Red Cross sox and bandage drives that Ida Lee Rust recorded. During the pandemic, the new (1912) Leesburg Hospital on Market Street had its 25 beds filled to overflowing, the Loudoun Fair was cancelled, county schools closed on 12 November 1918, and the *Loudoun Mirror's* longest listings were obituaries. The county's population declined by about 500 people between 1910 and 1920.

No influenza vaccine existed until 1942, the classification of “H1/N1” was far off in the future and indeed, even “virus” was a vague concept before 1935. Covid-19 and the 1918 Influenza have many differences both biologically and socially, but it is déjà vu all over again in a larger sense that all pandemics arise from crowding and a novel pathogen for which there's no prior immunity.



*The cemetery at Mount Olivet Methodist Church on Mountain Road near Lovettsville is the burial ground of four 918 victims of the “Spanish Flu.”*

Dr. Terry Sharrer is a professional historian who resides in Loudoun County. He has a unique perspective on the political, social, and economic forces that have shaped Loudoun. He received his Ph.D. in American History and Agricultural Economics from the University of Maryland and was Curator, Health Sciences, at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. from 1969 to 2007.

His activities include serving as contributing editor of *The Scientist*; editor of *Tagline* (Medical automation newsletter), and Visiting Scholar, National Museum of Health and Medicine, Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

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# *Thank you* **FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

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**For more than a decade**, it has been the pleasure of the Friends of Thomas Balch Library to host a Fall Annual Event. While the event is important to our group financially, it is also our opportunity to thank our donors and invite new supporters into our fold. The hours of planning are well worth the effort; for one evening we get to share the speakers, stories, properties that interest us, and that we hope interest you as well.

**Unfortunately, this year** Covid-19 robbed us of this special evening. We didn't want to break our string of successful fundraisers however, and with your timely responses and generosity, we continued this achievement. In the past, you have enjoyed a knowledgeable and entertaining speaker at a historical Loudoun County site with heavy hors d'oeuvres and fine wines. This year we offered you only our thanks, appreciation, and the promise we will keep supporting the Thomas Balch Library, despite all the obstacles. In the end, that proved enough. Our 13th (yes, 13th!) Fall Annual Event/Fundraiser exceeded our expectations, thanks to you. We raised more than \$10,000 this year!

**We are especially grateful** for your continued dedication to our support of the Thomas Balch Library. To our sponsors of \$500 or greater, we humbly offer our thanks and our collective hope we will be together soon. We also thank our generous donors for their continued support. Stay safe and well.

*Kacey Young,  
Vice President  
Friends of Thomas Balch Library*

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## BLACK HISTORY COMMITTEE CREATES NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR VIRTUAL PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

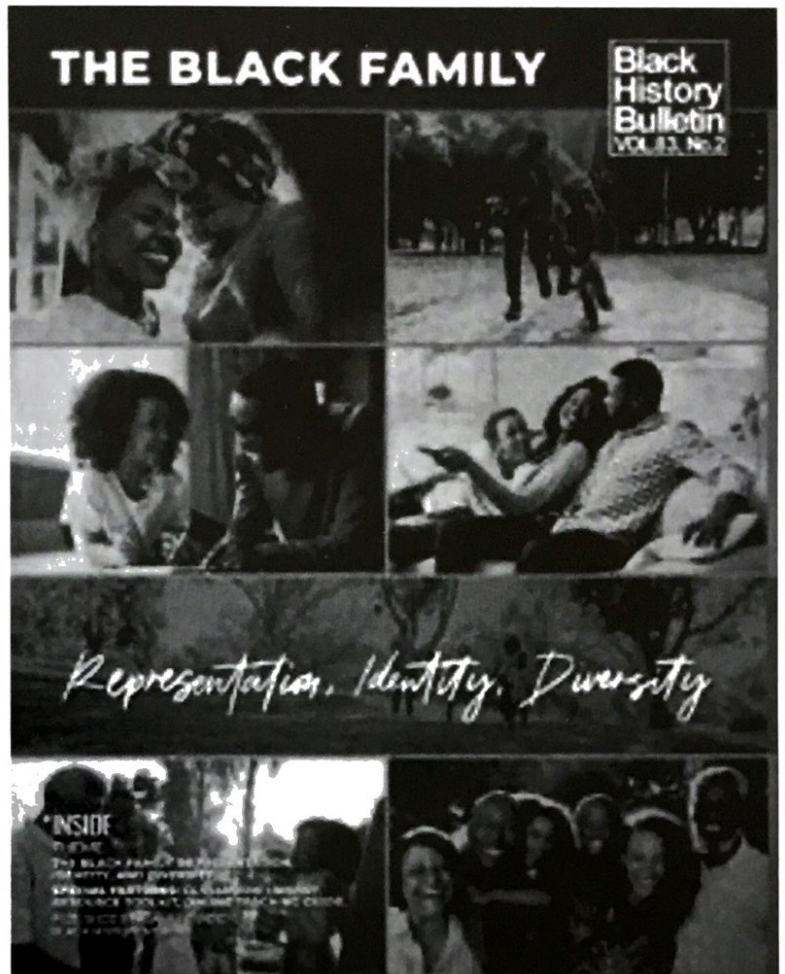
The **Black History Committee** (BHC), like so many organizations, has turned to meeting and holding events virtually due to the pandemic. Additionally, because of the growing awareness of social injustices, many organizations have contacted the BHC with an interest in working together to present African American history. As it is the mission of the BHC to promote and share this history, we were prepared and happy to partner. Specifically, in support of the Loudoun Historic Village Alliance's efforts to bring awareness to Loudoun's villages, the BHC will contribute articles highlighting the historic African American villages. Keep a look out for these articles that will appear in *Loudoun Now's* feature "In Our Backyard."

In partnership with the **Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association** (VPHAA), Black History Committee members participated in one of VPHAA's most popular Facebook Live events, "Loudoun County in 1920: A Centennial Exploration" on November 12. Members Alicia Cohen and Lori Kimball were panelists; the event is available on the VPHAA Facebook page.

**BHC Chair Donna Bohanon** also contributed to the *Blue Ridge Leader's* series Black History Matters. Lori Kimball and Gem Bingol, who represents the Piedmont Environmental Council, contributed narratives for **historic markers** that will be placed at a commercial development at Church Road and Atlantic Boulevard in Sterling.

Currently, the BHC is in the process of coordinating speaker webinars for 2021. These events will feature local historians. We will center the talks around the 2021 Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) theme **African American Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity**. (<https://asalh.org/black-history-themes/>) ASALH is the organization formed by the father of Black History Month, Carter G. Woodson.

When **Carter G. Woodson** established Negro History Week in 1926, he realized the importance of providing a theme to focus the attention of the



*The 2021 poster for the Association of American Life and History's programming focus on the "African American Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity"*

public. The intention has never been to dictate or limit the exploration of the Black experience but to bring to the public's attention important developments that merited emphasis.

**Over the years**, the themes reflect changes in how people of African descent in the United States have viewed themselves, the influence of social movements on racial ideologies, and the aspirations of the Black community.

The changes notwithstanding, the list reveals an overarching continuity in ASALH—its dedication to exploring historical issues of importance to people of African descent and race relations in America. Variation appears in discussions on the nature and impact of parenting, childhood, marriage, gender norms, sexuality, and incarceration. The family offers a rich tapestry of images for exploring the African American past and present. **To learn more, visit [asalh.org](http://asalh.org).**

# Friends Publications Order Form

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# Annual Meeting and Election of 2021 Friends of Thomas Balch Library Board of Directors

The Friends of Thomas Balch Library will not be holding an annual meeting in 2021 due to Covid-19. The 2021 slate for Board of Directors are Donna Bohanon, Jeff Bolyard, Murray Bradley, Donald Cooper, W. Perry Epes, Judith Gerow, Lewis Leigh, Jr., James P. Lucier, Richard Routman, Ronald A. Rust, Suzi Worsham, and Kacey Young. Below is the official ballot for the 2021 election of directors. If you are a member in good standing—you have paid 2020 and/or 2021 dues—you are eligible to vote for the 2021 Board of Directors. Please send your ballot back to Friends of Thomas Balch Library, P.O. Box 2184, Leesburg, VA 20177 within two weeks of receiving this issue of the newsletter.

## Ballot

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I approve the 2021 slate of Directors.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not approve of the 2021 slate of Directors.

## 2021 Dues

**Due to Covid-19**, the deadline for renewing your Friends of Thomas Balch Library membership has been extended until early March of 2021. Please take a few minutes now to check the status of your membership to learn whether you owe dues for this annual renewal cycle. Look at the back of your winter Chronicle and see if the number above and to the far right of your name is \*Dec 2021. If so, your dues have already been paid for this coming year. If the date is \*Dec 2020 or \*Dec 2019, you owe dues for 2021. If you are not already a member, please join us! Below is the form to fill in and send to us to renew or join.

## Join Us!

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## Winter 2021 Classes & Exhibits

### Virtual Classes

#### *Care and Preservation of Textiles*

10 AM Thursday, February 6  
MC Mairena, Thomas Balch Library Senior Associate,  
will go over basic techniques for caring and storing your  
family textile heirlooms.

#### *Writing Your Family History*

10 AM Thursday, March 4, 2021  
Norah Schneider, Thomas Balch Library Genealogy  
Associate.

#### *Researching Using Court Records*

10 AM Thursday, April 1, 2021  
Jeanette Irby, Loudoun County Circuit Court Judge  
and former Leesburg Town Attorney, will discuss how  
to use court records in research.

#### *Historic Preservation*

10 AM Thursday, May 6, 2021  
Panel Discussion with Lauren Murphy, Preservation  
Planner, Town of Leesburg; Heidi Siebentritt, Loudoun  
County Preservation Planner, and Steve Thompson,  
Loudoun County Archaeologist.

### Exhibits

#### Margaret Mercer Room

*The Black Family: Representation, Identity and  
Diversity* by Friends of Thomas Balch Library Black  
History Committee, February 2021 - March 2021

*The Barefoot Weaver* by Beth Wilson - April 2021

*Gallivanting Around the World: Trinkets and  
Souvenirs from the Morven Park Collection* - May 2021

*Loudoun Preservation Society Retrospective* - June

#### Lower Level Meeting Room

Friends of Leesburg Arts, January - March 2021

Loudoun Photography, April - June 2021

Loudoun Sketch Club, July- September 2021

*Due to the pandemic, Thomas Balch Library has moved  
its Thursday classes to a virtual platform. Pre-  
registration for all classes and exhibits is required:  
<https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents> To view exhibits and  
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