

The CHRONICLE

Volume 25 Issue 1

Winter 2022

Friends Celebrate Thomas Balch Library Building's Centenary with Special Exhibit and Full Calendar of Programs



One hundred years ago this May, Thomas Balch Library—the elegant Georgian Revival building pictured at left—opened its doors for the first time.

Born in Leesburg, Virginia, in 1821, Thomas Balch became both a distinguished attorney in Philadelphia and a keen student of history. He earned his own niche in history at the close of the American Civil War when his plan for resolution of the famous "Alabama Claims" resulted in a \$15 million settlement for the United States against Great Britain and earned him the title "Father of International Arbitration."



Clockwise from top, Thomas Balch Library, bust of Thomas Balch, Bowie Gridley addition, 2001.

In 1922, the Library was dedicated by his sons, Edwin Swift Balch and Thomas Willing Balch, who had donated \$10,000 to build a public library in their father's memory located in the town of his birth. In recognition of Thomas Balch's lifelong love of history, the library was dedicated with a special requirement—that it maintain and foster a section on local history.

Designed by noted Washington architect Waddy Butler Wood, best known for the Woodrow Wilson House and Federal Triangle, the original structure met researchers' needs for the better part of the 20th century.

When the need for more space became critical, the Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission and the Town of Leesburg commissioned Washington's Bowie Gridley Architects to design an addition and renovation. In May 2001, the Library was rededicated. The exhibit this May of 2022 is also a kind of rededication to keeping Thomas Balch Library's doors—real or virtual—open, no matter the challenge.

Cast Your Vote for Friends Board Directors

With the arrival of the Covid-19 Omicron variant, Dr. Don Cooper, Friends of Thomas Balch Library president, moved the annual meeting to a date in January 2023. That meeting will feature a video interview with Wynne Saffer that explores his contributions to Loudoun County's history and the Library's archives. Former Friends Board members Richard T. Gillespie as interviewer, Sarah Huntington as videographer, and Patty Rogers-Renner as producer are the team behind the Saffer presentation. While meeting and video presentation have been postponed, the Friends must still provide for an orderly transition of leadership by voting for 2022 directors. Dr. Cooper urges all members to fill out the ballot on page 7 and mail it to Friends of Thomas Balch Library, P.O. Box 2184, Leesburg, VA 20177 within two weeks of receiving this issue of the newsletter.

**FRIENDS OF THOMAS BALCH
LIBRARY, INC.**

P.O. Box 2184
Leesburg, VA 20177
www.balchfriends.org

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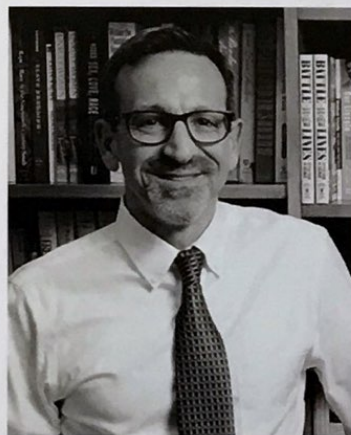
Thomas Balch Library's Latest YouTube Videos

Did you know Thomas Balch Library has a YouTube channel?

Launched in 2021, the channel offers lots of great content including video of the Library's workshops, author talks, and short pop-up programs. To find the channel online, go to [https://tinyurl.com/ VideoTBL](https://tinyurl.com/VideoTBL) or search for "Thomas Balch Library" in the YouTube search bar. You can subscribe to the channel to access new content as it becomes available. The Library staff and volunteers plan to continue adding to the growing archive of programs, and you can catch up on talks and classes you might have missed. Below is one conversation well worth your time online.

Joshua Rothman on 'The Ledger and The Chain: How Domestic Slave Traders Shaped America'

On January 26, acclaimed historian Joshua Rothman, pictured below, introduced his new book, *The Ledger and The Chain: How Domestic Slave Traders Shaped America*. He recounts the shocking story of the domestic slave



trade by tracing the lives and careers of Isaac Franklin, John Armfield, and Rice Ballard, who built the largest and most powerful slave-trading operation in American history.

Far from social outcasts, they were rich and widely respected businessmen, and their company, headquartered on Duke Street in Alexandria, Virginia, sat at the center of commerce connecting southern fields to northeastern banks. Bringing together entrepreneurial ambition and remorseless violence toward enslaved people, domestic slave traders produced

an atrocity that forever transformed the nation.

This program, now available on YouTube (visit balchfriends.org), was made possible by the Friends of Thomas Balch Library's Black History Committee and several cosponsors—the Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County, the Edwin Washington Project, Syphax Pathfinders, Inc., and a donation in honor of John B. Garner.

Library Hours and Mask Requirements

Thomas Balch Library is pleased to welcome patrons back for browsing, exhibits, computer access, and research—no appointment needed. Hours currently are Monday and Friday from 10 AM to 5 PM; Tuesday and Thursday from 10 AM to 8 PM; Wednesday from 2 PM to 8 PM; Saturday from 11 AM to 4 PM; and Sunday from 1 to 5 PM. The Library will be closed for lunch from 12 PM to 1 PM Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Masking is required inside public areas.

BHC Partners with Loudoun Museum, Village of St. Louis, Nokes Descendants, and Farm Museum to Advance Preservation Equity



Donna Bohanon, BHC Chair

In her quarterly update, Donna Bohanon, Black History Committee chair, provided Friends of Thomas Balch Library with details on a host of exciting projects and partnerships. The BHC initiatives include a dedicated website and collaborations with Visit Loudoun.

Preservation

- **St. Louis** – Committee members have coordinated, over the last nine months, with descendants of the original African American landowners who founded the Village of St. Louis, to capture oral histories and determine how to commemorate their story.



- **Sterling** – The BHC is working with Nokes family descendants and others in the Loudoun community to

commemorate the Nokes as community leaders, as well as the history of African American farmers in Sterling (Edds and Ewings). The BHC is partnering with Nokes Plaza, LLC, the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum, the Loudoun County Office of Mapping and Loudoun Supervisor Koran Saines.

- **Preservation Equity Initiative** – Committee members are working with the County on a project to update the African American Historic Architectural Resource Survey that was sponsored and published by the BHC and the Board of Supervisors in 2004.

Partnership and Outreach

- **Morven Park** – BHC's \$246 donation to the 246 Years Project was acknowledged by Morven Park.

- **Enslaved.org** – The BHC is a recipient of a grant from the Enslaved.org project. Members are scheduled to work with the support staff in the first quarter of 2022 to upload the BHC's dataset "The Enslaved Community of President James Monroe." BHC is one of the contributors to Michigan State University's Enslaved.org project that was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities grant.

- **Loudoun Museum** – Museum Director Joe Rizzo and Lori Wysong, Visitor Experience & Collections Manager, attended the January BHC meeting to discuss upcoming exhibitions. The BHC provided suggestions for the Dew Drop Inn exhibit and a United States Colored Troops (USCT) exhibit.



- **Loudoun County Historic Records Division** – Members coordinated with the Historic Records Division to create an African American History Brochure. Members will participate in a program to launch the brochure in February.
- **Visit Loudoun** - Members are working with Visit Loudoun on installation of African American historical markers throughout the County.

Website

- **Development** – All required software necessary to build the BHC-specific website has been purchased. BHC member Derrick Clark will be collaborating with Friends of Thomas Balch Library website creator Laura Longley to meet the BHC's objectives to launch the website.

Join the Black History Committee

The Black History Committee of Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc., meets at the Library on the first Saturday of every month at 10 AM. The public is always welcome. For more information, visit www.balchfriends.org or call 540-579-2825.

Spotlight on Speakers, In Person and Online

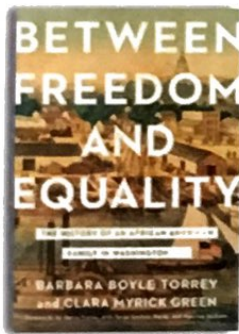


Barbara Boyle Torrey, left, and Clara Myrick Green

Between Freedom and Equality

Barbara Boyle Torrey and Clara Myrick Green (Virtual)
Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1 PM

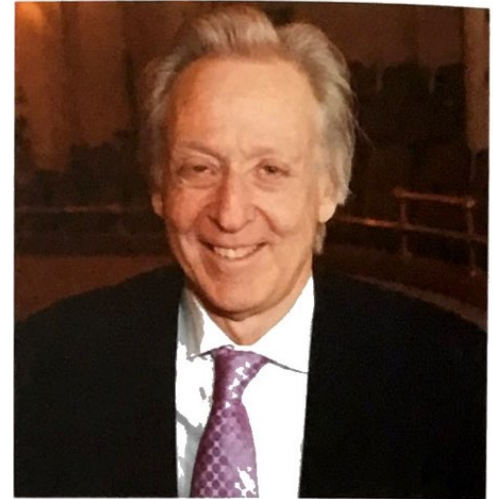
Between Freedom and Equality begins with the life of Capt. George Pointer, an enslaved African who purchased his freedom in 1793 while working for George Washington's Potomac Company. It follows six generations of his descendants as they lived and worked on the banks of the Potomac, in the port of Georgetown, and in a rural corner of the nation's capital.



By tracing the story of one family and their experiences, *Between Freedom and Equality* offers a moving and inspiring look at challenges free African Americans have faced in Washington, DC, since the District's founding. The Pointer family faced many challenges—fragility of freedom in a slaveholding society, racism, wars, floods, and epidemics—but their refuge was a small farm they purchased in what is now Chevy Chase. In the early twentieth century however,

the DC government used eminent domain to force the sale of their farm and replaced it with an all-white school. *Between Freedom and Equality* grants Pointer and his descendants their long-overdue place in American history.

Clara Myrick Green is a retired secondary school French teacher. In her 34-year career, she taught at the University of Missouri and in private schools in Brooklyn Heights, NY and Bethesda, MD. Barbara Boyle Torrey, former executive director of the Division of the Behavioral and Social Sciences at the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, has authored two local histories and edited three books.



David O. Stewart

The New Land

David O. Stewart (In Person)
Sunday, March 27, 2022 2 PM

From bestselling historian and storyteller David O. Stewart, *The New Land* takes the reader back in time to tell uniquely American stories—full of adventure, excitement, heartbreak, and a tapestry of richly developed characters.

In 1753, Johann Oberstrasse's wife, Christianne, announces that their infant sons will never soldier for the Landgraf of Hesse like their father, who was hired to serve King George of England. In search of a new life, Johann and the family join an expedition to the New World, lured by the promise of land on the Maine coast. Expecting to till the soil, Johann finds that opportunity on the rocky coast comes from the forest, not land, so he learns carpentry and trapping. To advance in an English world, Johann adapts their name to Overstreet. But war follows them.

After many years as a trial and appellate lawyer, David O. Stewart became a bestselling writer of history and historical fiction. In February 2021, Stewart published *George Washington: The Political Rise of America's Founding Father*.



Bitter Roots

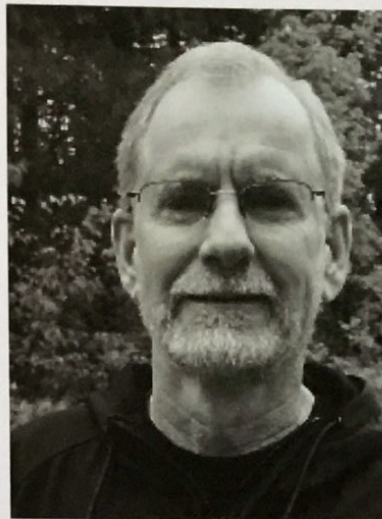
Ellen Crosby (In Person)

Sunday April 24, 2022 at 2 PM

The brutal murder of a beautiful vineyard expert and a devastating storm force Virginia winemaker Lucie Montgomery to confront painful changes on the eve of her wedding.

In just over a week vineyard owner Lucie Montgomery and winemaker Quinn Santori will be married in a ceremony overlooking what should be acres of lush flowering grapevines. Instead, they are confronted by an ugly swathe of slowly dying vines and a nursery owner who denies responsibility for selling diseased plants. With neighboring vineyards facing the same problem, accusations fly and the ugly standoff between supplier and growers looks set to escalate into open warfare.

Ellen Crosby is author of the Virginia wine country mysteries. Her books have been nominated for the Mary Higgins Clark Award and the Library of Virginia People's Choice Award. *The Riesling Retribution* won the 2009 Gourmand World Cookbook Award for Best US Wine Literature Book. Crosby has also written two mysteries featuring photojournalist Sophie Medina and *Moscow Nights*, a stand-alone mystery. She lives in Northern Virginia.



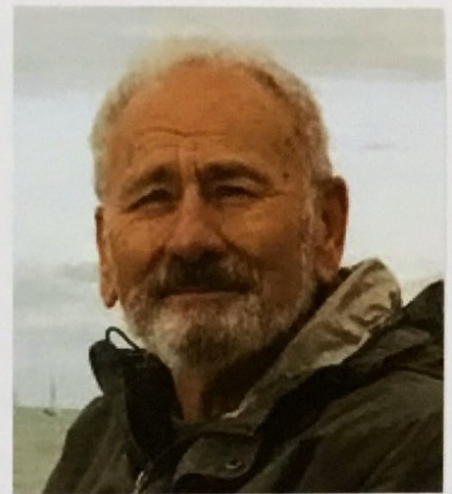
Loudoun County and the W&OD Railroad

Paul McCray (In Person)

Sunday, May 22, 2022 at 2 PM

The railroad that became the Washington & Old Dominion had a major impact on how Northern Virginia was developed. The railroad influenced the locations of towns, which areas of the county would grow, where roads would be located, and the success of farms. This program will explore how the W&OD Railroad came to be, its successes and failures, and why it was abandoned in 1968.

Paul McCray has lived in Loudoun County for 30 years. He managed various Regional Parks in Loudoun for NOVA Parks including Ball's Bluff Battlefield and Temple Hall Farm. He oversaw the W&OD Railroad Regional Park for 20 years. While in that position he became interested in preserving the history of the W&OD, and he collected nearly 2,000 images of the railroad as well as hundreds of original documents. Retired, he continues to work part-time for NOVA Parks as a historian, researching and telling the stories of park history. McCray is a recipient of the Thomas Balch Library's Loudoun History Award.



Luncheon Lectures

Andrew Jampoler (Virtual)

Pre-registration is required: <https://tinyurl.com/TBLEvents>

Through the Dark Continent, Henry Morton Stanley and the Exploration of Africa

Wednesday, 16 March 2022, 1 PM

Henry Morton Stanley's successful search in 1871 for the Scottish medical missionary, David Livingstone, was a newspaper circulation-building caper funded by the *NY Herald's* publisher. Its brilliant success and Stanley's subsequent trek across Central Africa in 1874-77 thrust Africa indelibly into the consciousness of the western world.

Congo, the Miserable Expeditions and Dreadful Death of Lt. Emory Taunt, USN

Wednesday 27 April 2022, 1 PM

Former Navy Lieutenant Emory Taunt's third time in the Congo, as the first resident American diplomat in equatorial Africa, ended in January 1891 with his death along the great river—a familiar fate of many Europeans in King Leopold's private estate. His life opens a window on the tragic history of this troubled nation.

A former US Navy Lockheed P-3 pilot and commander of a land-based air station, Andrew Jampoler has been writing full time for more than 20 years. He is an amazing storyteller on expeditions and adventures.

Friends Publications Order Form

Mail or Fax to: Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc. | P.O. Box 2184 | Leesburg, VA 20177

Tel: 540-579-2825 | Fax: 703-737-7150

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Please check off your choices. Thank you!

Loudoun Discovered: Communities, Corners & Crossroads by Eugene Scheel

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Volume 2 ***Leesburg and the Old Carolina Road***

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Volume 4 ***Quaker Country and the Loudoun Valley***

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Individual copies of the Historical Map \$10

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In the Watchfires: The Loudoun County Emancipation Association,

1890-1971 by Elaine E. Thompson \$20

George Washington Carver: Scientist, Artist, Musician

by Lemoine D. Pierce \$10

Journey Through Time by Black History Committee of Friends of the

Thomas Balch Library \$5

Billy Pierce: Dance Master, Son of Purcellville by Lemoine D. Pierce \$15

Loudoun 1757: On the Border of Mayhem—Loudoun County

250th Anniversary Lecture Series \$15

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We also accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, and Debit Cards

Annual Meeting and Election of 2022 Friends of Thomas Balch Library Board of Directors

The Friends of Thomas Balch Library did not hold an annual meeting in 2022 due to Covid-19. The 2022 slate for Board of Directors is Jeff Bolyard, Murray Bradley, Pauline Clark, Donald Cooper, W. Perry Epes, Judith Gerow, Beverly Ingle, James P. Lucier, Michael R. Napper, Larry Roeder, Richard Routman, Ronald A. Rust, Suzi Worsham, and Kacey Young. Below is the official ballot for the 2022 election of directors. If you are a member in good standing—you have paid 2021 and/or 2022 dues—you are eligible to vote for the 2022 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 2022 slate of Directors.

_____ No, I do not approve of the 2022 slate of Directors.

2022 Dues

Due to Covid-19, the deadline for renewing your Friends of Thomas Balch Library membership has been extended until early March of 2022. 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 2022. If so, your dues have already been paid for this coming year. If the date is *Dec 2021 or *Dec 2020, you owe dues for 2022. 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!

Become a Friend of Thomas Balch Library and play a vital role in supporting the Library's invaluable collections and educational programs.

Membership Dues

- Legacy Society.....\$500+
- Benefactor..... \$250
- Sustaining/Business\$100
- Patron.....\$50
- Family.....\$25
- Student/Senior.....\$15

Please provide your contact information:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
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To become a Friends member, please fill out the form above and send it with a check payable to Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc., or fill in and enclose this information:

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Send your form and payment information/check to Friends of Thomas Balch Library, P.O. Box 2184, Leesburg, VA 20177. If you have questions, please leave a message at 540-579-2825 or email us using the Contact Us form at balchfriends.org



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Programs & Exhibits

Programs and Tours

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Bitter Roots (In Person)

Ellen Crosby
Sunday, April 24, 2022 – 2 PM

The Congo (Virtual)

Andrew Jampoler
Wednesday, April 27, 2022 – 1 PM

Tours

Civil War Walking Tour (In Person)

Richard Gillespie at Thomas Balch Library
Saturday, March 12, 2022 – 10 AM

Exhibits

Margaret Mercer Room

Friends of Arcola Slave Quarters
February 2022

Thomas Balch Library Centenary Exhibit
May 2022

Granny's Cooking - Charles Johnston Collections
June 2022

Lower Level Meeting Room

Forrest Holbert
Friends of Leesburg Public Arts
February through March 2022

Ligia Inra Fine Art

April through June 2022

Classes

Genealogical Research – Norah Schneider (Virtual)
Thursday, February 3, 2022 – 10 AM

Census Records – Norah Schneider (Virtual)
Thursday, March 3, 2022 – 10 AM

Research Using Court Records (Virtual)
Jeanette Irby – Thursday, April 7, 2022 – 10 AM