

The CHRONICLE

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Spring 2017

Johnston Collection Opens Doors to Life in Historic Leesburg, Black History Committee to Host Third Heritage Tour in June

African American Heritage Tour Set for Saturday, June 24

By Alicia Cohen

Join us on our 2017 Black History Committee's African American Heritage Bus Tour! The tour introduces our community and visitors to the powerful citizens who emerged from the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Jim Crow Era to build stable and productive communities and businesses.



Shiloh Baptist Church in Middleburg—a site on the tour—celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2017. Photograph by Middleburg Eccentric.

We have had great success with our previous tours and plan to continue learning and (page 2)



Charles A. Johnston, above, and an ad for his hat store's special on seal and sea otter caps.

Wholesale Hat and Cap Store.



I HAVE just returned from New York and Philadelphia with a large and beautiful assortment of **Seal and Sea Otter Caps**, of the very latest pattern, which will be sold for Cash, or on credit to punctual customers, at as low prices as they can be purchased in any of the northern cities.

Having permanently located myself in this place, and made arrangements to carry on the business of Manufacturing Hats more extensively than formerly, Country Merchants will find it for their advantage to call at my Factory and examine my stock, and I assure them they shall be satisfied both with my goods and prices.

CHARLES A. JOHNSTON.

N. B. An apprentice wanted to the Hatting business—one from the country will be preferred. Constant employment also given to two or three good workmen, of sober, industrious habits.

Leesburg, Oct. 20—17

The Johnston Collection Is Now Ready for Your Exploration

By Ben Tayloe

The large and eclectic Charles A. Johnston Family Collection at Thomas Balch Library is now open for everyone, from casual researchers of Leesburg life to professional genealogists. Curated by Ben Tayloe, the collection explores the lives of Charles Anthony Johnston and his son Samuel John (S.J.) Johnston and their relatives, friends, neighbors, business associates, and community

leaders from the late 1700s through the 20th century.

Rare books, photographs, film, papers, business ledgers, deeds, and miscellaneous artifacts tell the family's story in personal and compelling ways.

Perhaps no items in the collection, however, are as affecting as the toys and photographs of S.J. Johnston's children, most of whom died before the age of five (page 3)

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(Continued from page 1)

African American Heritage Tour Set for June 24

appreciating this “hallowed ground” as we visit additional important and historical sites in Ashburn, Sterling, South Riding, Middleburg, and Leesburg. The tour will begin and end at the Thomas Balch Library.

This heritage tour is gaining recognition as a valuable resource for the Loudoun community and beyond. In October 2016, Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission presented the BHC Tour Team with its 2016 Loudoun History Award. And the Loudoun



Ashburn Colored School



Community renovating Ashburn school

the BHC Interpretive Team to present an all-day bus tour for 13 teachers . They visited sites important to the history of African Americans in Loudoun County and the United States.



Loudoun County Courthouse

County Public Schools are now offering the tour for teachers' professional development. William F. Brazier, Social Studies and Global Studies, LCPS, recently coordinated with Alicia Cohen and

In addition to touring Waterford, Oatlands, Gledsville, and Leesburg, the teachers toured and learned about the research resources at Thomas Balch Library and the Clerk of the Circuit Court Historic Records and Deed Research Department. Feedback from one middle school teacher: “I . . . participated in the amazing Black History tour . . . I can tell you that we all LOVED it!”

Contact Alicia Cohen at 703-606-3275 or aaheritagelocova@gmail.com for details.

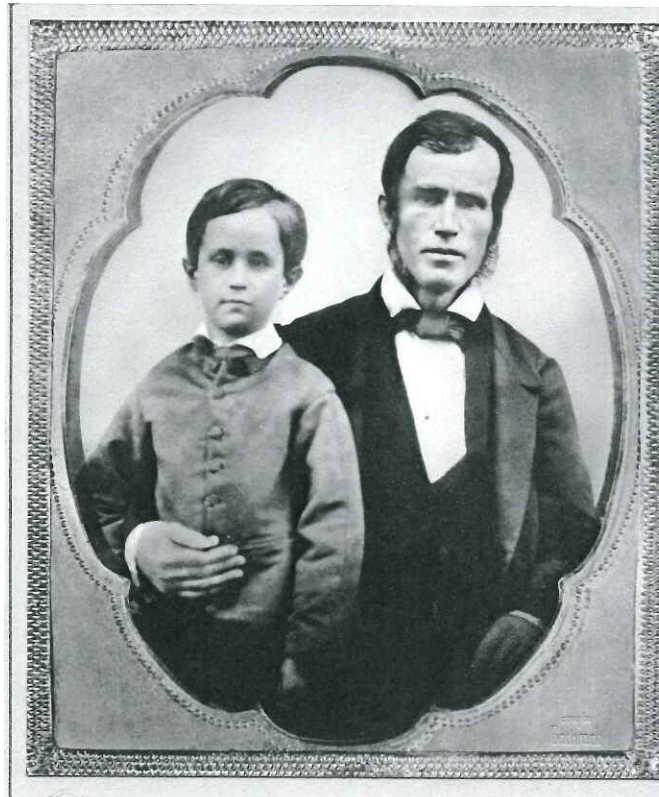
Behind the Collection: The Johnston Family Story

The story of the Johnstons of Leesburg begins with Charles A. Johnston (1806–1877), who was born in Alexandria, Virginia, and eventually moved to Leesburg where he bought the house at 21 West Loudoun Street (now 103 Loudoun Street SW). Next door he operated a dry goods and grocery store, as well as two hat businesses.

The Johnston family history is populated with many friends, neighbors, business associates, and especially relatives. Among them are Charles's wife, Mary Rebecca Boss and his Boss in-laws, including Private James Peter Boss who was killed at the Battle of Gettysburg. A sister-in-law, Margaret Ann Boss (1824-1884), married William Cline, Jr. (1818-1889), whose father operated Cline's Hardware on Market Street.

Others who figure prominently in Thomas Balch Library's largest collection are the Matthews family and Dr. John Gibson (1876–1947), who was instrumental in opening Leesburg's first hospital in 1912.

However, it is Samuel John (S.J.) Johnston (1853–1925), one of Charles's 10 children, whose life's story



Charles A. Johnston with son Samuel, ca 1858

The Charles A. Johnston Collection Tour 05/20/2017 10 AM - 12 PM

Ben Tayloe, project archivist of The Charles A. Johnston Collection and library associate at Thomas Balch Library, has historic preservation experience in both the private and public sectors. He will lead this tour focusing on local homes and businesses associated with the Johnston family. This unique tour will leave from Thomas Balch Library parking lot at 10 AM.

provides the compelling centerpiece of the Johnston Family Collection. S.J. operated a jewelry and watchmaking business on King Street and later served as Leesburg town treasurer. An inventor, he also held numerous patents.

In 1883 he married Maria Louise Bayne (1865–1899) of Baltimore, Maryland. After marrying, S.J. and Mary Louise Johnston moved to a house at the corner of Wirt and Loudoun streets. Mrs. Johnston gave birth to 10 children, two of whom died as infants. Louise died in 1899 at the young age of 35.

Two years later, S.J. Johnston married Beulah Marvin Neel, also from Baltimore. They had five children, only one of whom survived past the age of five. The brief lives of Stuart James Johnston (1902-1907), Alice Rebekah Johnston (1906-1910) and Beulah Neel Johnston (1916-1919) are highlighted extensively in the collection. Their middle child, John Allen Johnston (1911-2002), lived in the S.J. Johnston house until his father's death in 1925.

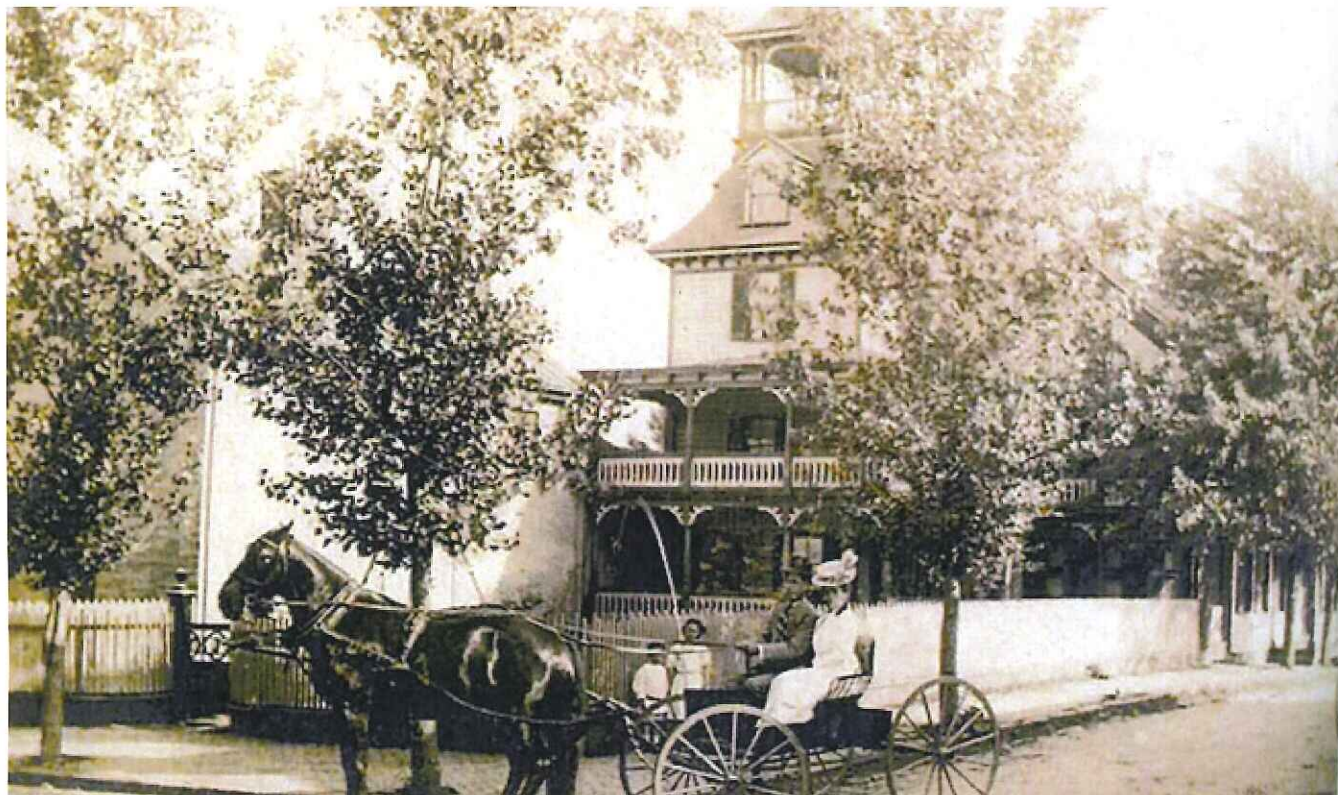
After S.J. Johnston's death, Mrs. Beulah Neel Johnston purchased the 21 West Loudoun Street house previously owned by Charles A. Johnston.

Collection artifacts shown on pages 4 and 5.

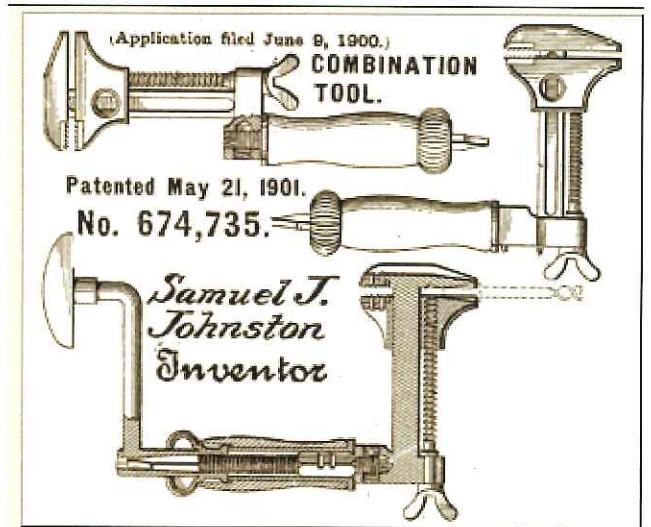
Hundreds of Photographs and Artifacts of Family Life
Library's Richest Collection on 19th Century Leesburg



Six sons of S.J. Johnston (1853 –925) and his first wife, Louise Bayne Johnston (1865 –1899), in a photograph taken at the S. J. Johnston house in 1897. Above right is a Logan & Strowbridge ice scraper used by the Johnston boys to make snow cones, which they sold in the front yard. The family home is below; Wirt Street is at right.



Insights into the Livelihoods of Leesburg Residents
Explore the Charles A. Johnston Collection



Samuel J. Johnston patent May 21, 1901

S. J. Johnston's jewelry store was located at 12 S. King Street, now the site of King Street Oyster Bar. The image at left has been photoshopped to illustrate how it might have looked at its opening in 1875. The holder of at least seven patents, S.J. Johnston invented the "combination tool" above.

Charles A. Cline, S.J.'s first cousin, also operated a hardware store; his ad, left, promoted a new rotary bell. Cline is credited with installing Leesburg's first telephone, running a fine silk cord from his store to his home on Cornwall Street. Below, Dr. John Gibson, who was beloved throughout Loudoun, was a founder of Leesburg's permanent hospital located on Cornwall Street.

The Celebrated Eagle Rotary Bell
 —SHOULD BE ON—
Every Farm in the Land.
 Sells at from Five to Seventeen Dollars.
 —FOR SALE BY—
CLINE & SON,
Wholesale and Retail Hardware,
FARMERS BUY THE EAGLE ROTARY BELL.
 SELLS AT FROM FIVE TO SEVENTEEN DOLLARS.

A Fire Alarm for the Farm.

Insolent tramps avoid Farm Houses that are furnished with Bells.

LARGE BELLS
 FOR Schools and Churches.

FOR FARMERS
 FERRIES
 PLANTATIONS
 FOG SIGNALS
 WORKSHOPS ETC

A Dinner Signal Bell.

A good protection to the females of the Farm against the visits of tramps.

In case of accident help can be signalled for.

"Cline's Hardware Bell"



Library Seminar Draws Genealogists to Learn About DNA

On March 22, more than 50 experienced and novice genealogists from as far away as New York and South Carolina packed Thomas Balch Library's meeting room for a special Friends fundraising seminar. Library Director Alexandra Gressitt and Curator of Manuscripts and Archives Laura Christiansen organized the all-day event—**“Genetic Genealogy: Understanding DNA Results.”**

Presented by expert Shannon Combs-Bennett, the engaging seminar provided a general introduction to DNA genealogy. Combs-Bennett also introduced the audience to mtDNA, or mitochondrial DNA, which is passed down almost unchanged from mother to child; yDNA, which allows you to trace your paternal ancestry, and autosomal DNA, which constitutes the 22 pairs of chromosomes that are *not* the pair of the X chromosome and the Y chromosome.



The seminar was especially helpful to attendees who had already taken DNA tests to interpret them. Those who had not done a DNA test came away with a better understanding of how they could use the tests and whether they were worth taking.

Because of the highly technical and scientific nature of DNA Genealogy, the Library is hoping to host an advanced DNA genealogical seminar next year. Shannon Combs-Bennett, owner of T2 Family History, writes and lectures on a variety of topics from genetics to methodology. She holds a BS in Biology and has a Certificate in Genealogical Research from Boston University. Currently, she is studying for her MSc in Genealogical, Paleographic, and Heraldic Studies from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. To learn more about DNA and genealogy, visit Combs-Bennett's website at <http://theindepthgenealogist.com/shannon-combs-bennett/>

Black History Committee Members Conduct Panel at Virginia Forum

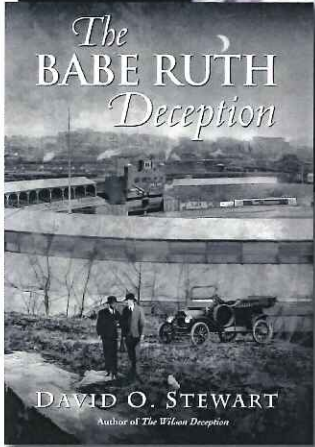


On March 4, 2017 at the Virginia Forum, hosted by Norfolk State University, Black History Committee members conducted a panel discussion entitled "Honoring Who We Are: A Loudoun County Story." Their objective was to inspire individuals and organizations pursuing similar goals to partner and to preserve their community's history. The panelists shared the Committee's experiences in preserving African American sites and stories.

BHC President Donna Bohanon (right) chaired the panel. Phyllis Cook-Taylor (third from right) discussed the Friends of the Arcola Slave Quarters.

Pastor Michelle Thomas (second from left) introduced activities of the Loudoun Freedom Center. Alicia Cohen (second from right), a certified tourism ambassador, reported on the BHC's annual African American tour, and Phillip Thompson, Loudoun County's NAACP Chapter president, discussed memorials and sites.

Talks: From Mystery in American Baseball to Tragedy in Afghanistan



David O. Stewart on *The Babe Ruth Deception*

Sunday April 30, 2 – 4PM

Babe Ruth was indisputably the best left-handed pitcher in the American League. This mystery set in the post-World War One era once again brings Dr. Jamie Fraser and Speed Cook back together in New York in 1920 and 1921—when the Babe reinvented baseball with a barrage of Yankee home runs. But in the wake of the 1919 World Series "Black Sox" scandal, they find themselves investigating the seamier side of baseball in their fight to protect the legendary slugger. Once again, masterfully blending fact and fiction, David O. Stewart delivers a nail-biting historical mystery that captures an era unlike any America has seen before or since in all its moral complexity and dizzying excitement.

After practicing law for more than 25 years, Stewart turned to writing history (though he still practices law). His first book, *The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution* was a *Washington Post* bestseller and won the Washington Writing Award as Best Book of 2007. Two years later, Harvard's David Donald called Stewart's *Impeached: The Trial of President Andrew Johnson and the Fight for Lincoln's Legacy* "by all means the best account of this troubled episode." *American Emperor, Aaron Burr's Challenge to Jefferson's America*, released in 2011, won the Society of the Cincinnati's 2013 History Prize.

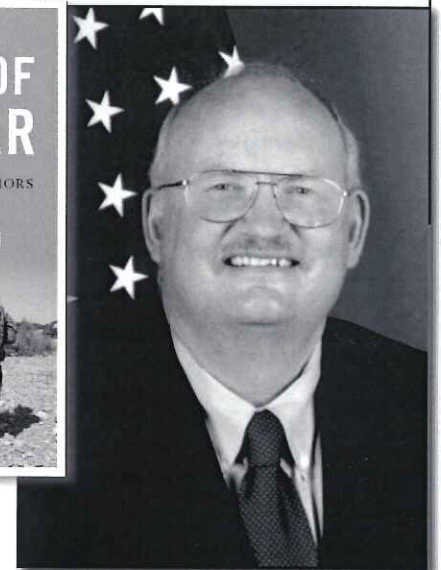
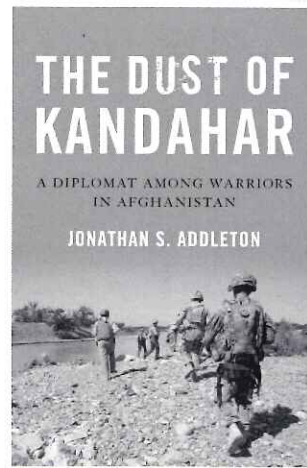
Jonathan S. Addleton on *The Dust of Kandahar*

Sunday, May 7, 2 – 4PM

In *The Dust of Kandahar*, his personal account of one diplomat's year of service in America's longest war, Ambassador Jonathan Addleton writes movingly of the human drama of the American soldiers, local tribal dignitaries, government officials, and religious leaders with whom he worked in southern Afghanistan.

Addleton's writing is at its most vivid in his firsthand account of the April 2013 suicide bombing outside a Zabul school that killed his translator, a fellow Foreign Service officer, and three American soldiers. The memory of this tragedy lingers over Addleton's journal entries, his prose offering poignant glimpses into the interior life of a U.S. diplomat stationed in harm's way.

Ambassador to Mongolia from 2009 to 2012, Addleton was born in Pakistan. He spent his early years with his parents in Upper Sind, then attended the Murree Christian School, located at an old British Himalayan hill station. He went on to attend college at Northwestern University, then earned his MA and PhD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He speaks Urdu and Hindi.





**Friends of Thomas
Balch Library**

THE CHRONICLE

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Spring 2017 Programs & Exhibits

Programs and Events

The Babe Ruth Deception (A Fraser and Cook Mystery) by David O. Stewart—April 30, 2 - 4 PM

Historic Preservation—May 4, 10AM - 12 PM

Historic Leesburg Tour—May 6, 9 AM - 12 PM

The Dust of Kandahar: A Diplomat Among Warriors in Afghanistan by Jonathan S. Addleton—May 7, 2 - 4 PM

Clerk's Office Tour of Loudoun Court House Historic Records—May 15, 7 - 9 PM

The Charles A. Johnston Collection Tour—May 20, 2 - 4 PM

Identification and Care of Photographs—June 1, 10 AM - 12 PM

African American Heritage Bus Tour—June 24. Contact Alicia Cohen at 703-606-3275 or aaheritagelocova@gmail.com for details.

Tours and Exhibits

Margaret Mercer Room Exhibits

Leesburg/Loudoun Remembering the Past through Artifacts—May 1 - 31

Liberian Artifacts by Greg and Patti Paxson—June 1 through June 30

Lower Level Meeting Room Exhibit

Waterford's Civil War by John Souders—April 1 through June 30

Programs are held in the downstairs meeting room and are free unless otherwise noted.

For updated news on programs, tours, and exhibits, please visit the Friends' website at balchfriends.org or the Library's website at <http://www.leesburgva.gov/government/departments/thomas-balch-library/library-events>