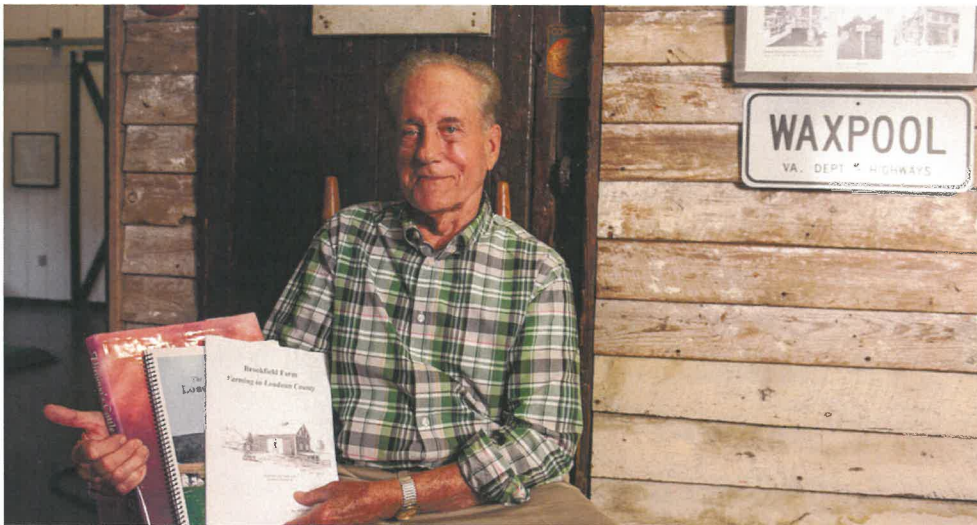


The CHRONICLE

New Oral History Video of Bill Harrison, Loudoun's Leading Agriculture Expert and Historian, Highlights Annual Meeting



Dairyman, geneticist, master gardener, Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum founder, community volunteer, and Virginia extension agent—these are just a few of the vital roles Bill Harrison has played in the life of Loudoun. He explores them all with historian Richard Gillespie in the new Oral History Series video created by Sarah Huntington and produced by Patty Rogers-Renner.

Setting the scene in the video are archival photos of local dairy farmers, 4-H shows, a legendary bull called "Elevation" and an airport named Dulles.

It was the construction of Dulles that forever altered the Loudoun farm landscape and made Harrison's educational and consulting role as Virginia extension agent so critical to the survival and ultimately the transformation of farming here.

Indeed, we are no longer milking as many Holsteins but we are harvesting lots of grapes and reaping the rewards of a new rural agricultural economy. For that, says Harrison, "I'm proud of the people here in the County and how we've adjusted to changing times."

See pages 4 and 5 for photos of the video debut at the annual meeting.

Bill Harrison, a founder of Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum, sits in the doorway of the Waxpool general store, which was moved lock, stock, and barrel to the museum in Sterling. His books on agricultural history are available at Thomas Balch Library. Photograph by Sarah Huntington.

Friends Elect New Board of Directors at Annual Meeting



Front row, left to right: Kacey Young, Mildred Anne Daye, Donna Bohanon, Suzi Worsham. Back row, left to right: Bruce Cleveland, Lewis Leigh, Jr., James Lucier, Dr. Donald Cooper, Ron Rust, Richard Routman, William Ray, Richard Gillespie. Not present: Gail Adams, Jeffrey Bolyard, W. Perry Epes, Patty Rogers-Renner. Photograph by Sarah Huntington.

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

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

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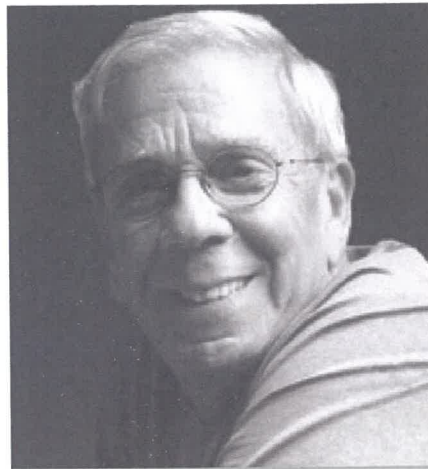
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Remembering Teckla Cox and Rockie Fera



Francis Rockie Fera



Teckla Cox

In September of last year, Thomas Balch Library and the Friends organization lost two great friends.

Francis Rockie Fera, who was known by his middle name, died at 76 in his Leesburg home on September 7, 2017. Dr. Donald Cooper, president of the Friends of Thomas Balch Library spoke for all members when he expressed his appreciation of Fera.

"Rockie served as secretary of the Friends of Thomas Balch Library for several years," said Dr. Cooper. "He was a generous donor to our organization in terms of time, money, and support. He also was on the Thomas Balch Library Advisory Board for the town for nearly two decades."

Over his long career in education, Fera opened and oversaw new schools in Loudoun, serving as principal at Sugarland Elementary, Guilford Elementary, Harper Park Middle School, and Farmwell Station Middle School. For his work as principal of J.L. Simpson Middle School he received *The Washington Post's* Distinguished Educational Leadership Award in 1989.

Teckla Cox, the subject of the Friends inaugural video interview for the Thomas Balch Library Oral History Series, died on September 2, 2017.

The first woman comprehensive planner in the Loudoun County Planning Department, she played a major role in 1980 in developing the County's first truly Comprehensive Plan. That plan was instrumental in laying out a picture of what the county would become, putting the emphasis for planned development in the east and maintaining the west as an agricultural area. She also wrote the original guidelines for Loudoun's Historic Districts.

When historian Richard T. Gillespie asked her what she would advise future Loudouners, she replied, "Keep up the preservation work. Keep up the differentiation between the east and the west. The west has a great deal to offer to tourists and to the people who live here, and they keep bringing in money. And if the west were to be developed like the east, we'd be losing a great deal. That is what I would want to emphasize."

Library Advisory Commission Honors 3 with Loudoun History Awards

By Margaret Morton

*Loudoun Now, November 13, 2017
Excerpted and reprinted with permission.*

On Sunday, November 12, 2017, family, friends and Loudoun historians turned out in force for winners of the 2017 Thomas Balch Library Advisory Commission's 25th Annual Loudoun History Awards.

This year's honorees—Phyllis Cook-Taylor, James A. Morgan III, and William C. Ray—were celebrated for their contributions to preserving the county's rich past.

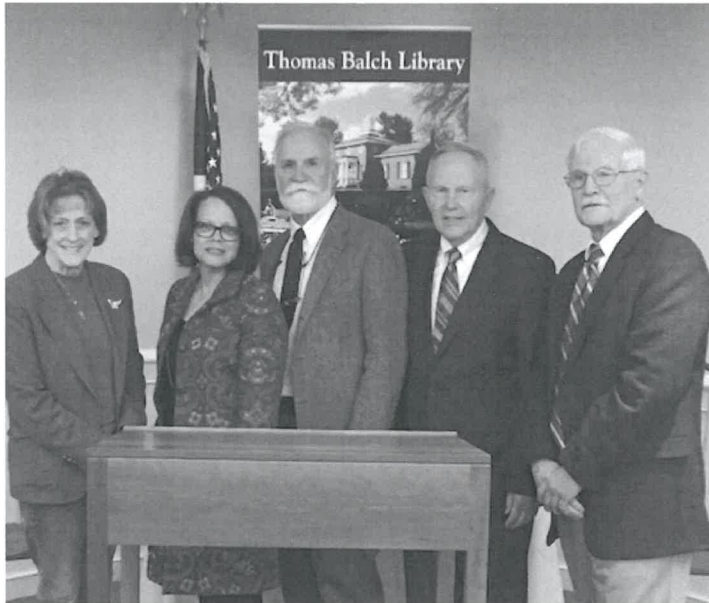
Advisory Commission Chairman James H. Hershman, Jr. welcomed attendees, including Leesburg Mayor Kelly Burk, Deputy Town Manager Keith Markel, and members of the Advisory Commission and Friends of Thomas Balch Library.

The contributions of Cook-Taylor, a native of Middleburg, have been so numerous over the years that she was nominated by four people—Donna Bohanon, chairwoman of the Friends' Black History Committee; Alicia Cohen, organizer of the committee's Heritage Bus Tour; Arlene Hill; and photographer Jim Roberts.

Bohanon praised Cook-Taylor for her activities in preservation organizations, including as a founding member and officer of the Slave Quarters at Hutchinson Farm and a founding member of the Black History Committee. In her own town, Cook-Taylor was instrumental in Middleburg's purchase of the historic black Asbury United Methodist Church.

Jim Morgan, who was nominated by historians Wynne Saffer and Bill Wilkin, has been a leading figure in Loudoun's Civil War history for years, as well as serving

on the Thomas Balch Library Commission. Saffer noted Morgan was omnipresent in Loudoun organizations—past president of the Civil War Roundtable, a member of the Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee, a member of the Mosby Heritage Area Association Advisory Board, a volunteer guide at Ball's Bluff Battlefield, and an organizer of the Friends of Ball's Bluff.



From left, Leesburg Mayor Kelly Burk, award recipients Phyllis Cook-Taylor, Jim Morgan and Bill Ray with Jim Hershman. Photo by Keith Markel

Morgan was one of the first guides at the Ball's Bluff battlefield, and it was out of that experience that he wrote his book, *A Little Short of Boats: The Fights at Ball's Bluff and Edwards Ferry, October 21-22, 1861*.

Accepting the award, Morgan noted that “70 percent of Loudoun's population has lived in the county less than 10 years.” He cautioned that we can lose the memory of self —“it's like having Alzheimer's, we forget who we are.” Newer residents don't have that personal connection to the county

and its history, he said, “so it's very important to show them ... our culture is worth it.”

Thomas Balch Library Director Alexandra Gressitt read the nomination for Bill Ray, as presenter Lewis Leigh Jr. could not be present. Ray was nominated for his “many accomplishments in preserving and interpreting Loudoun County history.”

Leigh cited Ray's meticulous research on his community of Mount Gilead and almost 20 other properties in Loudoun. Several of his books are part of Thomas Balch Library's collection. Ray has served on the Friends board for five years. It was Ray's research, personal recollections and stories about Mount Gilead, south of Leesburg, published in 2010, that brought him to the attention of the wider community. *Mount Gilead History & Heritage* is now in its sixth revised edition and has sold 875 copies.

Friends Applaud New Oral History Series Video on Bill Harrison

Continuing its tradition of honoring an esteemed Loudoun County citizen in a video oral history, the Friends of Thomas Balch Library this year chose to highlight farmer and Virginia extension agent Bill Harrison for his many significant contributions to Loudoun County's and Virginia's thriving agriculture industry. Not only did the audience like the video but they also thoroughly enjoyed the spirited Q&A session that followed (see photos below).



Dr. Donald Cooper, president of the Friends of Thomas Balch Library welcomed members and guests to the annual meeting.



Bill Harrison's wife, Polly, whose work as his partner in their agricultural business is featured in the video, listens to the welcome remarks. Beside her is Friends board member Bill Ray.



Bill Harrison, left, fields questions from the audience during the lively Q & A session that brought on peals of laughter. Above, from left, board member Jim Lucier, his wife, Mary Grace, and Shirley Carpener enjoyed the post-presentation as much as the show. Event photographs by Sarah Huntington.



The delighted audience included, above left, Donna Bohanon, chair of the Black History Committee, and, to her right, Lori Kimball, director of programming and education at Oatlands Plantation. Below is a behind-the-camera view of historian Rich Gillespie as he interviews Bill Harrison and videographer/photographer Sarah Huntington as she captures their conversation. Harrison talked about the challenges of creating the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum, shown here, and the three volumes on his lap: "Brookfield Farm--Farming in Loudoun County," "The Story of Loudoun's Dairy Industry," and "Cattle Story of Virginia--Jamestown to Now." The Library does not sell the books, but the first two are available for research. Patrons may view the Harrison video and other historic videos by visiting the Thomas Balch Library and viewing them on the special information kiosk in the reading room.



Essence of a People: The African American Experience in Loudoun

An Open House Hosted by the Friends' Black History Committee

Thomas Balch Library

Saturday, February 24, 2018 – 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Join members of the Black History Committee of the Friends of Thomas Balch Library for dynamic discussions on two themes—"African Americans in Times of War" and "African American Genealogy."

Local historian Kevin Grigsby will speak about African Americans from Loudoun County who served with the Union during the Civil War. His talk will include how family stories and genealogy helped him discover important hidden history.

Discover the ways in which the Black History Committee (BHC) shares the substantial history of Loudoun's African American community and the resources available at the Thomas Balch Library to assist in genealogical research.

BHC members Donna Bohanon, Alicia Cohen, Gertrude Evans, and Larry Roeder will share their personal experiences in genealogical research to discover family and local community history.



Kevin Grigsby is author of "Howardsville: The Journey of an African-American Community in Loudoun County" and "From Loudoun to Glory: The Role of African-Americans from Loudoun County in the Civil War."

SCHEDULE

10 a.m.	Welcome, Refreshments & Opening
11 a.m.	Presentation by Kevin Grigsby
12 p.m.	Light Lunch provided
12:30 p.m.	Genealogy Panel Discussion
1:30 p.m.	Tour of the Thomas Balch Library followed by a continuation of the genealogy discussion with BHC members and the Thomas Balch Library staff.

RSVP: bhc@balchfriends.org | www.balchfriends.org | 540-579-2825

Genetic Genealogy: Understanding DNA Results Workshop

Thomas Balch Library

Wednesday, March 21, 2018 – 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Shannon Combs-Bennett, Presenter

Do you have DNA results and wonder what to do with them—or perhaps wonder whether it is worth the expense to take a DNA test and if so which one? This seminar, in four parts, will provide a general introduction to 1) DNA Genealogy and include sections on 2) understanding Autosomal DNA results, 3) using third party tools to collect, share, and interpret your results, and 4) developing a research plan combining genetics and genealogy. Whether you are a novice or an experienced geneticist, this seminar is an opportunity to enhance your understanding of DNA genealogy and new developments in the field. There will be two breaks (morning and afternoon) and a lunch break of 1-1/2 hours on your own in historic Leesburg.

Advance Registration: \$15 members of Friends of Thomas Balch Library; \$20 non-members; \$30 at door (if space is available); Lunch on your own. Registration fee is nonrefundable. For more information, call 703-737-7195 or visit www.leesburgva.gov/library

Seating is limited: Preregistration and prepayment will guarantee a seat.

Number attending: _____

Name (s) _____

Address: _____

City : _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Daytime Phone: _____ **Evening Phone:** _____

E-mail Address: _____

Registration fee payment: _____

Make check payable to Friends of Thomas Balch Library

Credit card [Visa or Mastercard only]—fill out information below:

Name on Card: _____

Credit Card Number: _____ **CVV Number:** _____

Expiration Date: _____ [Day/Month/Year] **Amount:** _____

Please include mailing address and phone number of cardholder above. Mail or deliver registration to: Thomas Balch Library, 208 West Market St., Leesburg, VA 20176



**Friends of Thomas
Balch Library**
THE CHRONICLE
P.O. Box 2184
Leesburg, VA 20177
540-579-2825
www.balchfriends.org

Winter 2018 Programs & Exhibits

Black History Committee Open House:

The African American Experience in Loudoun –
10 AM–2:30 PM Saturday, February 24

The Last Lynching in Northern Virginia–
Jim Hall–2 PM Sunday, February 25

Paper Conservation–10 AM Thurs., March 1

Civil War Tour of Leesburg– Noon–2 PM
Saturday, March 3 starting at the Library

A Tale of Two Navies – Anthony R. Wells –
2 PM Sunday, March 4

*Harriet Lane: The Original First Lady of
Washington*–Bob O'Connor–2 PM March 18

**Spring Seminar: Genetic Genealogy–
Understanding DNA Results** – 9 AM–4 PM
Wednesday, March 21

Researching Court Records -10 AM
Thursday, April 5

*We Face the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood
Robinson, and the Legal Team that
Dismantled Jim Crow* – 2 PM Sunday, April 8

Margaret Mercer Room Exhibits

**Frederick Douglass Elementary School
Presents Its Art Projects** –February

**Highlights of Loudoun County African
American Bus Tours** – Friends' Black History
Committee –March

**General George C. Marshall: 20th Century
American Hero** by George C. Marshall
International Center –April

Lower Level Meeting Room Exhibits

Grace Through the Ages by Gertie Evans –
through March

Portraits from Viet Nam and Cambodia by
Jim Hanna –April through June

*Programs are held in the downstairs meeting
room and are free unless otherwise noted. For
updates on programs, tours, and exhibits, please
visit the Friends' website at balchfriends.org or
the Library's website at [http://
www.leeburgva.gov/government/departments/
thomas-balch-library/library-events](http://www.leeburgva.gov/government/departments/thomas-balch-library/library-events)*