



Sulgrave Manor

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

June marked the one year anniversary of working with the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of their National Treasures. We are indebted to Nancy Tinker, who led our project team, Rob Nieweg, Susan Berning and Stephen Crochet for the time they spent working with us. Under their experienced guidance, we developed a strategic plan for Happy Retreat, created a fundraising strategy and established valuable connections with other successful National Trust sites around the country that will continue to serve as models for what we do. Happy Retreat was featured prominently twice on the Trust's web page and social media, which gave us national exposure. It was a great honor for Happy Retreat to be the first site in West Virginia to be selected for the National Treasures program.

Our first Wine & Jazz Festival in June attracted many more people than we expected. It was a delightful day and we have received many compliments. It was also financially successful. Planning and staging the event was more complicated than we anticipated. We found out there are many more moving parts to a wine festival than to a beer festival. We learned what worked and what didn't work.

We now have run two successful major festivals – the Craft Beer & Music Festival and the Wine & Jazz Festival – which will become two of our signature fundraising events of the year. They both bring people to Happy Retreat who might not otherwise visit. Most importantly, they create a sense of excitement about what Happy Retreat can be.

Restoration moves forward. Repair and replacement of the roof will begin the Monday after the Craft Beer & Music Festival. The two main parlors are being repainted. The faux marble baseboards in those rooms that were removed to accommodate built-in bookshelves in the 1950s will be replaced now that the bookshelves are gone. Preliminary work on the events kitchen is underway. We are reviewing a proposal for a new HVAC system. We are ready to begin planning the restoration of the smokehouse and stone kitchen. We are confident the sun is rising at Happy Retreat.

We hope to see you all at the Craft Beer & Music Festival on September 9!

Walter Washington *President*

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WINE & JAZZ FESTIVAL

The first annual Wine & Jazz festival held on June 10 was a great success. Over 400 people turned out on a beautiful, warm summer day to sample over 50 fine wines. They enjoyed top notch jazz performances by The Brooks Tegler Quartet, The Krispy Kat Quartet and The Apollo Jazz Septet and a savory selection of food from Alfredo's Mediterranean Café, Marcia Flanigan's Comfort Cuisine and TheBestCookie.com, Pizza Llama and Sugar Whipped Bakery.

While the festival was taking place on the grounds outside, we offered three wine tasting classes in the historic parlors of the house: Simone Spinner, an adjunct professor of wine studies at the University of Colorado, taught the classes: "Wine and Music," "Hot Trends in Wine," and "Taste Like a Professional." Our original plan had been to have Professor Spinner teach the classes "virtually" via an internet connection from Colorado. However, when that turned out not to be feasible, she offered to appear in person. The classes were well received by appreciative wine enthusiasts.



Simone Spinner teaching a wine tasting class in the Happy Retreat parlor

The success of the festival was made possible by over 100 volunteers who turned out to help set up tables, pour wine, take tickets, clean up afterward and perform all the other chores that had to be done. Thanks to everyone who made the day work.

Thank you also to our corporate sponsors: The Spirit of Jefferson, Bloomery SweetShine, Data Direct, and the Bank of Charles Town.

We are especially grateful to the dedicated volunteer members of our Planning Committee who worked for over eight months to plan every detail of the festival: Fiona Harrison, John Swift, Nancy Sturm, Neal Nielson, Ruth Bielobocky, Todd Coyle and Marcia Flannigan. Thank you!



Our Wine & Jazz Festival planning committee. First row, Fiona Harrison, Rachel Niswander, Walter Washington; Second row, Nancy Sturm, Randy Hilton, Todd Coyle; Third row, Ruth Bielobocky, Richard Seckinger, Neal Nielsen and Marcia Flannigan. (Absent: John Swift)



Over 400 people enjoyed our first Wine & Jazz Festival

SMOKEHOUSE/KITCHEN

In June, workmen from Belfor, an international property restoration company, came to Shrink Wrap the roof of the smokehouse/stone kitchen, replacing the deteriorating blue tarp which had been covering the roofs of these buildings. Shrink Wrap, a technique perfected by Belfor, uses a polyethylene film to form a tight membrane over the protected structure. After the roof was wrapped, heat was applied to shrink the cover to fit the contours of the roof surface. We are indebted to Curtis Ruppert of Belfor for this important contribution to the stabilization of the smokehouse/stone kitchen as we work with architect Kevin Lee Sarring to design an appropriate restoration plan for both buildings.

Archeological exploration around the foundations of both the smokehouse and the stone kitchen by Dr. Chuck Hulse of Shepherd University was pictured in the April issue of *The Rising Sun*. It revealed that the 18th Century smokehouse has an adequate stone foundation.

However, the walls of the 19th Century stone kitchen are not supported by a foundation. They were built directly into the ground. This has led to significant cracking and settling, particularly of the southeast corner and the east wall.

After the archaeological work was completed, the ground around both buildings was properly graded and finished. Over the years, the ground level around the smokehouse had been gradually built up by additional layers of soil. This allowed moisture to penetrate the base of the brick walls, causing “rising damp” which was leading to serious deterioration of the bricks. The grade around the smokehouse has now been restored to its original level around the stone foundation so that the soil is no longer in contact with the brick. Thanks to board member Bill Senseney and neighbor and City Council member Chet Hines for seeding and mulching the graded soil which is now a lush lawn.



A new protective Shrink Wrap from Belfor, an international property restoration company, protects the roof of the smokehouse/kitchen

A VISIT TO SULGRAVE MANOR

In May, Marjorie Gaestel, our board secretary, traveled to England to visit Sulgrave Manor. She writes this account of her trip.

This past spring I had the privilege of visiting Sulgrave Manor, the ancestral home of Charles Washington and his brothers. Sulgrave had extended an invitation as they wanted to make this Washington connection, which we have now done. We are able to share the history of these two beautiful Washington homes, Sulgrave Manor and Happy Retreat.

Sulgrave Manor was built in the 1500s by Charles Washington's fifth great grandfather Lawrence Washington. It sits in the village of Sulgrave in South Northamptonshire, in the middle of England, a beautiful area on the edge of the Cotswolds.

Highlights of my visit were being shown their archive/research room and also the newly cleaned Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington. Sulgrave Manor has a lovely modern tea room for visitors as well as a small gift shop. They are very active with visiting school children and hosting weddings. I will write more about the trip in future issues.



FOHR Board Secretary Marjorie Gaestel at Sulgrave Manor in England



Recently restored portrait of George Washington at Sulgrave Manor. L. to R. Alison Ray, Director of Sulgrave Manor; Alex Valmarana, Architect and Historic Building Consultant; Nancy Stewart, Sulgrave Manor Trustee

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MILDRED WASHINGTON AND GEORGE WASHINGTON

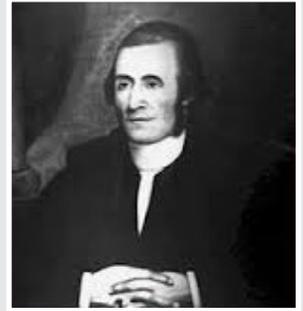
In doing research for the Historic Structures Report at the Handley Library in Winchester, our consultant Maral Kalbian came across the original copy of this letter from Mildred Washington, Charles's wife, to her brother-in-law General George Washington, dated October 13, 1798. It describes the depth of poverty and ill-health into which their life at Happy Retreat had fallen. We also note the lives of the enslaved people described in the letter.

In our next issue, we will include the General's reply.

Happy Retreat—Oct. 13th

Painful is the task which necessity now impose on me but painful as it is my beloved General I must communicate it to you the only friend now to whom I can make known my situation with hope of redress. The unfortunate situation of Mr. Washington for a number of years past laid him liable to many advantages being taken of him which has involved his estate in such a manner that I fear all the property both real & personal would do little more than pay the debts. Mr. Washington after the marriage of his Son gave him up the estate except [sic] the servants which were necessary for us & after paying us a hundred a year his son became responsible for the debts, but being young & unacquainted with business he thought that the debts would easily be paid with attention & industry which he has uniformly pursu'd but the repetition of unforeseen misfortunes have been great; we have lost the principal part of our fellows by death & for three years past have not made bread sufficient for our support & obliged to purchase on credit the necessaries we were compel'd to get with hopes of better times: the hession-fly has taken our small grain for two years & the land so poor that it will not produce corn all the best of the land Mr. W—gave his son George at least the only part that was valuable. I believe you may have heard some reports unfavorable to my Son Sam, you may relay that they are without foundation & done to prejudice him in your esteem – he is quite domestic man & seldom of the farm – although I may view him with eyes of a partial Mother, yet they are not so blind but I can see his faults the only one that I can accuse him off is the building of a house, but that may in some degree be palliated when we take a view of his situation when he commenced he had prospects of

selling about one hundred acres of land adjoining town at that time for a good price but the fall of produce and the scarcity [sic] of money is so great that he cannot sell it now for anything near its value – there is now several executions against the estate & several suits now in courts & a writ out for £ 5,6,5 & our negroes & horses must be sold of both we have but a few – only four working fellows & some old women which is but slender support for two families. It is truly distressing at my time of life to see poverty staring me so plainly in the face. I should not care so much a bout [sic] myself as my state o health is very delicate & I cannot by the course of nature expect to live long: but poor Mr. Washington requires more – owing to his unfortunate & truly distressing situation. How excruciating is the thought to leave a partner that I have lived so long with in this melancholy & destitute situation unable to help himself without the assistance of two fellows when these are taken from him he will be left helpless indeed with only the assistance of our son who has rendered himself doubly [sic] Dear to us by the attention he shows his father – but I thank Providence I leave (when he shall please to take me) a dutiful daughter United to a sober indust [sic] young man & as he has been long attach'd to her I trust he will not remember her want of fortune. I have been compeled [sic] to this plain statement of our affairs from the tender feelings of a wife and Mother & a firm knowledge [sic] of your inestimable goodness – let me beg you my Dear Sir to let it remain secret with you as my family has not the most distant idea it was my intention to make known our situation – accept my sincer [sic] prays for you & the amiable Mrs. W—n.



Charles Washington

I remain your ever sincer [sic] friend

Mildred Washington

CRAFT BEER & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Our Second Annual Craft Beer & Music Festival will take place on Saturday, September 9, from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. This year we are expanding the number of craft brewers represented from 20 to over 30. There will be more than 100 craft beers to sample. We will have four great bands providing entertainment: Jah Works, Black Masala, The Primate Fiasco and a favorite returning from last year -- The Woo Yeahs. Thanks again this year to Josh Vance, owner of Charles Town's Abolitionist Ale Works, for lining up this impressive list of brewers, brews and bands.

We will have another delicious array of food vendors: Charles Town's Mediterranean Café, Ortega's Taco Shop, wood fired pizza from Pizza Llama, Pigstastic BBQ, Sugar Whipped Bakery and Mountaineer Popcorn.

VIP tickets are \$40 in advance/\$45 at the gate. General admission tickets are \$25 in advance/\$20 at the gate. Designated driver/underage tickets are \$15. Please visit our website for ticket details.



COTILLION GALA TO BENEFIT HAPPY RETREAT

The Eastern Panhandle Cotillion Club is hosting a benefit Gala for Friends of Happy Retreat on Saturday, September 30 from 7:30 to 11:30. Guests will dance to the music of the Fabulous Bel Airs. Light hors d'oeuvres and mixers will be provided (BYOB). The Gala will be held at the Independent Fire Hall Social

Hall, located at 200 W. Second Ave., Ranson. Black tie optional. Tickets are \$100 per couple. Checks made payable to Friends of Happy Retreat should be sent to Eastern Panhandle Cotillion, PO Box 36, Ranson, WV 25438, by September 15. We are grateful to the members of the Cotillion for their support.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PICNIC

On an uncharacteristically cool August evening, we held a picnic in the backyard at Happy Retreat to thank all of the volunteers who were the backbone of our Craft Beer & Music Festival and our Jazz & Wine Festival. Over 50 of our volunteers came to enjoy an old-fashioned cook-out of hamburgers and hot dogs. We hope to do more every year to show our appreciation for the many members of our community who pitch in so eagerly to make what we do possible. Thank you, volunteers!

FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT GOALS

We are launching the "Turn up the Heat at Happy Retreat" campaign to raise funding for a new heating and cooling system at the mansion. The existing heating system uses hot water radiators. There is no air conditioning in the house. We plan to use a geothermal-based system that is environmentally sensitive, that will be the least intrusive, that will be the most cost effective over the long term and that will provide cool summers and toasty winters for many years of future enjoyment of this wonderful house. Please let us know if you are willing to support this important effort.

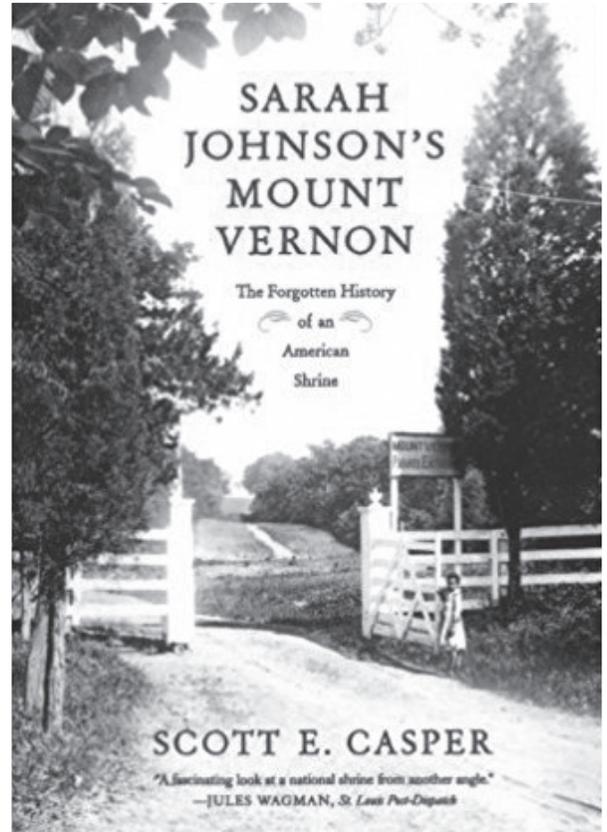
DR. SCOTT CASPER TO ATTEND BOOK CLUB

The next meeting of the Happy Retreat Book Club will feature the book Sarah Johnson's Mt. Vernon. The Jefferson County Black History Preservation Society will be our co-hosts for the evening.

We are delighted that the author, Dr. Scott Casper, will attend to lead the discussion of this fascinating history of Mt. Vernon as told through the lives of African Americans who worked and lived there, both as slaves and after Emancipation. The book has many ties with Jefferson County. John Augustine Washington, II, who inherited Mt. Vernon in 1829, was the builder of Blakeley.

The book details, in part, the lives of both his family and the people enslaved by them as they traveled back and forth between the two homes.

The book club will meet at Happy Retreat at 7 pm on Tuesday, October 3. Membership in the book club is free. All are welcome to attend. The book is available at Four Seasons Book Store in Shepherdstown, which is donating 15% of the proceeds all sales of the book to Friends of Happy Retreat.



Author Scott Casper will discuss his book, Sarah Johnson's Mt. Vernon, at Happy Retreat on Oct. 3



Thank you to **Dolley Madison Garden Club** for its \$1,000 donation from the proceeds of the 2016 Dolley Madison Christmas Market to be used for the ongoing restoration of Happy Retreat.

Thank you to **Belfor Corporation** for its donation of the Shrink Wrap for the roof of the smokehouse and stone kitchen.

Thank you to the family of the late **Nancy Needy** for making possible the acquisition of several pieces of period furniture from her estate.

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The name "**Rising Sun**" is taken from the Rising Sun Tavern in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The tavern is located in the house built by Charles Washington in 1760 and where he lived before he moved to Happy Retreat. The house became a tavern in 1792. It is now owned and operated by the Washington History Museums.



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