

Photos: Brian Christopher

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The inaugural concert of the Charles Washington Chamber Music Society on Sunday, February 25, was thrilling. We are indebted to Gary Stewart for organizing the event and for bringing such a group of extraordinary musicians to Happy Retreat. It was so successful we are making plans for future concerts.

Rachel Niswander, our AmeriCorps member, completed her year of service with us on March 19. Over the past twelve months, she helped promote our many events on social media, created an inventory of all of the books, furniture and other items which have been donated to us using the MusArch software program. She prompted us to develop a volunteer management policy and a donations policy, both of which she contributed research to. She helped plan our festivals as well

as helping out at the festivals themselves. She was a daily presence in the office at Happy Retreat and welcomed visitors and tours to the house. We wish her the best of success as she pursues her career. We hope to welcome another AmeriCorps member in August.

On Saturday, May 12, we will convene the meeting of the Grand Idea Task Force at Happy Retreat. This will be a gathering of representatives of historical, arts, music and other cultural groups to work out a shared use plan for Happy Retreat. We are delighted that Nancy Tinker, Senior Field Officer for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, will be here to facilitate the event.

Walter Washington *President*

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SHPO ARCHAEOLOGY GRANT

Friends of Happy Retreat (FOHR) has received an \$11,000 grant from the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to undertake a detailed archaeological survey of the Happy Retreat property. When FOHR was first organized in 2006, we realized that before we could make any plans for the future use of the property we would first need to understand its archaeology so that any archaeologically significant sites could be protected. We asked Dr. Charles Hulse, Professor of Anthropology at Shepherd University, to outline how to go about that. Dr. Hulse proposed a seven step plan.

In 2007, we completed the first step of the plan, which was a reconnaissance survey and walkover of the entire 12.3 acre property to locate surface features such as foundations, artifact clusters and anomalies in the natural landscape. Based on this survey, Dr. Hulse prepared a report

showing, among other things, the location of what is believed to have been slave quarters and the original location of the octagonal building now located at the rear of the yard. The report also identified a roughly four acre portion of the property with the highest potential archaeological significance.

The SHPO grant will allow us to complete four more steps of the original plan: (1) prepare an archaeological map of the entire 12.3 acre property; (2) complete detailed shovel testing of the four acres previously identified as most worthy of further study; (3) curate any artifacts found; and (4) prepare a final report on the work completed. Work will begin this summer. We will schedule an archaeological “open house” for members of the public and students to observe the work underway.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

We held our first Holiday Open House – “Happy Christmas at Happy Retreat” -- on Sunday, December 10. The house was beautifully decorated with greens and other seasonal finery appropriate to the 19th Century. A carefully laid out dining table re-created an 18th Century assortment of Christmas desserts.

While the Wright Denny Intermediary School choir sang Christmas carols and Dave Bateman, husband of Board member Nancy Bateman, displayed and demonstrated his collection of dulcimers, an appreciative crowd enjoyed cookies and cider.

We are especially grateful to Margo Swift, wife of Board member John Swift, for her work in researching and creating the table full of Christmas desserts; to the entire Bateman family for their help throughout the day; to former Board member Rick Snowden; and to Board members Marjorie Gaestel, Margie Fithian, Robin Huyett Thomas and John Swift for their hard work in planning the day and making it a success.



*Photo: Brian Christopher
The Wright Denny Intermediate School Choir sang songs of the season at the Christmas Open House.*



Photo: Brian Christopher
Cellist René Schiffer addresses the audience before his performance



Photo: Brian Christopher
Flutist Angela Collier-Reynolds performs Debussy's Syrinx

CHARLES WASHINGTON CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY CONCERT

The inaugural concert of the Charles Washington Chamber Society on Sunday, February 25, was a memorable afternoon of music. Seated in the intimacy of the parlors at Happy Retreat, audiences at the two Sunday afternoon performances enjoyed music of Mozart, Debussy and Bach, as well as of lesser known composers of the 17th and 18th Centuries, Marin Marais, Fernando Sor and Ferdinando Carulli. The acoustics of the space were perfectly suited to the era of the music performed.

The concert was organized by local musician Gary Stewart, the founder of the Charles Washington Chamber Music Society and an award-winning guitarist. He assembled a stellar group of musicians: oboist Emily Bentgen, who has played with a number of symphony orchestras around the country; flutist Angela Collier-Reynolds, winner of several international awards; René Schiffer, principal cellist of Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra who has performed throughout the world; and Stanley Yates, one of the leading 20th century exponents of music for the guitar. The musicians were as thrilled by both the acoustics and intimacy of the setting as was the audience.

Because seating in the parlors at Happy Retreat is so limited, we scheduled two performances that Sunday afternoon, one at 1:30 and one at 4. Our next concert will be on the weekend of May 5/6. Instead of having both performances on one afternoon, the first performance will be held on Saturday evening, May 5, in the beautifully restored performance space on the second floor of Charles Washington Hall, at the corner of George and Washington Streets in downtown Charles Town. The second performance will be held on Sunday afternoon, May 6, in the more intimate setting of the parlors at Happy Retreat and will include the opportunity to meet and talk with the performers after the concert. This arrangement will allow us to broaden the audience by offering tickets for the Saturday evening concert at different price levels. If this arrangement works, we will use it for future concerts in the fall.

We are delighted that Angela Collier-Reynolds, René Schiffer and Stanley Yates will all be returning to perform again. The program will include works by both classical and contemporary composers.

RESTORATION UPDATE

We are completing plans on two important restoration projects. The first is the plan for the restoration of the smokehouse and stone kitchen. The restoration plan is being developed by architect Kevin Lee Sarring, who is working with Matt Webster, Director of Architectural Preservation at Colonial Williamsburg, and others. The restoration of these buildings was identified as a high priority in the Historic Structures Report completed last spring. We hope to get the restoration underway this summer.

The second is the plan to remove the bathroom, added in the first part of the 20th Century, on the second floor of the hyphen between the main section of the house and the west wing. The bathroom is an unsightly protrusion which detracts from the appearance of the rear of the house. Once this is done and once the west wing chimney is rebuilt, we can finish the replacement of the roofs on both wings.

We continue to work toward our “Turn Up the Heat at Happy Retreat” fundraising goal for a geothermal HVAC system. We have applied for a \$125,000 Save America’s Treasures grant to cover approximately half the cost.



Photo: HABS
The smokehouse/stone kitchen pictured in the 1930s



Portrait of Rebecca Cunningham Washington (1820-1890)

REBECCA CUNNINGHAM WASHINGTON PORTRAIT

Thanks to the generosity of John C. Allen, Jr., we have recently acquired a portrait of Rebecca Cunningham Washington (1820-1890), whose husband Thomas Blackburn Washington (1812-1854) inherited Claymont, the grandest Washington family home in Jefferson county, from his father Bushrod Corbin Washington (1790-1851), who built Claymont c. 1820. Rebecca Janet Cunningham, daughter of James and Catherine Cunningham was born at “Richlands” in Frederick County, Maryland. After the death of Thomas Blackburn Washington, Rebecca remarried. She died in London, England, in 1890. The back of the canvas bears this inscription: “M. Rebecca Washington/Southern View/L. White, painter/March 1842.” We are very grateful to John Allen that this significant Washington family portrait has been returned to Jefferson County and has been entrusted to our care as part of our collection.

LETTER FROM SAMUEL WASHINGTON (CHARLES'S SON) TO GEORGE WASHINGTON

In our last two issues, we have published the exchange of letters between Gen. George Washington and Mildred Thornton Washington, Charles Washington's wife. These letters have opened a window on life at Happy Retreat. The following letter written by Samuel Washington (1770-1831), the younger son of Charles and Mildred, to his uncle, General Washington, at Mt. Vernon, completes this cycle of correspondence.

Dear Uncle, Chas Town November 7th 1798

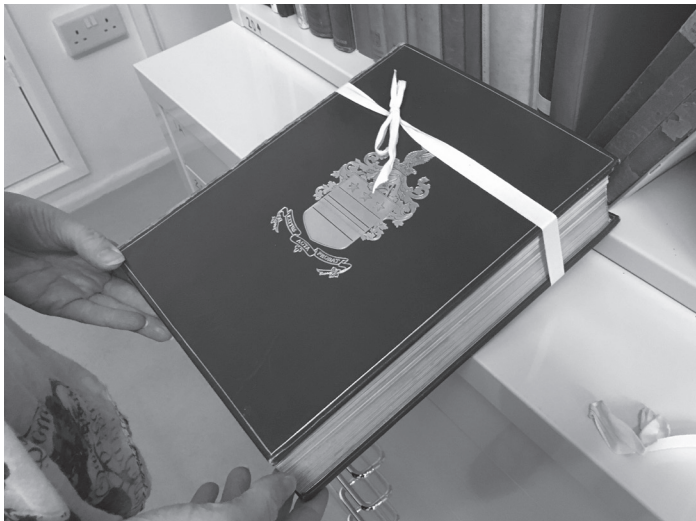
I received the Other day a Letter directed to me, from you upon opening of it, found the enclosed Letter to be for my Mother which I put safe into her hands finding from the direction it was from you, I after a good deal of persuasion got her to shew it to me, upon Reading it, found that she had wrote to you, a cobby [sic] of which she had by her, which I also prevailed with her to shew me. The contents gave me great uneasiness on many accounts particularly as her object for writing appeared in a great measure for my benifit [sic] I say it distresses [sic] me that you should be called on for more money by this Family after your goodness in Lending me Three hundred pound which kindness I never shall forget.

My Mother in her Letter has express'd fears on her own Account which I think never can come to pass. For this reason, That when I was Married my Father gave me all his Land & Negroes reserving to him self nothing but his house and Garden and house Servents [sic] leaving him self and my Mother to be supported by me, it then became necessary that all his debts should revert on me Therefore all Bonds or Notes that are against the Estate are in my name, the consequence of which is that all Execusions [sic] must be Levied on my property and not on his unless my property be not sufficient, which it will take time to determine As the greater part of the debts are not yet sue'd for. There is about Three or Four Hundred pound due Doctr Stuart which he has not yet brought suit on, Also Six hundred pound to Capt. Hammond for my Sisters Fortune which he has my Bond for, the rest are sue'd for, (to say) £550 in the hands of Joseph Biddle of Alexandria and about Three hundred pound in small debts which distresses me more than all the rest, as there will be no way of puting [sic] them off, Those are all the debts due from the Estate, except what you were so kind as to Lend me, I should not be the Least

affraid [sic] of paying all the debts and Leaving enough to support My Fathers Family and my own very well, was it not for the debts coming on me at such destressing [sic] time for money, that property that I could spare will not sell at half its Value. for double the property now will not sell for what One half will do the next year, provided we have no war with France, for People that have money will not lay it out in property at this critical time, Could forbear Selling untill [sic] next Fall, I mean then to sell off all my Land and pay every thing that I owe and purchase Land that is Rich if it is only half as much it will be better than this that is so poor.

The Latter part of your Letter has given me more pain and uneasiness than all my present difficulties , for fear you should suspect me of applying the Money you Lent me contrary to your Wish My house I paid for with Bonds I got for my Wifes [sic] Fortune, I should not have Built a house at all had I been acquainted with the incumbrance the Estate was under at that time, though I had not a House to put my head in, I am induced to trouble you with this full statement of my Affairs in Order to shew you that it will not be in my Mothers power to accept of the Thousands Dollars you ware so good as to offer her to do with it as you wish'd, and was it Practicable and a thing of that kind done it would compleatly [sic] ruin me, for it would give my creditors an Idea that I was more in debt than I was worth and they would all push me at Once and Consequently I would be Obliged to sell property for whatever it would bring, Whereas if they come on gradually I can have a better chance of Selling property. Was it not for about Three hundred pound that will come against me this winter I should do very well, for it will be some time before any more can come out against me, by which time I could be able to Sell some Lotts and Land joining Town on Credit which will Induce people to purchase, After my Makeing [sic] a Statement of my affairs to my Mother, as I have now done to you it was her request I would answer your Letter my being best-Acquainted with the Situation of the Estate, And to offer you her Most Sincere thanks for your kindness to her. I Am Dear sir your Affectionate Nephew

Saml Washington



Volume containing the original deed to Sulgrave manor in the Sulgrave Archive room.

THE SULGRAVE MANOR ARCHIVE COLLECTION

This is the third installment of the account by Board member Marjorie Gaestel of her trip to visit Sulgrave, the Washington family ancestral home, in England.

In this issue I would like to tell readers about my visit to the Sulgrave Manor Archive Room. The Archive Room was exciting to me as it will help lead Happy Retreat toward its own archive collection. It was not a big area at all but a small two room Archive storage area that was climate controlled and only open once a week in the summer. This area was part of the newly added Sulgrave Manor extension. It had a large table in the center of one room so items could be taken down from the shelves or out of drawers for historic study. Of course, our research items are not as old as theirs but still very meaningful. They had the original deed of the Sulgrave property from Henry VIII to Lawrence Washington. This deed goes back to 1539/40.

I have added a photo of the Sulgrave Archives to share with our readers. They have several shelves with research books, some items, photos and many papers. Hopefully we are on our way to something very similar. A lot of the historic items are displayed throughout the Manor. They are very proud of anything that concerns George Washington.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Charles Washington Chamber Music Society Concert May 5/6

The next performance of the Charles Washington Chamber Music Society will be on the weekend of May 5/6. The first performance will be at Charles Washington Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 5 and a second performance in the parlors at Happy Retreat on Sunday, May 6, at 2 p.m. Program information and tickets are available on our website. www.happyretreat.org.



Wine & Jazz Festival June 9

Our second annual Wine & Jazz Festival will take place on Saturday, June 9, from 11 – 6. We will offer over 50 fine wines to sample. This year's band line up will include The Jordan English Quartet, Ginada Pinada and The Max Kool Quintet. Food will be provided by The Mediterranean Café, a local favorite; Pizza Llama, wood-fired pizza; Royalicious Bakery, sandwiches and cannoli; and M Street Bakery, savory sweets and sandwiches. Please join us for a day of great wines, great music and great food!

Happy Retreat Book Series June 14

The Happy Retreat Book series (formerly known as the Happy Retreat Book Club) will feature historian Warren Hofstra who will help lead the discussion of his book *The Planting of New Virginia, Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley*. The publisher explains, “[i]n *The Planting of New Virginia* Warren Hofstra offers the first comprehensive geographical history of one of North America’s most significant frontier areas. By examining the early landscape

Continued on Page 7

UPCOMING EVENTS *(continued)*

history of the Shenandoah Valley in its regional and global context, Hofstra sheds new light on social, economic, political, and intellectual developments that affected both the region and the entire North American Atlantic world.” Thanks to Dr. Michael Spensley for arranging to have Dr. Hofstra appear.

The Four Seasons Bookstore in Shepherdstown is offering the book at a significant discount and will donate 15% of all sales to Friends of Happy Retreat. So please support Four Seasons and Happy Retreat by buying local!

Please join us at Happy Retreat on Wednesday, June 14, at 7 to meet Dr. Hofstra and join in the discussion. Admission is free.

Craft Beer & Music Festival September 9

Please mark your calendars for the third annual Happy Retreat Craft Beer & Music Festival on Saturday, September 8, from 11 am to 6 pm. Please watch our website and Facebook page for updates on the bands and the breweries.

DAR Dedication September 15

On Saturday, September 15, the Beeline Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) will dedicate a plaque to honor Charles Washington’s military service during the Revolutionary War.

New Year’s Eve

Save the date for a special New Year’s Eve gala at Charles Washington Hall!



Volunteers Needed!

As you can see, we have a lot going on at Happy Retreat. We are in constant need of volunteers both to help at our events and to serve as docents in the house. If you are interested, please return the form on the back page indicating your interest, or call us at (304) 724-7596, or contact us through our website www.happyretreat.org. Volunteers are crucial to the success of everything we do at Happy Retreat. Please consider becoming part of our volunteer team. Thank you!

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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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Wine & Jazz Festival
Saturday, June 9, from 11 am – 6 pm



Please join us for the
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