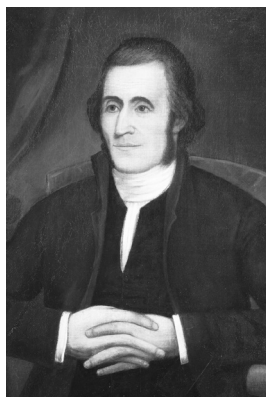




Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association



## *Honoring Charles Washington's Revolutionary War Service*

### PRESIDENT'S LETTER

**O**n Saturday, September 15, 2018, the Bee Line Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution will dedicate a plaque to honor the military service of Charles Washington (1738-1799), founder of Charles Town and builder of Happy Retreat. The plaque will be dedicated at a ceremony at Happy Retreat and then placed at Charles Washington's gravesite.

The research into the life and military career of Charles Washington undertaken in support of this dedication is described in the article written by Darla Treat Courtney for this issue. It brings to light new facts of his biography and gives us a more complete picture of his contributions to the Revolutionary cause. We are grateful to the Bee Line Chapter for this important commemoration.

We continue to peel back the history of Happy Retreat by uncovering physical evidence. Last year, the paint analysis conducted as part of the Historic Structures Report revealed the chronology of the first floor of the west wing of the house. The physical evidence provided by the 24 layers of paint found on the door and two windows of the front room established with certainty that that portion of the house dates to the time of Charles Washington.

Now, as reported in this issue, the archaeological work of Dr. Charles Hulse has helped us understand the chronology of the stone kitchen, both the era of its construction and how it was used. Further archaeology is underway, thanks to a grant from the State Office of Historic Preservation. Through this practice of patient and careful evidence-based analysis, we are gradually understanding the history of Happy Retreat.

Meanwhile, there will be lots going on at Happy Retreat this fall.

- Our Third Annual Craft Beer & Music Festival takes place on Saturday, September 8. This has become an established event for Charles Town that everyone looks forward to.
- The Eastern Panhandle Cotillion Club is hosting a benefit dance for Friends of Happy Retreat on Saturday, September 22.
- The Charles Washington Chamber Music Society will perform concerts at Happy Retreat in October and November.
- The Happy Retreat Book Series will present author William Threriault in October.

**Walter Washington** *President*

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# WINE & JAZZ FESTIVAL

Our second annual Wine & Jazz Festival was another enjoyable day of fine wine, great music and good food. Thank you to all who came out to support Happy Retreat! And a special thanks to all the volunteers who made the day possible from set up to take down. It was the smoothest running festival yet. In particular we thank the hardworking volunteers on the planning committee who worked for months to make the day a success: Fiona Harrison, Neal Nilsen, Ruth Bielobocky and Tom Cain.

*Photos: Brian Christopher*



## BOOK SERIES

On June 14, Flag Day, the Happy Retreat Book Series hosted Dr. Warren Hofstra, Professor of History at Shenandoah University, who led an engaged discussion of his book *The Planting of New Virginia*. The meticulously researched

book documents the early settlement of the lower Shenandoah Valley from the 1720s through the end of the 18th Century. We had a good turnout of history buffs and Dr. Hofstra enjoyed the evening as much as the audience did.

## PRESERVATION UPDATE

We are happy to report that we have received a \$5,000 grant from the National Trust For Historic Preservation's Johanna Favrot Fund. The grant will be put towards the restoration of the stone kitchen.

The entire front hallway of Happy Retreat, both first and second floors, has been expertly replastered and now awaits a coat of paint. The powder room off the first floor hallway has been beautifully re-done under the talented eye of board member Robin Huyett Thomas.

The final phase of roof replacement of the two wings has been completed. Our "Raise the Roof"

campaign succeeded in raising the \$50,000 needed to restore the roof on the central portion of the house, replace the roofs on both wings and replace all of the gutters and downspouts on the entire house. This work also involved rebuilding all four of the brick parapets on the two wings which had suffered severe moisture damage over the years and making other repairs to the masonry edges around the roofs. Protecting a historic building from moisture is the first and most crucial step in restoration. Completing this phase of the restoration is an important milestone in preserving Happy Retreat for the future.





Archaeologist Matt Fuka sifts dirt from a test hole dug by fellow archaeologist Mark Arnhold. Both work for Cultural Resource Analysts, Inc.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

**I**n the late spring of 2017, Shepherd University Professor Dr. Charles Hulse conducted an archaeological excavation around the smokehouse and stone kitchen. The primary purpose of the dig was to examine the foundations of those buildings as the first step in planning their restoration. It also gave us the opportunity to look for clues as to their age and use.

We now have Dr. Hulse's written report detailing the results of the excavation. The archaeological evidence indicates that the stone kitchen was built between 1835 and 1840. This puts the construction squarely during the proprietorship of Judge Isaac Douglass, who owned Happy Retreat from 1837 until his death in 1850. The archaeological remains further indicate that after 1850, its use as a kitchen declined and that by 1900, all cooking in the building ceased. Due to previous soil disturbance from gardening and landscaping, not enough artifacts were found to confirm the chronology of the brick smokehouse, which is believed to date to c. 1785 on the basis of its architecture and details of construction.



Matt Fuka (l) and Mark Arnhold study the high resolution aerial photograph of the Happy property donated by Air Photographics, Inc., of Martinsburg.

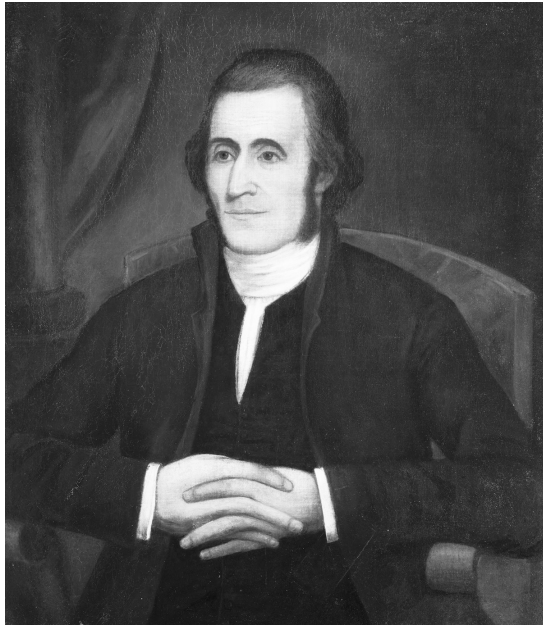
Two artifacts recovered from the stone kitchen site are possible markers of use by enslaved persons. One is a piece of broken glass stemware that shows evidence of use as a scraping utensil. The other is a black faceted glass bead. Artifacts similar to these have been identified at other sites associated with enslaved people in Jefferson County.

The archaeological survey made possible by a grant from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) got underway at the beginning of August. Under SHPO guidelines, following a bid process the work was awarded to the archaeological consulting firm of Cultural Resources Analyst, Inc. (CRA) based in Richmond, Virginia. The work completed in August included digging a series of shovel test holes over a two acre grid in the rear of the property. The soil from each hole was sifted for artifacts which were taken back to Richmond for examination and analysis. A full written report detailing the findings will be provided by CRA later this year.

# PORTRAITS OF CHARLES WASHINGTON AND FRANCES BASSETT WASHINGTON

**T**wo new portraits now grace the central parlors at Happy Retreat. Both are reproductions courtesy of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association. Over the mantle in the west parlor hangs a portrait of Charles Washington. Over the mantle in the east parlor hangs a portrait of Frances Bassett Washington, the wife of Charles's son George Augustine Washington.

The only original portraits of Charles Washington and his wife Mildred Thornton Washington were destroyed in a house fire in 1946. The likenesses of Charles that are prominent around Charles Town today are all based on a black and white photograph of that original portrait.



*Charles Washington (1738-1799)*  
*Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association*

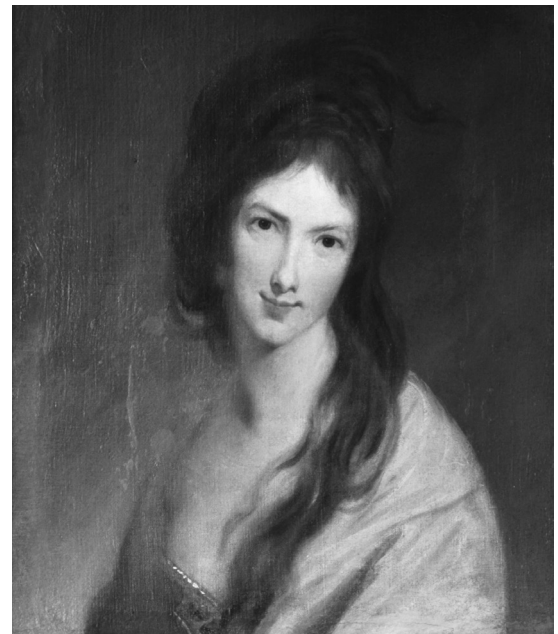
Fortunately, in 1855, artist James Alexander Simpson painted a copy of the original portrait of Charles. That copy was bequeathed to Mt. Vernon in 2016. The portrait at Happy Retreat is a digital reproduction of that painting and is the closest to an original image of Charles Washington that exists.

Frances ("Fannie") Bassett Washington was Martha Washington's niece who, in 1785, married George Augustine Washington, George Washington's favorite nephew. They were

married at Mt. Vernon, where the couple lived until George Augustine's death in 1793, helping to manage the estate and entertain the steady flow of visitors. It is said that Martha Washington thought of Fannie as a second daughter. The original portrait, painted by Robert Edge Pine, hangs in the dining room at Mt. Vernon. After the death of her husband, Fannie married Tobias Lear, George Washington's close friend and secretary. She died in 1796.

There is a second connection between the Bassett family and Happy Retreat. In 1874, Happy Retreat was bought by Charles T. Mitchel. In 1887, he deeded the property to his wife, Judith F. C. Mitchell, whose maiden name was Judith Frances Carter Bassett. She was the great niece of Frances Bassett Washington. In addition, her mother, Betty Burnet Lewis, was a descendant of Charles Washington's sister, Betty Washington Lewis. Judith F. C. Mitchell owned Happy Retreat until her death in 1907. In 1920, her heirs sold the property to C. Magnus Conklyn and J.P. Conklyn.

We are very grateful to the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association for permitting us to have reproductions of these fine paintings.



*Frances ("Fannie") Bassett Washington*  
*(1767 – 1796)*  
*Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association*



# FINDING CHARLES WASHINGTON'S REVOLUTIONARY SERVICE

*The following article was contributed by Darla Treat Courtney, who serves as historian for Bee Line Chapter DAR in Charles Town and holds degrees in history from the University of Maryland, College Park.*

It seemed a simple matter when the officers of Bee Line Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) asked me to lead an effort to erect a historical marker to honor Charles Washington's contributions to the American Revolution. After all, Charles was a local figure, founder of Charles Town, and presumably a hero of the Revolutionary cause. I would go to the library, find the details on Washington's service, and send off the application to be approved by the Historian General of DAR. Easy, right? Well, not exactly.

My first trip to the local library proved a rude awakening. I found absolutely no history on the details of Charles Washington's contributions to the Revolution. Initial Internet searches were equally unsatisfactory. Even the DAR's Genealogical Research System disappointed. It provided only a short entry from a secondary work that too often lacks clear references—a source showing that Charles served Virginia as a lieutenant colonel and colonel in the Spotsylvania County Militia and as a commissary for the Caroline County Militia. It was a starting point, but just barely.

A conversation with Jefferson County Museum's historian, P. Douglas Perks, confirmed that the historiography on Charles was slim to nonexistent. He also encouraged taking a further look into suggestions that Charles had signed a 1766 document known as the Leedstown Resolutions, a formal colonial protest lodged against the Stamp Act of 1765. Next came a conversation with the director of the Westmoreland County Museum, which had recently held a special exhibit on the Resolutions.

The Leedstown Resolutions reflected the lofty language of the Enlightenment. Written and signed by 115 leading citizens of Westmoreland County in the Royal Colony of Virginia—among them Charles Washington, his brothers Samuel and John Augustine, and their kinsman Laurence. The men who signed the Resolutions still regarded themselves as Englishmen and swore their allegiance to the British monarch. This was not a call for rebellion. Still, signing such a protest required courage, and Samuel and Charles Washington's signatures appear in the fifth and sixth places, respectively, suggesting both their rank within the community and their willingness to accept the risks associated with this action.

The Westmoreland County Museum provided a transcription of the Resolutions and shared that the original document could be found at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond. As for identifying more details about the patriotic service of Charles Washington, they suggested contacting Dalton Mallory, an amateur historian who has spent many hours reconstructing the details of Charles's life. Mallory's timeline identified key aspects of Charles's patriotic service and indirectly led to finding the necessary primary source verifications.

Subsequently, we confirmed that Charles Washington served on the Spotsylvania County Committees of Correspondence and Safety in 1774-75. These committees provided a crucial link for sharing information between colonies and helped establish the infrastructure of rebellion, as well laying the basis for new institutions of government when the colonies declared their independence. In 1775, the Virginia Convention also appointed Charles as a commissary supporting local militia units, and he served on a committee to liquidate confiscated British property. His jurisdiction as a commissary was imprecisely referenced in the Convention minutes, but the context suggests Stafford County.

All these roles can all be traced by the kind of primary sources historians love—in particular, the minutes of the Virginia Convention as found in Peter Force's American Archives, a document collection published under authority of an 1843 act of Congress, and in contemporary issues of the Virginia Gazette.

We also found that in 1780, the same year Charles and his wife Mildred moved to what would become Charles Town, he accepted a commission as lieutenant colonel in the Spotsylvania County Militia. His oath as an officer is documented in the county's published court records. We could find no evidence to confirm that he ever held the rank of full colonel.

Without question, Charles Washington actively supported the American Revolution. The evidence shows him as a person of property and social standing who took the risk to protest Parliamentary authority a full decade before the Declaration of Independence was signed. As revolution approached, he helped provide the structure and leadership Virginians would need to overthrow one system of authority and establish another. He also worked to secure and distribute the money and supplies required to support the war effort. Finally, his commission as an officer speaks to the value his contemporaries placed on those contributions.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Craft Beer & Music Festival September 9

Our third annual Craft Beer & Music Festival will be on Saturday, September 8, from 11 am until 6 pm. We have another great lineup of breweries, bands and food vendors. Some 30 breweries will offer tastes of 100+ different beers. The band lineup is Bumper Jacksons, Balkun Brothers, Billy Thompson Band and Someone to Ride the River With. Food vendors will include Ortega's Taco Shop, The Anvil, Fun Shack Hot Dogs, M Street Bakery, and Mountaineer Popcorn. Tickets are available on our website. [www.happyretreat.org](http://www.happyretreat.org).



## DAR Dedication September 15

Bee Line Chapter, National Society Daughter of the American Revolution (DAR), in coordination with the Friends of Happy Retreat, is planning to dedicate a historical marker honoring the service of Charles Washington as a patriot of the American Revolution. The dedication will take place on Saturday, 15 September 2018, starting at 1 o'clock in the afternoon on the grounds of Happy Retreat. The public is invited to attend. Activities will include remarks by public officials, a wreath laying ceremony, a proclamation by the governor, honor guards representing the Sons of the American Revolution, and other activities. An exhibit inside the mansion will reflect Washington's contributions to the Revolutionary cause. The marker itself will be placed at the gravesite of Charles and Mildred Washington along Evitts Run.

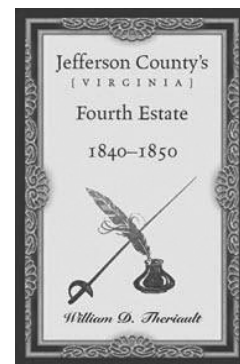


## Cotillion Benefit Dance

On Saturday, September 22, the Eastern Panhandle Cotillion Club will host a benefit dance for Friends of Happy Retreat at the Independent Fire Company Fire Hall, located at 200 W. 2nd Ave., Ranson, from 8 pm to 11 pm. There will be a live band. Last year's dance was a great success. Please come out and enjoy a fun evening and help support Friends of Happy Retreat. For ticket information please contact Linda Hart at [djhart1947@frontiernet.net](mailto:djhart1947@frontiernet.net).

## Happy Retreat Book Series October 24

The next meeting of the Happy Retreat Book Series will be on October 24, at 7 p.m. at Happy Retreat. We will feature author William Theriault who will discuss his recent book *Jefferson County's Fourth Estate, 1840-1850*, which recounts the history of Jefferson County during that decade "[t]old chiefly through the viewpoints and voices of contemporary local journalists," principally The Virginia Free Press, The Spirit of Jefferson and The Shepherdstown Register. Copies of the book will be available at the Four Seasons Bookstore in Shepherdstown. They are also available online at [heritagebooks.com](http://heritagebooks.com).



# UPCOMING EVENTS *(continued)*

## Charles Washington Chamber Music Society Concert October 7 & November 4

The Charles Washington Chamber Music Society will present concerts at Happy Retreat on Sunday, October 7, and Sunday, November 4. The October performance will feature harpsichordist Francis Xavier Yun. The November concert will feature cellist Rene Schiffer, who thrilled audiences at our concerts this past spring.



## Christmas Open House

Our Second Annual Christmas Open House will be held on Sunday, December 9, 2018, from 2 pm until 4 pm. Please join us for an afternoon of holiday cheer!

## New Year's Eve Gala

Save the date for a New Year's Eve party at Charles Washington Hall! Skip Times Square. Ring in the New Year in downtown Charles Town!



Earlier this year, **Air Photographics, Inc.**, of Martinsburg, presented us with a high definition aerial photograph of Happy Retreat showing every detail of the 12.3 acre property. An infrared image was also included. Copies of these images were provided to the archaeologists from CRA, Inc., in August to aid them in their survey. Special thanks to Diana Walch for arranging this important contribution to Happy Retreat.

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## 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 email us at [volunteer@happyretreat.org](mailto:volunteer@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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Please join us for the  
**Craft Beer & Music Festival**  
Saturday, September 8, 11 am – 6 pm

Please visit our new website  
**WWW.HAPPYRETREAT.ORG**



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