

## *Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles*

"HSCC Bus Tour to the Shenandoah Valley"

Carroll County Times article for 3 September 1995

by Jay A. Graybeal

The Historical Society will sponsor its fall bus tour to three historic homes in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley on Thursday, October 5th. The rich history of this region is linked with our own local history. During the 18th century, a number of local families moved to the Valley from this region. Many were a mix of Quaker and German Baptist Brethren from the Meadowbranch and Pipe Creek areas.

Among the early Shenandoah pioneers were Jacob Danner (a grandson of Michael Danner of the Uniontown area) William Wilson of the Keymar/Bruceville area and Jacob Crisman of the Wakefield Valley section of the county. The historical records of the Shenandoah Valley are also sprinkled with the familiar local names of Shepherd, Hedges, Farquhar, Wells, Woods, Chenowith, Hollingsworth, Stoner, Bonsack, Senseny, Bucher, Lehman and others.

The first stop on our tour will be historic Winchester to visit two properties, Abram's Delight and Stonewall Jackson's Headquarters, both operated by the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society. Abram's Delight was built of native limestone in 1754 by Isaac Hollingsworth and originally served as Winchester's first Friends (Quaker) meeting house. As the oldest home in Winchester, the house witnessed the town's settlement and survived the Civil War years. Today, the house has been restored and furnished to reflect the early settlement life of the lower Shenandoah Valley.

Civil War general Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson made his headquarters in Winchester during the Valley Campaign of 1861-1862. Jackson and his staff, including Turner Ashby and cartographer Jed Hotchkiss, made their battle plans in a home provided by Lt. Col. Lewis T. Moore. The Hudson River Gothic Revival-style home was built in 1854 and has been restored to the period when Jackson led Confederate operations in the area. Among the hundreds of Civil War objects on display are Jackson's prayer book and camp table and Ashby's revolver. The house also displays reproduction gilded wallpaper donated in 1993 by actress Mary Tyler Moore, a great, great granddaughter of Lt. Col. Moore.

Following our visit to Winchester, the group will enjoy a traditional Virginia meal at the historic Wayside Inn in nearby Middleburg. The main course will be a choice of Virginia baked ham or roasted chicken.

The final stop will be Long Branch, an elegant manor house located in Millwood. A brochure published by the museum provides an overview of this interesting property.

Located at the foot of the picturesque Blue Ridge mountains just sixty miles from Washington, D.C., Long Branch is one of the most historic and elegant manor homes in the Virginia Hunt Country. Since the early 18th century, the rolling hills of the Long Branch estate have been owned by a series of famous men - Lord Culpeper, Lord Fairfax, and Robert "King" Carter. A young George Washington helped to survey the property, and it is likely that his lifelong love of fox hunting was nurtured in the forests of Long Branch.

In 1788, Robert Carter Burwell inherited the land lying along the stream known as Long Branch. Some twenty years later, he began to construct a mansion following the classical principles suggested by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, an architect of the U.S. Capitol.

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Burwell died suddenly in 1813, and for nearly thirty years this architectural masterpiece remained unfinished. Fortunately, a Burwell descendant, Major Hugh Mortimer Nelson, purchased the Long Branch mansion in 1842 and finished the interior using elaborate woodwork based on the designs published by architect Minard Lafever. A spectacular spiral staircase, spanning all three floors, provided a sense of drama and allowed light to pour in from the belvedere which crowns the mansion.

Although the descendants of Nelson and subsequent owners, notably Abram Hewitt, made valiant efforts to maintain Long Branch, its condition had declined by the late 20th century. In 1986, Harry Z. Isaacs, a Baltimore textile executive, purchased the estate at public auction. His good taste, remarkable energy, and sizable fortune revitalized the manor house in less than three years. The original woodwork was painstakingly restored, ten of the eleven fireplaces were put in perfect working order, and a west wing was added to balance the facade.

The exquisite rooms at Long Branch boast a superb collection of 18th and 19th century furnishings. Mr. Isaacs traveled throughout Europe and the United States to find antiques of great distinction - dining room chairs identical to those at the White House, several major pieces attributed to the workshop of Duncan Phyfe, and rare decorative arts items dating to 200 B.C. Hand-painted wallpapers and elaborate fabrics adorn room after room, complemented by Mr. Isaacs' extensive collection of equestrian paintings and sculptures.

Mr. Isaacs also transformed the 400 acres surrounding the manor house into a working horse farm, complete with handsome stables and more than fourteen miles of board fencing. Today, a few of his champion racehorses still graze peacefully in retirement next to a tranquil pond.

Before he died in 1990, Mr. Isaacs established a private non-profit foundation to manage the estate for the enjoyment and education of the American people. Special guided tours are offered by members of the Long Branch Guild on weekends in the spring, summer and fall. Long Branch also serves as a site for a wide variety of seasonal events in the Clarke County community.

The Historical society tour departs from the Ascension Church parking lot at 8:30 a.m. and returns at 6:00 p.m. The tour fees are \$50 for non members and \$45 for members of the Historical Society and include all transportation, admissions, and lunch costs. Reservations are required and may be made by calling the Historical Society at (410) 848-6494 before September 25th.

Photo caption: Entrance hall of Long Branch with a spiral staircase that spans all three floors of this historic manor house in Millwood, Va. The house will be one of three historic properties on the Historical Society's upcoming bus tour to the Shenandoah Valley. Photograph by Bruce Katz, courtesy of Historic Long Branch.