

Historic Shepherdstown & Museum

Letter From the President

Dear Historic Shepherdstown Members and Supporters,

As we bring another remarkable year to a close, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your dedication, enthusiasm, and unwavering support for Historic Shepherdstown. This year has been one of celebration, reflection, and meaningful progress for our organization.

One of our proudest achievements was the success of the 250th Bee Line March Anniversary events. Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and the participation of our community, these commemorations truly honored our history and brought renewed attention to the stories that shaped our region.

Our Speaker Series also continued to flourish, culminating in a memorable final event featuring Park Ranger Robert Ambrose, who delivered a fascinating and insightful presentation about Fort Frederick during the French and Indian War. His expertise brought this important chapter of our past vividly to life, and we are grateful to all who joined us for an evening of learning.

We are also pleased to share that our new commemorative ornament, featuring the beloved Fireman's Hall, is still available for purchase. This year marks our eleventh ornament celebrating different landmarks that have served our community; the entire set is available for purchase all year long.

Behind the scenes, we have continued our important conservation work, particularly on the 35-star flag. Thanks to the generous support of the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, we have made significant progress toward its conservation and mounting. We look forward to having it on display when we reopen in the spring.

As the newly appointed President of Historic Shepherdstown, I'm excited for the projects, exhibits, and programs lined up for 2026. I am truly grateful for our community's support as we continue preserving and sharing our history.

With warm regards,
Stephanie Unger

President, Historic Shepherdstown

Celebrating 250 Years of American History



Many of Jefferson County's local historical and cultural institutions, including Historic Shepherdstown, have formed a committee to plan events for 2026, the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Events for next year will involve themes from different parts of America's past including the American Revolution, Bicentennial commemorations, and everything in between. Some of the happenings for next year will be incorporating music and art as well as history, and will be taking place throughout the county—including in Shepherdstown.

For updates on upcoming events and for more details, follow the group's Facebook page: America 250th Jefferson County, WV, and keep an eye out in the local papers.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." ~ Thomas Jefferson

Historic Shepherdstown's 2026 Membership Appeal

In late January, Historic Shepherdstown will launch its annual appeal to renew current members and attract new members. While the majority of Historic Shepherdstown's revenues come from Entler Hotel office and event rentals, most of that is directed to maintaining and operating the historic building. To operate the museum, protect and add to the collections, and provide public programming such as our Speaker Series, we count on the generosity of members to make tax deductible contributions through renewing their memberships. Historic Shepherdstown protects, communicates and celebrates the rich history and culture of our town – which we all know is among the most important and interesting historic places not only in the state but in the entire region.

Membership Renewal: We call upon current members to not only renew at their current giving levels but to consider increasing their support. When we roll out the 2026 membership appeal in late January, you will see that we have added some benefits which we hope you will find attractive and that further engage you in our mission.

Attracting New Members: We also call upon current members to help us attract new members – neighbors, friends and people you know who care about or should care about protecting and celebrating Shepherdstown's history and culture. If you provide their name and address (*send to info@historicshepherdstown.com*), we will include them in our annual appeal.



LtoR back row: Mike Nickerson, Stephanie Unger, Butch Deal, Doug Perks, Jill Craig & Patrick Fuller
Front: Greg Coble, Terry Fulton, Marellen Aherne, Donna Bertazzoni, Keith Alexander, Wendy Beckner, Jennifer Murray & Yoci Deal

*"Every morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most" –
Gautama Buddha*

2026 Speaker Series Lineup Underway

On October 15, 2025, Maryland State Park Ranger-Historian Robert Ambrose from Fort Frederick State Park wrapped up the 2025 Speaker Series with his talk "In Their Own Words: The French and Indian War at Fort Frederick." Ambrose used primary sources to bring new perspectives to the history of the fort through the centuries.

It was my privilege as the new chair of Historic Shepherdstown's Program and Awards Committee to introduce the talk, along with Stephanie Unger, the new president of HSC. My duties also involve identifying speakers and general topics for the 2026 season. Planning is well underway, with subjects under consideration such as the history of the land of the National Conservation Training Center; the "treasures in the files" of the Byrd Center relating to West Virginia and Shepherdstown history; the history and architecture of Shepherdstown's churches; Shepherdstown history in the context of the Shenandoah Valley; the history of the Shepherd Grist Mill and efforts to preserve it; and Senator Robert Byrd and his relationship to Shepherdstown. Because of the upcoming 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, we are also looking at topics relating to the Revolution, perhaps including a talk on Jefferson County's two disgraced Revolutionary War generals, Horatio Gates and Charles Lee.

If any of these particularly appeal to you, or if you have additional suggestions, please email me at kalexand@shepherd.edu. Meanwhile, please mark your calendars with the following dates for the 2026 Speaker Series:

April 15
May 20
September 2 (Annual Meeting)
October 14

All the presentations are scheduled to take place in the auditorium of the Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education.

Bee Line March Commemoration 2025



The 250th anniversary of the Bee Line March from Mecklenburg (now Shepherdstown) to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1775 was celebrated in Shepherdstown in the summer of 2025. It was organized by the Bee Line March 250th committee comprised of several local organizations, including Peter Smith from the Rotary Club, Historic Shepherdstown, the Pack Horse Ford Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, the Adam Stephen Chapter of the National Society Sons of the American Revolution, and the Jefferson County Museum. In April 2025 a display in the Historic Shepherdstown Museum opened to begin the celebration. It featured 15 rifles made between 1740 and 1840, including 10 signed Sheetz rifles. These were the kind of rifles that the marchers from Shepherdstown would have carried.

[Sheetz rifle exhibit in museum](#)

[The Bee Line Marcher at the Historic Shepherdstown Museum](#)

Also in April, a Historic Shepherdstown Speaker Series talk on the features of the rifles and how they were constructed was given by two former presidents of the Kentucky Rifle Foundation, [History of the Kentucky Rifles, April 2025 – Brian LaMaster and Tim Hodges](#)

In May, at another Speaker Series talk, Doug Perks, a Jefferson County historian, told the story of the remarkable 26-day 600-mile journey from Shepherdstown to Cambridge in the summer 1775 of 95 Virginians under the command of Captain Hugh Stephenson. The march is now known as the Bee Line March. That was followed in June 2025 by a day-long commemoration at Morgan's Grove Park involving descendants of the original marchers.

[Doug Perks – the Bee Line March](#)

[Bee Line March map – Mecklenburg to Cambridge](#)

[Bee Line Marchers and their Descendants](#)

Travis Shaw, the director of education for the Piedmont Heritage Foundation, spoke at the re-enactment of the start of the Bee Line March at Morgan's Grove Park in July 2025. This is a talk he gave at [Lovettsville Historical Society](#) in 2023 and it is used with permission. [Travis Shaw – The Maryland and Virginia Rifle Companies, 1775](#)

The events concluded in September with another presentation, [Wallace Gusler – Longrifles of Virginia and West Virginia](#). The talk was given by Wallace Gusler, former Master Gunsmith at Colonial Williamsburg. His presentation in Shepherdstown was sponsored by Historic Shepherdstown and the Kentucky Rifle Foundation.

Information about all of the Bee Line March activities can be found on our website:

<https://historicshepherdstown.com/2025/09/bee-line-march-commemoration-2025-2/>

Worth Saving: 19th Century Log Home Once Owned by Early Hollywood Character Actress Preserved

Worth Saving Monthly Column

Since May 2025, Historic Shepherdstown's *Worth Saving* column has appeared monthly in the *Shepherdstown Chronicle* to focus on the historic homes of Shepherdstown. The seven homes that have been featured in this series demonstrate the town's rich range of history, architectural styles and stories – including the people who now live in these homes who are caring for them and adding to the evolving history of the town. Board member Greg Coble has written the columns, with the research and home identification support of Board members Marellen Aherne and Terry Fulton. The November 14 *Worth Saving* column appears here. Suggestions for future columns are welcome at hsc1786@gmail.com.



Lyn Membreno and Kameron Turner stand in the front of their early 18th century log house on West German Street.

On a recent evening, Kameron Turner and Lynn Membreno sat in the cozy sitting area of their log home at 306 West German Street to watch previous owner (1923-45), Shepherdstown native and former Hollywood character actress Laura Treadwell, in the 1941 Three Stooges film, *"Time Out For Rhythm,"* on YouTube. It had to be fun to consider how Treadwell used her Shepherdstown log home while pursuing a career in Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s, which included small character parts in as many as 70 films, including *"Nobody's Baby"* (1937), *"Five Little Peppers at Home"* (1940) and *"Bringing Up Father"* (1946).

"I've been told that Mae West was a frequent visitor while Treadwell owned the home," Turner proudly reported.

It is believed that the home's iron fence, imbedded into its courtyard's stone wall, was the product of the blacksmith shop operated by Marvin Spohn in a shed located in the courtyard in the late 19th century and early 20th century – likely used to attract customers. The iron fence contains large federalist eagles, a popular architectural motif in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

It was a combination of these and other features that drew Turner to the home.

"In addition to the overall cool feel of the house, what attracted me to it were the large cooking fireplace in the main living space and the iron fence in the entrance courtyard," noted Turner.

He soon learned that the fireplace was crumbling, so it and the chimney needed to be rebuilt. The rebuilding was, thankfully, successful in preserving the historic look of the fireplace and chimney.

The front part of the 1,100 square foot log home was likely constructed before 1823. There is evidence it existed in the early 1850s and, based on Philip Shoppert's will of the property to his daughter upon his death in 1823, we believe it was to provide her a home. The rear part of the home containing the kitchen was built in the 1920s. The kitchen features an acid etching in a cabinet tin facing in the form of the log home. Adding to the log home's history, fashion designer Anne Pepper Stewart owned the property for a short time in the mid-2010s, shortly before her 2017 death; she appeared in the first season (2004-2005) of reality show *Project Runway*.

A federal contractor with the State Department, Turner moved to Shepherdstown in 2024 from Middleburg, Va. where he restored a 1920s *"hunt box"* house used traditionally for fox hunting. He grew up in Williamsburg, Va., where he participated in fife and drum corps. He moved to Shepherdstown to live in a historic small town surrounded by natural beauty. As Turner returns from Washington where he works two to three days per week, *"I breathe a sigh of relief when I hit the summit of the hill on Route 9 and see West Virginia laid out in front of me."*

He and Membreno met online and plan to be married next year. Her childhood years were spent in Latin America, until moving to the Washington, D.C. area in 1980. A nurse, she can now be found riding her motorcycle to her work assignments throughout Fairfax County.

"I love living here and discovering beautiful country roads on my cycle, and now Kameron is taking it up," shared Membreno.

Turner and Membreno embrace the authenticity of their home, including the exposed logs in the upstairs bedroom and bathroom that they enlarged to add a walk-in shower. They've restored the home's shutters, which are likely from the 1920s given the popularity of decorative crescent moon cutouts at that time. A cedar shed to the rear of the house is being restored, using repurposed materials from an unsalvageable shed on the property. They're currently addressing the badly weathered logs along the Shoe Lane side of the house.

Turner and Membreno have recognized they need more space. Each has two adult children who will visit – and they have three energetic dogs (Boone, Rosie and Weggie) to consider. Their solution is to add at the far rear of the property a small 12-feet-by-20-feet traditional post and beam kit structure being delivered from a Vermont supplier. Their plan for the structure, made with white pine and hemlock and which should be under roof before winter, is to use it for an office, storage and guests. Siting it at the far rear of the one-third acre property is important to them, as it preserves their large yard and native trees identified by an arborist. Because their property is within the Shepherdstown Historic District, they had to seek approval for the added structure from the Historic Landmarks Commission, a process described by Turner as productive and efficient.

We imagine that actress Laura Treadwell would be pleased that the historic log home she owned for 22 years has new owners who, after a little over one year of ownership, are already proving themselves to be good stewards of an important part of Shepherdstown's history.

Conservation Completed on Our 35-Star Flag



The team at *Caring for Textiles* in Washington, DC, has been working on the flag for the last two months. Here, Oliver Petersen, left, and Julia Brennan inspect the flag. Not pictured is Katherine Hill McIntyre.

The canton (the blue area with the stars) was lined with a lightweight fabric, and two damaged stars were repaired.



The top and bottom stripes were relined and the remaining stripes were patched using a specially dyed mesh fabric. We invite you to visit the museum to see the restored flag when we reopen in April.

Ghost Writer?

A recently published book devotes an entire chapter to the Entler Hotel and its most famous ghost, Peyton Bull Smith. In 1809, Smith, a young lawyer from a prominent Winchester family, got into an argument with his colleague, Joseph Holmes. Smith called Holmes a “damned fool” and Holmes challenged him to a duel. Since dueling was frowned upon in Virginia, the site selected for the duel was in Maryland, across the Potomac River from Shepherdstown. The two faced each other at daybreak on Tuesday, November 3, 1809. Witnesses stated that only one shot was fired. Smith, mortally wounded, was carried back to the Entler Hotel (the Globe Tavern at the time). He was placed in an upstairs chamber, where he died soon after. Over the years, visitors have reported hearing strange moans and groans coming from the third floor of the building and a man’s voice faintly calling for his mother. The ghost of Peyton Bull Smith is just one of the two dozen or so spirits said to inhabit the building.

Other reportedly haunted sites in Shepherdstown highlighted in the book include Stone Row, Shepherd University, the Yellow House, and Moulder Hall.

Local legends, lore and folk tales abound in Jefferson and Berkeley Counties. ***Haunted Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia*** by Justin A. Stevens tells the stories of many of our local landmarks along with their paranormal history.

