



# Word from the Junction

Newsletter of the Manassas Museum System—Volume 27, Issue 2, October 2009

**C**lover Hill, a name once synonymous with the Johnson family farm, now describes a road that bisects Manassas housing developments and leads to the County Parkway.

The transformation of this farm to suburban landscape is a focus of *From Cows to Condos*, the Museum's ambitious new eight month-long initiative, which includes an exhibit, a brochure, and interactive educational programs.

*From Cows to Condos* recently began with a lecture by the Honorable Robert S. Bloxom, Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry in the Manassas City Council Chambers. Despite the rapid disappearance of farmland in the area, Bloxom was upbeat about the present strength of farming.

"The state of agriculture is sound," Bloxom reported.

**“ It was the first industry in Jamestown and the largest industry in the Commonwealth. I feel confident that it will remain our largest. ”**

## From Cows to Condos Heritage Series Begins



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Although fewer family farms like Clover Hill, once located in the midst of what is now the Wellington housing development, still exist, surviving farms are diversifying. Bloxom cited Virginia farms that now export edible soybeans to Japan, the rapid expansion of Virginia vineyards and wineries, and the use of GPS and computer chips

to tag cows to aid modern-day farmers.

*From Cows to Condos* grew out of discussions among museum staff, board members, and volunteers who witnessed the disappearance of the area's farm land. A focus group of Lifelong Learning participants from Northern Virginia Community College met a year ago to discuss this topic with museum staff.

The group stressed that the Northern Virginia Piedmont they know today is not the same Piedmont they experienced in their youth. They remembered the freedom to wander and explore the area's farms that are now mostly gone. Of those who lived here as young children, they recalled urban families moving to

the area so they would have space to grow their own gardens, and that the region was promoted as farmland—for example, the town of Manassas Park was advertised to potential residents as "little farms." They expressed an interest in seeing programs exploring this aspect of the region's history and development. Museum staff took their request into account when developing programs and the exhibit.

John Verrill, Director of Historic Resources, conceived of the idea—and

# From Cows to Condos Launched

From Page 1

the *From Cows to Condos* program name—shortly after moving here last year.

“Many long-time residents of Manassas fondly remember the days when farm fields could be found within shouting distance of Old Town; newer residents know only the landscape of urban development,” Verrill observed. “It is important to remember and highlight this part of the city’s heritage, to give residents of the newer housing developments a sense of place. Once hay and corn and other crops were harvested and cows roamed over fields that now are covered with handsome homes and manicured lawns. Old Town businesses were dependent upon the income derived from agriculture, but when large numbers of suburban homes were built, and corporate entities located large facilities in Manassas, the death knell of farms was heard and soon followed.”

Programs for children and adults have been included in the *From Cows to Condos* initiative. Toddlers enjoyed a special Down on the Farm version of Toddler Tuesday, while third and fourth graders can explore the educational trunk available for rent. The trunk includes a number of antique farm implements and activities designed to illustrate life on a farm.

Liberia Plantation, itself the site of a prosperous dairy farm from the 1880’s through the 1940’s, hosted a first-ever Heritage Farm Day on October 24. The free event featured demonstrations on corn grinding, herb growing, and farm-related crafts for all ages.



(Above) Honorable Robert S. Bloxom, Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, spoke about the present state of agriculture during the launch of *From Cows to Condos*.

Museum staff are sharing the stories not only of the transformation of surrounding land, but during Heritage Farm Day also shared the sights, sounds, and even scents of farms that once blanketed the area but are now rare.

“More people are reaching adulthood with little to no experience with farming or even the realization of how farming remains a vital part of the American life and landscape,” Grant Writer Vina Hutchinson wrote in the program’s successful grant application. “For every child who believes that chocolate milk comes from brown cows, for every adult who remembers summer vacations spent on his or her grandparents’ farm or grew up on one of the region’s bustling dairy farms, for every immigrant for whom ‘backyard’ farming remains an active way of life, for those born and raised in larger cities who have never visited a farm, participation in *From Cows to Condos* will offer different yet enlightening education experiences.”

Funding and in-kind support for the initiative was contributed by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the Titmus Foundation, ExxonMobil Community Summer Jobs Program, and *The Washington Post* PostPoints program.

## Help Us Go Green

To save on the escalating costs of printing, we can occasionally email you notices about special events, store sales and other current Museum news. We will only use your address for Museum purposes. Please send your email address to [jriley@ci.manassas.va.us](mailto:jriley@ci.manassas.va.us). If you would like to view a full-color version of this newsletter, please visit our website at [www.manassasmuseum.org](http://www.manassasmuseum.org). We thank you for your help in making our operations more effective and cost-conscious.

### Word From the Junction is published by The Manassas Museum System, with support from The Manassas Museum Associates.

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# From Cows to Condos Exhibit Chronicles Area's Agricultural Heritage

Artifacts from many of the area's once-familiar farms bring life to the region's agricultural heritage in the *From Cows to Condos* exhibit, open through May 15, 2010.

Curator Roxana Adams says most of the items displayed in the exhibit have been generously donated to the museum through the years, including small farm implements from the Johnson's Clover Hill farm, where the Wellington subdivision now stands in Manassas, and items from the Hersch Fun Farm, a local institution visited by thousands of elementary school children.

"This exhibit surveys agricultural history from 1900 to the present," Adams explains. In addition to recalling bygone agricultural sites and events in the county, the exhibit also explores more contemporary concerns. "We look at the evolution of land use through zoning and land development in the county," Adams says. "We also examine a carbon footprint as expressed in a typical day's worth of food, and show how we can reduce that footprint in the choices we make, like using seasonal vegetables."

Younger visitors will enjoy crawling through the soil



*The exhibit includes a metal egg shipping crate for two dozen eggs manufactured by the "Metal Egg Crate Co. of Fredericksburg, Virginia" sometime between 1913 and 1950. Similar crates are in the collection of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C. According to a 1928 bulletin published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "more parcels of eggs than any other one product pass through the mails." The crate, mailed between Manassas and Alexandria many times, was donated by Betty I. Wilkinson.*

tunnel, which illustrates what lives beneath the soil, and creating their own farms in the computer game *Sim Farm*, both part of the exhibit. Longtime area residents will enjoy the remembrances of the Prince William County Fair, Future Farmers groups, and the Piedmont Dairy Festival.

Visitors who have not lived on a farm might not recognize some of the more unusual artifacts in the exhibit. The hand-forged orchard knife, grain cradle, and egg crate are among the items that Adams finds most interesting. "They show the ingenuity people show in dealing with the intense physical manual labor involved in farming."

The exhibit illustrates not just the disappearance of area farms, but the changing nature of agriculture. "When the exhibit begins in 1900, we see direct training in the form of agricultural schools, canning clubs, Future Farmers of America, and the extension service teaching people how to improve farm methods," Adams explains. "As we turn

toward the modern day, we realize there are not many farms left, but we need to educate our children about farming heritage. And now farmer's markets, niche farms, and vineyards are a vital part of our economy."

## GRANT UPDATE

### Grant Awarded, Sponsorship Opportunities Available

The Dominion Foundation has awarded the museum a \$1,000 grant to fund development of a new travelling trunk focusing on Civil Rights in Northern Virginia.

The museum's five travelling trunks are available for rent to teachers and home schoolers, and contain hands-on reproduction artifacts, teacher's guides and educational materials.

The museum has launched its Annual Sponsorship Program, aimed at area businesses and designed to support programs, exhibits and special events. Contributors to the sponsorship program will be recognized in the museum's donor wall (now in the planning stages), in the

newsletter and annual report, and in press releases and other media materials. Four sponsorship levels are available. The museum thanks the following businesses for their sponsorship gifts: Columbia Gas of Virginia, QMT Associates, and Bennett, Atkinson & Associates, Inc.

For more information, contact John Verrill, Director of Historic Resources, at 703-257-8265 (jverrill@ci.manassas.va.us) or Vina Hutchinson, Development Associate/Museum Grant Writer, at 703-257-8456 (vhutchinson@ci.manassas.va.us).

## Fall Fundraisers Underway

By Ann Harrover Thomas  
Manassas Museum Associates President



This fall the Associates are focused on two fundraising projects that are expected to generate much-needed support for museum programs and exhibits.

Each Associate member will receive five raffle tickets for the original acrylic painting by renowned artist Richard Guy entitled *Stone House in Winter*.

Tickets are \$5.00 each or five for \$20.00.

This lovely watercolor, depicting the Stone House at the Manassas National Battlefield Park in soft pastel colors, has been matted and framed and is ready to be hung. Mr. Guy is well known in Virginia, the District of Columbia and throughout the Eastern Seaboard for his Civil War paintings, landscapes, note cards, the Museum Christmas card, and an annual painting of the nation's capital.

We would appreciate it if every member either sells or purchases the tickets to ensure the success of this fundraiser.

The painting will be raffled the night of the Christmas tree lighting and museum Open House on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Help is always appreciated on that night, when hundreds of people visit the museum, munch cookies and cider, and share their wishes with Santa.

The second Manassas Museum Cookbook, *More Treasures from the Kitchen*, is now on sale at *Echoes*, the Museum Store, as well as at several locations in Manassas. The book features 300 tasty new recipes, many photographs and interesting comments from the cooks, which make the book as much fun to read as it is to use for cooking.

The cookbooks sell for \$15 and make wonderful gifts for the holiday season. Be sure to save one for yourself!

Please consider donating some of your valuable time to the Associates Board. We are recruiting new members to help support the efforts of the museum, and require a minimal time commitment.



*The Richard Guy Stone House painting will be raffled on December 4.*

## Liberia Restoration Efforts Continue

The Breeden Foundation recently awarded another \$10,000 grant for Liberia Plantation restoration, where new windows and exterior whitewash have enhanced the 1825 historic house.

Over 170 visitors attended the September Liberia Open House and witnessed the latest improvements first hand. Visitors also learned about an unexpected Civil War-era treasure uncovered there recently.

A leather women's shoe was found under the attic floor boards. Although the leather is very brittle, antique clothing and textile consultant Susy Moorstein was able to identify a few key parts of the shoe.

Estimated to be from the 1860s to 1870s, it is about a size 5 right foot shoe with a one inch heel. The wood heel

is laminated and the shoe has a leather sole fastened with tacks. It originally had pieced black leather uppers with smooth leather on the upper portion of the shoe and rough leather (possibly not black) on the lower portion of the shoe. It is lined with cotton, and has metal grommets for laces.

Through the years, the shoe had been used as a convenient nest for spiders and other insects. It was given a preliminary cleaning and is now part of the museum's collection.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

# Volunteers Help Campers Dig in the Dirt

*Each volunteer plays a vital role at the Museum. This column highlights the contributions of our volunteers. We extend a heartfelt “thank you” to all of the Museum volunteers who help make our mission possible.*

The realizations came at different times in their lives, but volunteers Andrew Christensen and Sarah Mehr both knew that someday their interests in history would lead them to dig in the dirt.

Andrew and Sarah did get their hands dirty this summer while sharing their passion for archaeology with museum campers at Liberia Plantation. Andrew, a recent graduate of the College of William and Mary, and Sarah, a recent George Mason University graduate, both majored in anthropology and history, and used their expertise to design and

conduct an archaeology camp for students in grades six through eight that garnered rave reviews from campers and their parents.

Sarah remembers her passion for ancient cultures taking shape in the sixth grade, when she couldn't get enough of her social studies classes in ancient civilizations. Soon she was reading everything she could on Alexander the Great, watching History Channel programs, and imagining that she would one day uncover the next great historical discovery.

In college, archaeological field schools at James Madison University and in Italy confirmed that she was on the right track.



*Andrew Christensen (left center) and Sarah Mehr (right center) consult a Munsell soil color chart with archaeology campers.*

## Teen Volunteer Council Formed

The Teen Council, a new museum initiative designed to encourage area teens to become more involved in museum programs and activities, has been established.

Council members, ages 14 to 17, can earn volunteer credit hours or community service hours from their schools while creating, developing and staffing teen-related programs.

The Council meets once a month on Tuesday evenings, and new members are welcome. Call Nicole Wilfong at 703-257-8264 for information.

Andrew remembers a childhood picture as a sign of his future interest, but credits the enthusiasm of an introductory anthropology professor with sparking his interest in the archaeology field. Andrew was soon digging in the dirt of Historic Williamsburg and at a field school at the George Washington House in Barbados during college. Andrew, who is now a graduate student in historical archaeology at The University of West Florida,

says he enjoyed his volunteer experience. “The camp was a great opportunity to reach the kids and tell them what archaeologists really do. The kids learned a lot and were really enthusiastic. Maybe some of them will pursue an archaeology class in college.”

Sarah, now working at a school while contemplating graduate study, also enjoyed her experiences at the camp. “It was very exciting to see the kids trying to get to the bottom of our raised beds and find the artifacts. They had such enthusiasm! It was nice getting younger kids involved and having them understand the practicalities in archaeology.”

## Publications Win Awards

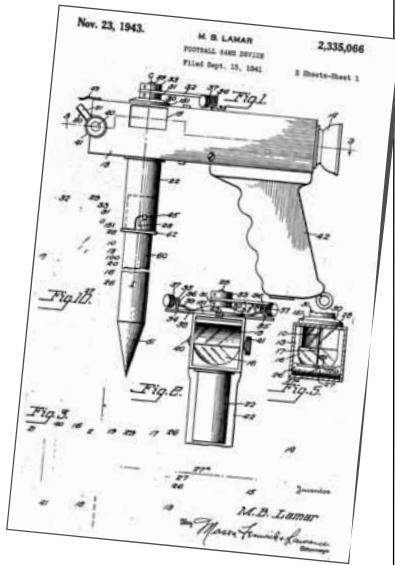
The museum's education brochure and 2008 Annual Report have won awards for graphic design from the Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC), a professional organization serving 12 states.

The education brochure won a Gold award, and the Annual Report won a Silver award in the corporate design, medium museum budget category. Both publications were designed by Luanne Stephenson of ABS Graphics in Manassas, and were displayed during the SEMC annual meeting in Charleston, SC.



## Manassas Inventor Could Have Revolutionized Football

On November 23, 1943, Mirabeau B. Lamar of Manassas had his patent registered by the U.S. Patent Office. His “Football Game Device” made it possible to decide in close cases whether or not a first down has been made without having to trot down the line and measure it so often. According to the *Science News Letter* of December 4, 1943, “The device will site very accurately the position of the football. It consists of a short telescope on a pistol grip handle with a pair of angled mirrors that show images of the line stakes as well as the football.”

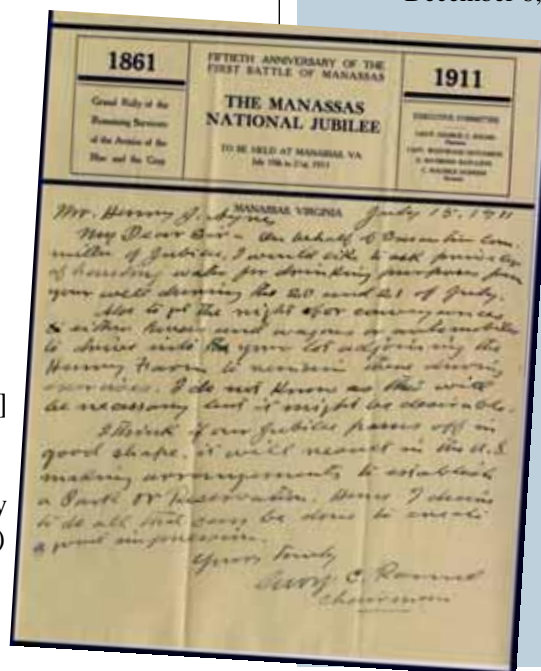


In 1943, the head referee used his best judgment and acute observational skills to determine first downs. Modern football fans have suggested that the balls be embedded with CPU or GPS chips to mark the position, that laser sighting devices be used, but the National Football League still clings to its 100-year old chain method. Lamar’s invention was never used in football.

## NEW ACQUISITION

Museum Collections Committee members Don Wilson, Chair, Ann Harrover Thomas, and Martha Hendley met recently and reviewed 41 lots containing over 400 objects and archival items for potential acquisition by the museum.

They accepted the 1911 letter and envelope (at right) hand-written to Henry J. Ayres from George C. Round on the occasion of The Manassas National Jubilee [of Peace] in 1911. Written on official Jubilee stationery, Mr. Round requests permission to use Mr. Ayres property (present location of the Stone House) for visitor parking and water for participants to drink during the Jubilee festivities on July 20 – 21, 1911.



## Coming Soon

### **Poems From the Battlefield with Katherine Gotthardt**

*Author's Presentation & Book Signing*  
November 1; 2 p.m.; included with admission

### **Home School Day at Liberia Plantation**

November 4; 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; \$6

### **On Hallowed Ground: The Story of Arlington National Cemetery with Robert Poole**

*Author's Presentation & Book Signing*  
November 8; 2 p.m.; included with admission

### **Virginia Women in History: 2009 Exhibition**

November 9-December 19; included with admission

### **A Victorian Tea at Liberia Plantation**

*Enjoy elegant tea fare and period entertainment*  
November 14; 3:30 p.m.; \$35

### **A Reading by Claudia Emerson**

*Virginia's Poet Laureate & one of the 2009 Virginia Women of History*  
November 15; 2 p.m.; free with admission

### **Toddler Tuesday: Circus Animals**

November 17; 10 a.m.; \$10

### **Museum Open House**

December 4; 5-8:30 p.m.; free  
*Join us during the tree lighting on the lawn & enjoy a 10% discount at Echoes*

### **Images of America: Clifton with Lynne Garvey-Hodge**

*Author's Presentation & Book Signing*  
December 6; 2 p.m.; included with admission

### **Christmas Through the Ages at Liberia Plantation**

*See Christmas in 1862, 1900, 1945, and 1970*  
December 11-12; 5-8:30 p.m.; \$15 advance tickets; \$20 day of event

### **A Troubled Peace with Laura Elliott**

*Author's Presentation & Book Signing*  
December 13; 2 p.m.; included with admission

### **Toddler Tuesday: Snowmen**

December 15; 10 a.m.; \$10

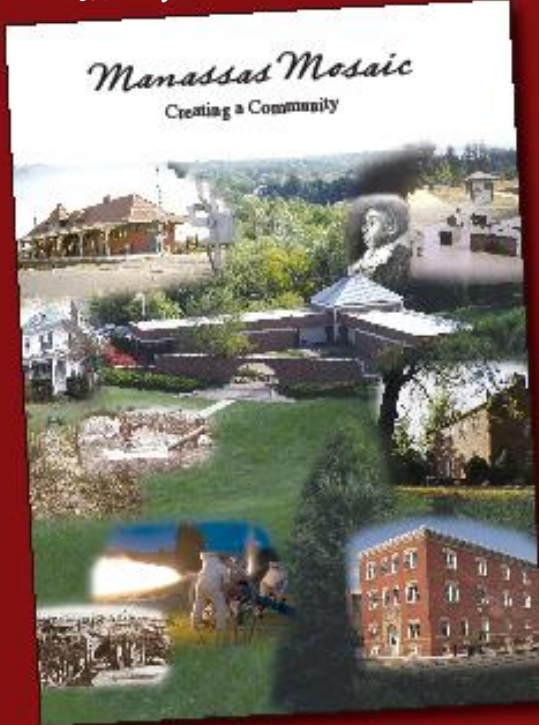
### **Customer Appreciation Days at Echoes**

*Enjoy a 10% discount on holiday gifts*  
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A new book by Rita Koman  
 edited by Roxana Adams

# Manassas Mosaic

Creating a Community



Crossroads of the Piedmont aptly describes the community that began its life with its roots deeply embedded in the rich red soil and mild climate of the region. Native Americans hunted and fished here for thousands of years before the European colonists came to clear the land for agriculture. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century and the arrival of the railroad and the American Civil War that the town of Manassas began to emerge as a community.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, large plantations and small farms populated the countryside around present-day Manassas, which began its written history as Tudor Hall, a village where two railroads joined in the 1850s. Later named Manassas Junction and then simply Manassas, the town developed shortly after the Civil War. Its railroad lines provided transportation for goods and people to Alexandria and Washington, D.C.

Today, the city of Manassas occupies ten square miles of Prince William County and has about thirty-five thousand residents. Although the surrounding community is often included when describing Manassas, we cannot recount the history of Manassas without recognizing that historical events often ignore such boundaries.

The City of Manassas theme is "Rich in Historical Interest." Turn-of-the-century buildings still grace the narrow main streets of Old Town. Frequent festivals enliven the community, while an old-fashioned Christmas parade each December and a spectacular and patriotic fireworks display on July Fourth brings crowds from throughout Northern Virginia and the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

This book will give the reader an opportunity to learn about the rich and fascinating history of Manassas gleaned from the resources of the Manassas Museum System archives, the Library of Virginia, and many other community resources.

John H. Verrill, Director of Historic Resources  
 Manassas Museum System

This volume will be available November 2009. Hurry to pre-order your volume today to take advantage of a \$5 discount making the book \$34.95. After November 1 the price will be \$39.95. Purchases of 10-19 books receive a 15% discount. 20 or more books receive a 25% discount. No other discounts apply toward the presale price of \$34.95.

Complete the order form on the back of this card, or go to: [www.manassasmuseum.org](http://www.manassasmuseum.org) to purchase online, or save shipping and handling charges and purchase your volume at the Museum Store.

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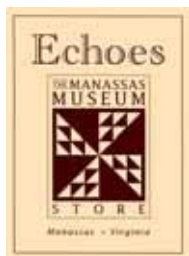
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**NEW!** This year's exclusive Holiday ornament features the historic County Courthouse (right) \$19.

**NEW!** Sudley Church (right), Stonewall Jackson High School, Manassas Water Tower, Chapman's Mill, Carnegie Building at Manassas Industrial School, and the Battles of Manassas Cat's Meow Collectibles



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