

## The Bulletin of Loudoun County History

### 2022 – 2023 Edition

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*From files held by the Edwin Washington Society. 1908. The Ryan Baseball Team defeated the Capital Traction Railroad Team at Great Falls. Back row, left to right are David McDonald, Floyd Darnes, John Lowe. Second row are Earl McNealy, J. Lambert, Osborn Leith, Pierce Rose. First row are John Milstead, Alec Page and Ray Lambert.*

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*Possible School Bus, Found at White Stone Farm.*

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**Front Cover Photo Discussion:**



The cover photo is from a special ceremony in Aldie by chapters of the NSDAR (National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution), SAR (Sons of the American Revolution) and CAR (Children of the American Revolution) held in April 2022 to honor Revolutionary War Hero John Champe (1757-1798). Champe risked his life to spy on the British and try to capture the traitor, Benedict Arnold, which was his main task.

These acts of bravery were extraordinary. Champe was a well-known Sergeant Major by 1780 when assigned to the Light (Loudoun) Dragoons, commanded by Major Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee. To his surprise, General Washington asked him to pretend to defect. To do this, despite being taller than average, making a good target, he also had to pass through American lines, full of men who considered Champe a traitor. He then convinced the British of his

fidelity to their cause, no small job, and secretly tracked General Arnold, coming within hours of capturing him. His failure only came because of a last-minute change of venue by Arnold.

Champe then worked his way back to Washington by passing back through British and American lines. This time, soldiers on both sides wanted to shoot the hero. In essence, he was a double agent. After the war, on the recommendation of General Washington, Sergeant Champe was appointed to the position of doorkeeper or sergeant-of-arms of the Continental Congress. He later returned to Loudoun County, married and acquired a small farm where the SAR/DAR ceremony was held.

Champe is buried in Prickett Cemetery, Marion County, West Virginia. His wife was Phebe Susan Barnard (1758-1841).

In honor of one of Loudoun's greatest heroes, John Champe High School was established in 2012 at 41535 Sacred Mountain St, Aldie, VA.

Some sources of information to consider are:

- Stories about Arnold, the traitor, Andre, the spy, and Champe, the patriot : for the children of the United States: with engravings. New Haven : A.H. Maltby, 1831.
- Champe's adventure. By General Henry Lee. New York : Office of the Rebellion Record, 1864.
- John Champe, the soldier and the man, by Ida Mabelle Judy. Strasburg, Va., Printed by Shenandoah publishing house, inc. 1940.

### Back Cover Photo Discussion:

Despite being close to Washington, DC, Loudoun County is famous for its beauty and quiet areas, perfect for research or reading the Bulletin.



*Quiet pond in the Dulles District in Loudoun, just below the Gum Spring Library*



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF

December 1, 2022  
South Riding, Loudoun County, Virginia

Dear Readers:

We are pleased to present the fourth issue of the revised Bulletin of Loudoun County History. Our goal is to tell the stories of Loudoun County's past, as well as of its neighbors, when of special interest to our residents.

The Bulletin was originally owned by the Historical Society of Loudoun County, formed in 1957, which ran the Bulletin until 1976. It was revitalized in 1997 and then in 2018 that society turned over ownership to Diversity Fairs of Virginia (DFV), (now known as the Edwin Washington Society), with its own heritage going back to 2014. We are non-partisan and dedicated to broadening our readership.



*Charcoal Rendering of Edwin Washington*

Therefore, although we are not a membership society like the prior owners, we invite anyone to collaborate by submitting articles and

photographs for consideration, attending discussion groups, or joining us on Facebook. Details on how to make submissions are on our website. Also on our website is information on past issues.

The society has a number of projects, one of which is the Edwin Washington Project, an exploration into the history of segregated education in Loudoun. Another explores the history of John Rust, a 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century politician. We are also developing a special set of topical Bulletins that contains reprints of much older issues.

We invite readers to explore all our activities by going to our website ([edwinwashingtonsociety.org](http://edwinwashingtonsociety.org)).

Larry Roeder, MS  
Editor in Chief

## **DEDICATION**

Once again, we want to remember the hardships from COVID-19 and its variants. The disease has been very hard on medical workers who treated county residents and provided vaccines. Working residents were also at risk, e.g. grocery store clerks, teachers, bus drivers and so many others that risked their lives, due to daily contact. The COVID-19 epidemic has been one of the worst disasters to ever hit Loudoun, so readers are encouraged to share their first-line worker stories with us for a future issue. We also urge all residents to fully vaccinate. Vaccinations save lives and the economy.



We also want to recognize that several members of the Edwin Washington Society either suffered severe illnesses this year or had to treat their families. This delayed progress producing the Bulletin. In the interest of privacy, names are withheld, but the management of the society wants them to know that their sacrifices for our non-profit have not gone unnoticed.



*Students and teachers in an undated photo from a White schoolhouse on Paxson Road (off of Silcott Road). The same schoolhouse was photographed for Loudoun County Public Schools in the 1930's. However, this could not be definitively verified until stones in the exterior walls were compared to old photos.*

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Authors (including university students and high school seniors) are encouraged to submit unpublished manuscripts<sup>1</sup> on a Loudoun County person, place, organization, or historical event. Portions of early diaries and letters are encouraged, also articles which advocate for the preservation of historical artifacts. The article must be submitted by email and needs to be in Word for Windows format. Further details on how to submit an inquiry are on our website.

The Bulletin has a special interest in documenting lost letters and other material that can fill in historical gaps. As an example, between 1910 and 1926 events were held in Loudoun called County School Fairs, which were different from county fairs or ordinary schools fairs as we know them today. Managed by the School Superintendent, they were also sometimes the largest social event of the year. Prizes were given out for everything from animal husbandry to spelling. Athletic competitions and contests over growing tomatoes were held. Some students drew maps of Loudoun as it existed then, and drawings of old schoolhouses. Perhaps these artifacts are in your attic or a trunk, long forgotten as unimportant. They are not unimportant to us. Share your history.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes articles previously published on blogs.

## EARLY SUBMISSIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

We anticipate in the next issue having articles on following topics, but we encourage more submissions:

1. **The Digges' Valley Farm Ruins.** This is a collection of stone ruins outside the small town of Hamilton, dating back to the eighteenth century. The research article will derive from a project for the Historical Archaeology and Digital History courses at Northern Virginia Community College's (NVCC) Historic Preservation and Public History Certificate Program.
2. **The story of Isaiah Allen,** who escaped from slavery in the Leesburg area on December 24, 1861 by swimming across the Potomac River along with another enslaved man. He then joined the 15 Massachusetts Infantry Regiment in Poolesville, Maryland as a blacksmith. He might also have been a delegate from the Colored Republicans of the Eighth Congressional District to the National Colored Convention in Washington, D.C. in 1889.
3. **Understanding Historic Houses.** This article will focus on house styles and construction materials commonly found in Loudoun's 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century domestic architecture.

## BUYING THE BULLETIN

Copies can be ordered from Amazon, or at Morven Park in Leesburg, the Prosperity Baptist Church in Conklin (by South Riding), the Lovettsville Historical Society and Museum in Lovettsville, Journeymen Saddlers in Middleburg, Photoworks in Leesburg, and the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association (on-line).

Free copies for loan can be found at the Balch Library, the county public libraries and the public high schools in Loudoun.

## ABOUT THE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE

**Christopher Perfect: From British Convict to American Patriot**, *by Angelica M. Stephens.*

The abridged narrative of Christopher Perfect's life can be summarized with the words "convict" and "lawman." Between these contrasting images is indentured servant, husband and father, landowner, and colonial patriot of the Revolutionary War. A unique story for certain, Christopher Perfect's life is one of many rooted in colonial Virginia's early population of transported British convicts and indentured servants that have largely been lost or forgotten. The details of Christopher's life have fortunately been preserved because of what he chose to do after his period of indenture – he embraced opportunity and refused to be defined or held back by the circumstances that brought him to Virginia. This is his story.

**The Role of School Petitions During Segregation,**  
*by Dave Prebich and Larry Roeder.*

One of the most important lessons learned by both Black and White students in Loudoun County during segregation was the right to petition. This is expressly set out in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution: "Congress shall make no law...abridging...the right of the people...to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Loudoun's communities used petitions extensively, e.g., to keep a local school open, ask for repairs or to request transportation. These were critical matters for Blacks because the small schools were community focal points and Black students didn't acquire school transportation until 1937. Closing a school often meant requiring children to walk great distances on sometimes rough terrain, including during inclement weather. A lack of transportation also inhibited Blacks from attending high school, thus preventing entry into college and affluent jobs

**Patrick Cavan: "Missing Trustee of the Town of Leesburg,"** *by Stanley K. Contrades.*

It takes involved citizens to build a new country. The same goes for the towns and counties. Leesburg and Loudoun County were no different in the 1700s, a very formative period for our new country.

Patrick Cavan, who lived in Leesburg, Virginia, in the latter half of the 1700s, was a businessman and public figure of import and helped build both Leesburg

and Loudoun County into what it is today. Yet for someone who helped shape a new county for the better part of three decades, little of him is widely known. So little, as a matter of fact, that it is unknown where he is buried.

While many gaps in his life story exist, a wide variety of information is available to piece together a colorful portrait of this important local businessman and community leader. The volume and diverse nature of the information, however, is akin to being “a mile wide, but only an inch deep.”