



The Guardian

Newsletter of the Burkittsville Preservation Association

Preserving the Shafer Farm

Inaugural Issue § Summer 2022



The Shafer house by Doris Keil-Shamieh

What is today known as the Shafer Farm was part of a 298-acre parcel of land known as “The Forest of Needwood” in the late 18th century. The farmhouse was built by John Garrott III between 1820 and 1830. In addition to several generations of the Garrott family, the property was occupied by over a dozen enslaved African Americans who worked in the home and fields. By the 1850s, the Garrotts rented the property to Martin Shafer who lived in the house and ran the farmstead.

During the Civil War the Shafer Farm served as Union General William B. Franklin's headquarters for the battle that took place on September 14, 1862 (three days before the Battle of Antietam), just outside Burkittsville.

After the Civil War, the Shafers continued to live on the property, where they operated a wagon shop and blacksmith shop along Gapland Road leading into Burkittsville. They finally purchased the parcel in 1889, four decades after moving onto the land. The Shafer family owned the property until 2016, when the remaining parcel was donated to the Burkittsville Preservation Association, Inc. Today the Shafer Farm includes the original home, a detached kitchen/workshop, meat house, well, shed, barn, and five acres of land.

Rural Historic Preservation Grant

Thank you, Frederick County! In June, County Executive Jan Gardner announced that seven projects would be awarded competitive grants, including the Hamilton Willard Shafer Farm.

We are to receive a \$49,975 grant to refurbish windows, exterior doors, and shutters.

Previous Grants

State of Maryland Capital Bond Grant (\$100,000), Delaplaine Foundation (\$10,000), Preservation Maryland (\$10,000), Save Historic Antietam Foundation (\$5,000 pledged), American Corner Foundation (\$4,000)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES

The \$100,000 grant from the State of Maryland allowed us to pay for the house masonry repair and a new roof with gutters and downspouts. However, it paid for almost none of the removal and replacement of the cornice, soffit, rotted rafters, and sheathing. We were able to accomplish these through donations and a loan of \$3,000, which has since been paid back.



West wall of the Shafer house in June 2021 and after repairs in June 2022.

When a storm in August 2021 put half the rear wall of the barn on the ground and left two other sections hanging by a thread, the Board of Directors borrowed \$52,000 and hired Mike Meyers Construction out of Waynesboro, PA, to save the barn. Meyers handled this job as an emergency and promptly started work on the project. They did a fantastic job. They not only replaced the fallen areas but installed all new standing seam roofing, gutters, and downspouts.



After the storm.



*Volunteer Charlie Shuman working on the barn, July 2022
Photo credit: Katina Zentz/Frederick News-Post*

After the barn was saved, Preservation Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust provided funding in part by awarding BPA a \$10,000 grant to correct some interior structural issues and make interior improvements. Contributions from the Burkittsville Ruritan Club, GoFundMe, and other donors have helped a lot. The last major step will be painting the barn. The donations are going to pay for the paint and Donald Young has volunteered to provide the labor.

WHAT NEXT?

We hope to complete most of the exterior work on the house by the end of the year: to restore all the windows, shutters, and exterior doors; to paint the exterior; and to begin restoration of the front porch. The cost of materials for the porch has been donated, but we **need volunteer carpenters!**

In addition, we plan to work on the two-story summer kitchen building, replacing the rotted wood sills that are the structural support of the building and rotted portions of the walls; fix portions of the masonry foundation; repair the chimney; and install windows. We will make the building watertight and secure. In the little meat house, we plan to complete the temporary steel support of the failing stone walls, repair an area of the roof, and paint the roofs of all three outbuildings.

We are proud of our progress to date – and SO grateful for the community support that has allowed us to be at this stage of renovation. THANK YOU!

SPECIAL THANKS

We are especially grateful to our **original donors, Shannon and Sarah Shafer**, who donated the Shafer Farm to the BPA. The paperwork transferring the buildings and five acres of land, was finalized in 2016. It is Shannon and Sarah's wish that the property always maintain the name of Shannon's great-aunt's father, Hamilton Willard Shafer, and that it be used for the benefit of the whole community.

We've held ten workdays in the past year, and many people showed up to help. These individuals came to workdays four or more times: Allison Abdias, Ron Dustin, Russell Headley, Charlotte Hebrand, Steve Henderson, Alan McGregor, Mick Mizell, Todd Remaley, Jon Thames, and Yulissa Velenuela. We are grateful beyond words to them and to everyone who has helped!

Our thanks also to these companies that have supplied labor and/or material, or given donations:

J.C. Andres Concrete
Construction
Distillery Lane Ciderworks
Dustin Construction
EAI Dumpsters
Ercole Electric, Inc.

SA Halac Iron
Hardy Builders, Inc.
Home Depot of Frederick
Insul-Tech, Inc.
Mid Maryland Excavating, Inc.
Nichols Financial, Inc.

Rockville F&F, Inc. – Concrete
H.C. Summers Feed & Supply
Tri-County Pumps
Weis Market of Brunswick
David Wilt's Custom Ironwork
Coblentz Electric

JOIN US

We are now extending to the public the opportunity to become part of the group that is bringing the Shafer Farm back to life, providing a facility where education, events, tours, and seeing into the past can take place. We are offering two types of non-voting membership:

\$35 – Annual individual/family membership
\$100 – Annual business membership

Your membership will come with the following benefits:

- **Knowing that you are helping to support a really worthwhile project!**
- Receipt of BPA newsletters like this one.
- **Special consideration for BPA events held at the site.**
- A guided tour of the house, barn, and 5-acre property.
- **\$35 members will receive an unframed 8"x10" reproduction of the Shafer house watercolor at the head of this newsletter. \$100 members will receive a framed copy.**

You can become a member by filling out the form in this newsletter and sending it to us with your check, or by visiting our website and making your membership payment by credit card or through PayPal: BurkittsvillePreservation.org/membership.

Needed Volunteers! Mowing & Stump Grinding

- We need three or four volunteers to take turns mowing the grass once a month each and a couple of volunteers to do weed eating. Can you help? Phone Paul Gilligan at (301) 693-8373.
- We also need to have four or five stumps ground. If you have access to a grinder and can help with this, please phone Ron Dustin at (301) 401-5502.

Here's a list of our **initial non-voting members**. Please join them!

Ralph and Fae Brown
Allison Abdias and
Charlotte Hebrand
Catherine Cox and
Charles Murray
John Delauder
Sam Zigler and
Sharon Kalbarczyk
Lee and Judith Houck

Bob and Tess Blumenthal
Randy Huffer
Gloria Green
Sally and Richard Arnold
Warren and Debra Huffer
Ron and Pat Dustin
Griff and Mary Garwood
Chip and Peggy Bowen

Jay Ferris
Linda DeLauder and
William Steigelmann
Helen Coutant Vo-Dinh
Jim and Lana Rand
Jon Thames
Shannon and Sarah Shafer
Tommy and Sandy Skaggs

Our first **business members**:

Burkittsville Ruritan Club

Shafdon Farms

PJ's Roofing

DONATIONS

Need we say that we are welcoming donations? We've accomplished a lot, but there's plenty more work to be done. If you'd like to help further, you can always



send us a donation at the address on the membership form in this newsletter, or go to our website: BurkittsvillePreservation.org

ANOTHER WAY TO HELP: AMAZON SMILE

Sign up for Amazon's Smile program! When you enroll in Smile and designate Burkittsville Preservation Association as your charity, 0.05% of the price of your Amazon purchases will be donated to BPA. That might not sound like much, but it definitely adds up! Look for instructions on AmazonSmile.com.

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

Paul Gilligan - President
Karen Koch - Treasurer
Kevin Cromer - Secretary
Ron Dustin – Chair of Fundraising
Harry Lashley
Todd Remaley (On leave of absence)

VOLUNTEERS

Bob Blumenthal – Fundraising/promotion, Secretary of BPA fundraising
Jody Brumage – Historian
Catherine Cox – Editor of The Guardian
Tommy Scaggs – Grant writing



GREAT NEWS!!!



During the week of August 8th BPA received an **anonymous donation more than ample to entirely pay off our remaining loan balance** on the barn. This is fantastic because it allows future donations to go towards funding the completion of the house interior. Our proposed concept is to set up a separate account to receive donations and funds to be used only for renovation of the house interior at this time. Our goal is to raise a minimum of \$100,000 for this fund which will be kept separate in an income producing account. Many grants require some matching funds which would come out of this account. Should we be fortunate enough to receive grants sufficient enough that all the money in this account is not needed for renovation of the house, the money would remain in this account for future maintenance of the buildings, equipment and/or appliances. We should get guidance from our CPA when we meet with him later this month on how best to set up this account.

Tentatively, we feel we now have enough funds to have the exteriors of all the buildings - house, barn and 3 outbuildings - in good condition including painting. This leaves the house interior to fund. We have tentative pricing of \$450,00 to totally renovate the interior including a caretaker's suit on the second floor. We are beginning to see light at the end of the construction tunnel.

We have recently added one more goal for the Shafer Farm - that being to raise approximately \$12,000 to fund bringing electricity to the Barn. When successful, this will allow events and programs to take place in the barn. All the bays in the barn now have 2 x 8 T&G kiln-dried yellow pine flooring.

HOUSE TOUR

On June 4, 2022, six of the older homes/buildings in Burkittsville opened their doors to ticket purchasers. At 4pm, BPA offered a first floor-only tour of the Shafer house, followed by a picnic, great food and drink, live music, and fellowship. The weather was perfect! Everyone who came told us that they'd really enjoyed themselves. The tour went so well that we plan to do it again in the future.



Volunteer Freddy Andres & Family with Ron Dustin at house tour picnic.



Planting for the future.



Bob Blumenthal cooks BPA special sauce at the picnic.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mail with your check to P.O. Box 243, Burkittsville, MD 21718

_____ Individual/family \$35 membership
 _____ Business \$100 membership
 _____ Donation

Name _____ Email _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____

Membership fees are not tax deductible. Donations are tax deductible; BPA will send a donation receipt.



The Hamilton Willard Shafer Farm: A historic home, farm, and Civil War headquarters with almost two centuries of rich history – preserved from destruction but still a work in progress.

Burkittsville Preservation Association

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