**Our Shenandoah**

Bob Webb, Reston Philosophers, June 8, 2012

***Shenandoah Carl Sandburg***

*. . . .The blue nobody remembers, the gray nobody remembers, its all old and old nowadays in the Shenandoah . . . .*

*And all Is young, a butter of dandelions slung on the turf, climbing blue flowers of the wishing woodlands wondering: a midnight purple violet claims the sun among old heads, among old dreams of repeating heads of a rider blue and a rider gray in the Shenandoah.*

**Master sites**

T**he Valley Pike:** That was the traditional name given to the original Indian trail and roadway, later called the Great Wagon Road and now designated as US-11, paralleling I-81. Beginning in the 1730s, Scots Irish and German immigrants began to establish settlements along the Pike, and quaint villages still dot the rolling road every five or six miles – some with surprises. At Lacey Spring, a road runs west over a covered bridge and to a cemetery with dozens of Abraham Lincoln’s ancestors and their slaves. During the Civil War, the macadamized Pike enabled fast movement of heavy wagon trains and gun carriages even during rainy weather, when dirt roads turned into mud. In 1918, the Valley Turnpike Company’s president (and future senator), Harry Flood Byrd, allowed the Pike to be one of the first roads taken over by the state. A section of the original Valley Pike runs parallel to US-11 in Rockbridge County, one mile north of Lexington.

“Touring the Shenandoah Valley Backroads” by Andrea Sutcliffe. Here are 13 tours of every part of the Valley with maps, directions, beautiful country roads, places to visit and history beyond the Civil War.

Civil War Traveler: Valleys and Mountains: <http://www.civilwar-va.com/EAST/VA/va-valley/index.html>

A Relaxing Meander Along US-11: Winchester to Port Republic [http://www.civilwartraveler.com/EAST/VA/va-valley/pike1.html](Our%20Shen%20handout.docx)

“Winchester in the American Civil War”:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winchester,_Virginia_in_the_American_Civil_War>

Shenandoah at War -- <http://www.shenandoahatwar.org/>

Driving the Valley Pike – a great website: <http://shenandoahvalley.com/> and click on desired number.

Early Virginia and West Virginia turnpikes at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_turnpikes_in_Virginia_and_West_Virginia>

**Favorite Places (north to south)**

**Harpers Ferry:** In 1761 Robert Harper established a ferry across the Potomac, making the town a starting point for settlers moving into the Valley. In 1799, George Washington established a federal armory for mass production of weapons. Abolitionist John Brown staged his raid here on October 16, 1859, alarming the Valley and making Civil War inevitable. Harpers Ferry changed hands eight times between 1861 and 1865. Stonewall Jackson’s capture of the Federal garrison (12,419 troops) in 1862 was the largest American surrender until Corregidor in World War II. In 1906, the Niagara Movement led by W. E. B. Du Bois met at Storer College (now part of the NPS site) for three days for what DuBois called "one of the greatest meetings that American Negroes ever held" for securing civil rights. An elongated island in the Potomac was an early industrial site (map of ruins available) and at the beginning of the 20th century became a resort and entertainment site like Coney Island. The B&O ran as many as 28 excursion trains a day from Washington and Baltimore.

Fine walking tours, exhibits and talks by National Park Service rangers abound at Harpers Ferry. See:

History: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harpers\_Ferry,\_West\_Virginia#History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harpers_Ferry,_West_Virginia%23History)

Home page[: http://www.nps.gov/hafe/index.htm](:%20http:/www.nps.gov/hafe/index.htm)

Schedule of events: <http://www.nps.gov/hafe/planyourvisit/events.htm>

**Charles Town:** The city was founded by George Washington’s youngest brother Charles in 1786. In a county courthouse and courtroom (restored) that still has trials, John Brown was convicted in a half hour on Nov. 2. He was hanged on December 2 (six others followed by March 1860) next to where a Victorian house now stands at South Samuel Street and East Hunter Street. See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\_Town,\_West\_Virginia#History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Town,_West_Virginia%23History)

**Martinsburg:** The B&O Railroad reached Martinsburg in 1842 and the roundhouse and station complex were constructed in 1849. On May 22, 1861, Stonewall Jackson’s troops stopped all trains going east at Martinsburg, blew up bridges to the west and blew down rocks on the tracks to the east, captured or destroyed 42 locomotives and 386 cars, 36 miles of track, 17 bridges, 102 miles of telegraph wire and the B&O roundhouse and machine shops. On Oct. 19, 1862, the roundhouse complex was burned by Confederate Troops under Jackson.

The buildings were rebuilt by 1872. The designs were simple, precise, elegant and typical of the great structures of the Industrial Revolution. In 1990, young vandals set fire to wooden pallets in East Roundhouse and destroyed the building. In 2000, Berkeley County bought the complex and began restoration. The Martinsburg Roundhouse Center now includes13 acres with three B&O Railroad shop buildings. The 1866 cast-iron framed roundhouse is the only one standing in the world today. It is presently closed. (Call 304-260-4141 for update.) See: <http://www.martinsburgroundhouse.com/>

In 1863, Isabelle “Belle” Boyd of Martinsburg was imprisoned as a Confederate spy. She eavesdropped on Union officers, crossed enemy lines and delivered messages to Jackson and others. Her home at 126 E Race St. (open M-F, 10-4) contains museum artifacts as well as genealogical and historical records.

See <http://www.civilwarhome.com/boydbio.htm>

In 1877, the first nationwide rail strike began at Martinsburg to protest pay cuts. The strike and traffic stoppage soon spread across the country. When outnumbered federal troops fired on an attacking crowd, they killed 11 and wounded 40. See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Railroad_Strike_of_1877>

**Winchester**

\* Museum of the Shenandoah Valley (2005) beautiful Michael Graves building interprets Valley history, art and culture. <http://www.shenandoahmuseum.org/index.php.> Tu-S, 10-4. Fee.

\* Winchester Battlefields with addresses and websites for many sites listed below.

[http://www.shenandoahatwar.org/cluster\_winchester.html](%20http:/www.shenandoahatwar.org/cluster_winchester.html)

\* Stonewall Jackson's Headquarters Museum (1861) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stonewall_Jackson%27s_Headquarters_Museum>

\* Stonewall Cemetery for Confederate soldiers (1866) <http://www.mthebroncemetery.org/stonewall.html>

\* Winchester National Cemetery for Union soldiers (1866) [http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/winchester.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/winchester.asp%20)

\* Winchester Visitor Center, 1360 S Pleasant Valley Road

\* Old Courthouse Civil War Museum, on the Loudoun Street walking mall downtown. Emphasis is on the common soldier. Excellent collection of artifacts. Wed–Sat, 10-5; Sun 1–5. \* Fortifications in Winchester: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winchester,\_Virginia\_in\_the\_American\_Civil\_War#Fortifications\_and\_ posts%20in%20Winchester](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winchester,_Virginia_in_the_American_Civil_War%23Fortifications_and_%09%09posts%20in%20Winchester%09%09%09%09%09)

\* Cedar Creek battlefield and Belle Grove National Historical Park (1797)

<http://www.nps.gov/cebe/index.htm>

\* Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation visitor center and book shop (across US-11 from Belle Grove) – information about the battle and self-guided tours.

\* Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival, usually first weekend in May.

**Massanutten Mountain** looms over the Valley from Strasburg to Harrisonburg and is cut through at only New Market Gap. There are roads and communities atop it as well as ridges, valleys, precipitous gorges, hiking trails and a ski resort. Signal Knob, a former Civil War signal station on the northern peak of the mountain, is a popular destination.

**Rapidan Camp,** Herbert Hoover’s summer retreatalong the Skyline Drive, is now a National Park Service site open to the public. The secluded 164 acres of Rapidan Camp included two small streams that form the Rapidan River, 13 rustic cabins, waterfalls and other stone structures.  The Hoovers were very social and rarely came to Rapidan Camp alone.  Guests included the Lindberghs, the Edsel Fords, Henry Luce, and Will Rogers as well as family members, friends, Cabinet officers, politicians and foreign officials. Every day an airplane dropped mail and the daily newspapers at the site’s Marine compound; Hoover got his papers while he was still in bed.  Hoover bought it in 1929 and donated it to the Commonwealth of Virginia in1932 for use as a summer retreat for subsequent presidents. FDR visited the camp, found its rugged terrain too difficult to navigate and eventually established his own retreat at what is now Camp David in Maryland.  The National Park Service acquired Rapidan Camp in1959. During the summer months, ranger-led tours of the camp are available. Call 540-999-3283 or see: <http://www.nps.gov/shen/historyculture/rapidancamp.htm>

**Strasburg:**  Museum at 440 East King Street, (540/465-3175). Strasburg produced earthen and stoneware pottery commercially from 1761 until just after 1900 when the glass jar made pottery obsolete. The building was a railroad depot from 1913 until the early 1960s.  It opened in 1970 as a museum and National Historic Landmark. Townsfolk apparently emptied their attics, because it has the damnedest collection of authentic stuff from the Colonial era through the mid-20th century that you can imagine, including a genuine red caboose and a perpetual motion machine broken down into its parts.

See <http://www.csonner.net/museum.htm> and ignore the horrible music or mute it at the bottom.

**Front Royal**: Modern US-340 between US-50 and I-64 encompasses beautiful landscapes at every turn. Stonewall Jackson used this “Luray Valley” and its lesser roads to screen his movements during the Valley campaign. On May 23, 1862, his victory at Front Royal (aided by Belle Boyd) saw the 1st Maryland CSA battle the 1st Maryland USA, with one brother capturing the other (both captains), the only time two American regiments of the same numerical designation and from the same state have fought.

Front Royal was also the site of a public execution of six of John Mosby’s uniformed rangers by Union forces under Brig. Gen. George A. Custer. They are buried at the Mosby Monument in Front Royal’s Prospect Hill Cemetery. In retaliation, Mosby ordered seven Union prisoners, chosen by lot, to be executed at Rectortown near Middleburg; in the end just three were executed.

See: <http://www.shenandoah.stonesentinels.com/Front_Royal/Execution_of_Rangers.php>

And <http://www.pbase.com/mosbyheritage/prospect_hill_cemetery>

The Belle Boyd Cottage at 101 Chester St. (540-636-1446) is decorated in period style and has exhibits on women, slavery and journalists in the war. The Warren Rifles Confederate Museum at 95 Chester St, (540-636-6982) has items relating to Belle Boyd, Stonewall Jackson, Jubal Early, Turner Ashby and others. See <http://warrenheritagesociety.org/belleboyd.php>

**Driving tour of US-340 valley:** <http://www.civilwar-va.com/EAST/VA/va-valley/frontRoyal.html>

**Luray:** Luray Valley Museum with early German artifacts and 19th-century farming community.

**New Market:**  The New Market Battlefield State Historical Park and the 19th century Bushong Farm commemorate the moment when VMI cadets engaged in pitched battle and helped win a victory for the Confederate army. (Every year VMI cadets commemorate the 85-mile march from Lexington to New Market.) The adjacent Virginia Museum of the Civil War is superb, one of best museums anywhere on the course of the entire war – and it takes only about an hour. A stained-glass sculpture honors the cadets as does an Emmy-winning film, "Field of Lost Shoes" (45 minutes). See: <http://www.virginia.org/Listings/Museums/VirginiaMuseumoftheCivilWarNewMarketBattlefieldStateHistoricalPark/>

**Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia** on I-81 near **Staunton** <http://frontiermuseum.org/> viewed at 1280 x 1024) The outdoor museum and its interpreters tell the story of the people who migrated to the colonial Shenandoah Valley from the hinterlands of England, Germany, Northern Ireland and West Africa. Five sprawling farmsteads comprise the museum, each composed of historic buildings painstakingly disassembled, brought to Virginia and reassembled. **(Other Staunton sites available, all possibly for Philosophers visit in 2013).**

**Cyrus McCormick Farm** A memorial site with manor house, gristmill, slave quarters and original patent models dedicated to the inventor of the reaper, which transformed agriculture. Off I-81 north of Lexington. See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_McCormick_Farm>

**Lexington**: Home to Stonewall Jackson before the Civil War and to Robert E. Lee after. Lexington retains much of its 19th-century flavor.

* Lexington Visitor Center, 106 E Washington St. is a good place to start.
* Lee Chapel on Washington and Lee University campus, 204 W Washington St.

Includes Lee's office as president, museum area, “Recumbent Lee” statue and family crypt below.

* Virginia Military Institute Museum, on the post. Much on the Civil War and the cadet experience. Items related to Stonewall Jackson, including his horse "Little Sorrell." Daily 9-5. Free.
* Stonewall Jackson House, 8 E Washington, where he lived before the war. Many Jackson possessions and period pieces. Daily 9-5, Sun 1–5 pm. Fee.
* Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery, South Main and White streets. Jackson lies among his family and hundreds of his fellow Confederates. Open dawn to dusk.

**Music and theater venues (north to south)**

**Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester.**  It is Virginia's premier conservatory for young professionals, with a faculty of more than 100 in music, theatre and dance. Its 32 performing ensembles give more than 300 concerts, recitals, clinics, master classes, theatre and opera productions and dance concerts on campus each year and around the world. See: <http://www.conservatoryperforms.org/performances>

**Wayside Theatre** in Middleton began in 1961 as a 10-week summer stock company and grew to a seven-month regional theatre with artists from around the country and shows ranging from musicals to Noel Coward. Middletown dates from 1750 and saw much Civil War action, including battles at nearby Winchester and the critical Battle of Cedar Creek just south of town. Middletown's Wayside Inn purports to be the longest continuously running inn in America. See: <http://www.waysidetheatre.org/>

**Shenandoah Valley Music Festival** at tiny, funky Orkney Springs, performed in a rustic pavilion next to a turn-of-last-century hotel listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It doesn’t appear on most maps but is in the mountains southwest of Winchester, about 2-3 hours from Washington. Classical, pop, blue grass, limited schedule, July 20-Sept. 2. Hotel buffet, barbeque concession. Directions at website: [http://www.musicfest.org//index.php?cid=1](http://www.musicfest.org/index.php?cid=1)

**Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival** at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg. Week-long series of large and small musical performance events, June 10-17.  See: <http://www.emu.edu/bach/>

**Garth Newel Music Center** near Hot Springs -- jazz and blues festival, June 15-17, classical season for rest of year. Inspired music-making, shared gourmet meals, personal interaction among musicians and guests in a setting of natural beauty. The Garth Newel Piano Quartet performs as artists-in-residence and around the world. Limited accommodations in its fading manor house, others at nearby Gristmill Square or Homestead. Gorgeous mountain drives through Bath County. (Garth Newel is Welsh for “new home” and was given to the property in 1920 by its new owner, William Sergeant Kendall, and his bride, Christine Herter. Prof. Kendall had resigned as dean of Yale’s School of Fine Arts and married Miss Herter, a former student.) See: <http://www.garthnewel.org>

**Stonewall Brigade Band in Staunton.** This is the nation's oldest continuous community band sponsored by local government and funded by tax monies. It began as a community band in 1857, mustered into Stonewall Jackson's First Brigade and went to war in 1861 and returned to play. The WPA is credited with helping the band survive the Depression. Today it averages about 70 playing members for its concerts each Monday at 8 pm in June, July and August in the Stonewall Brigade Bandstand in beautiful Gypsy Hill Park. See <http://stonewallbrigadeband.com/>

**Lime Kiln Theater** at Lexington is anoutdoor venue in the ruins of a 19th-century lime kiln and quarry. Its programs of Appalachian culture are supported by the NEA, the Virginia Commission of the Arts, the City of Lexington and others. Its signature production for more than 20 years – the rousing musical “Stonewall Country” about Stonewall Jackson and the Valley – will not be performed this year. See: [http://theateratlimekiln.org/](http://theateratlimekiln.org/%20) and <http://theateratlimekiln.org/season/>

**Barter Theatre** at Abingdon has been the State Theatre of Virginia since 1946 and offers professional shows year-round, daily and nightly (dark Monday) with an Appalachian Festival in June. During the Depression, patrons could pay with food goods, hence the name "Barter". See: <http://www.bartertheatre.com/index.php>

Abington itself is a designated Virginia Historic Landmark with galleries and museums along a pretty Main Street, fine dining and an interesting history back to Colonial days. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abingdon,_Virginia>

**Big Stone Gap** is in far southwestern Virginia (not in the Valley but on the way to Cumberland Gap): Home to the “Trail of the Lonesome Pine,” the official outdoor drama of Virginia. Thur-Sat, 540/523-1235. The play is set in the Appalachian Mountains at the turn of the 20th century and tells of an endless feud between two influential families as industrialization and coal mining begin to take over the area. Big Stone Gap is also home to a coal museum, the Southwest Virginia Museum, author John Fox Jr.’s house and museum and annual (May) “Gathering in the Gap” bluegrass and country festival and competition.

**My program on the Valley comes from four principal sources:**

Beleaguered Winchester A Virginia Community at War, 18611865" by Richard R. Duncan, a scholarly treatment of occupied Winchester and civilian survival amid the turmoil of war.

Shenandoah by Julia Davis (1900-1993). A lovely brief history of the Valley and the war years by a writer of 20 other histories and historical novels (and four plays and innumerable essays and poems) who, at age 92, collapsed and died gracefully in the arms of a dear friend as they left the dance floor.

James E. Taylor Sketchbook: With Sheridan Up the Shenandoah Valley in 1864" by James E. Taylor. A spectacular collection of sketches and diary notes not published until 1989 and now out of print and hard to find (Amazon has it for $400). In August 1864, Taylor was sent by Leslies Illustrated Magazine to follow Union Gen. Philip Sheridans army in the Shenandoah Valley. His sketches appeared in that publication but then vanished until discovered among an industrialists Civil War collection given to the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland and published by Morningside Press, Dayton, Ohio.

“The Valley of the Shadow” is a digital archive of primary sources that document the lives of people during the Civil War in Virginias Augusta County (Staunton) and Pennsylvanias Franklin County (Chambersburg) at opposite ends of the Shenandoah/Cumberland Valley. The website includes thousands of letters and diaries, census and government records, newspaper accounts, speeches and music, all of which record daily life as experienced by people in two counties at war with each other. The Valley Project is a part of the Virginia Center for Digital History at the University of Virginia and is available on the Internet [at http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/](at%20http:/valley.lib.virginia.edu/) and as a book with a CD‑ROM from Amazon.com.

**Other books and essays about Winchester, the Valley and the Civil War**

-- **“**Albion’s Seed: **Four British Folkways in America” by David Hackett Fischer**

-- “Civil War Winchester” by Jerry Holsworth, with heavy use of women’s diaries.

-- Plagued by War: Winchester, Virginia During the Civil War. Gauley Mount Press, Leesburg

-- Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause by Caroline E. Janney. A Purdue history professor, Janney examines the vital role women played in shaping politics, culture and society after the Civil War and in making sure that the Lost Cause interpretation of the war survived.

-- This Republic of Suffering by Drew Gilpin death and the home front in the Civil War.

-- The Road to Disunion: Vol. I, Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854" and “Vol. II: Secessionists Triumphant,1854-1861" by William Freehling.

-- Political Culture in the Lower Shenandoah Valley of Virginia,1836‑1861" by researcher Michael Gorman,Thompson Rivers University, Canada.

-- The Great Wagon Road: From Philadelphia to the South by Parke Rouse, Jr.

-- “A Town Embattled” -- [http://www.historynet.com/winchester-virginia-a-town-embattled-during- americas-civil-war.htm](http://www.historynet.com/winchester-virginia-a-town-embattled-during-%09americas-civil-war.htm)

-- “My will is absolute law – Gen. Robert H. Milroy and Winchester, Virginia.” Masters thesis by Jonathan A. Noyalas, Virginia Tech: [http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-04142003- 224717/unrestricted/MilroyandWinchesterthesis.pdf](http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-04142003-%09224717/unrestricted/MilroyandWinchesterthesis.pdf)

**Women and Winchester**

* Winchester Divided: The Civil War Diaries of Julia Chase & Laura Lee. Michael Mahon, editor.
* “Women Are the Devil” – Winchester Star <http://www.winchesterstar.com/uploads/content/CIVIL_WAR/WS10152011.html>
* “The Devil Diarists of Winchester -- Civil War diaries at Handley Regional Library in Winchester,

<http://www.handleyregional.org/handley/archives/CWdiaries.htm>

* Genteel Rebel: The Life of Mary Greenhow Lee by Sheila R. Phipps.
* A Woman's Civil War: A Diary with Reminiscences of the War, by Cornelia Peake MacDonald of Winchester.