



PRESERVE PORT

Newsletter of The Society of Port Republic Preservationists, Inc. July 2006

8691 Water Street P.O. Box 82

Port Republic VA 24471

www.heritagecenter.com/SPRP

Gundalow Day A Success



Captain Chuck's flat-bottomed boat in Port, May 20, 2006

All of us counted this day a success! An interested, and interesting, crowd of people made their way to Port Republic on May 20 to celebrate the history of the River and learn more about its critical health problem. A guided walking tour illustrated the role of the rivers in the history of the town and many visited the Museum.

Some people visited and participated in a demonstration "dig" in the "ghost town", New Haven, where they could see how archaeology and research can shed light on the lives of people.

Some visitors prowled on a James River batteau, a flat-boat similar to the Shenandoah River gundalow, while a Period band played and a marine biologist explained what was happening to fish in the River.

Our own fund-raiser, a "mini-gundalow" race, made a seemly profit while the \$200 prize for the winning boat went to a deserving friend, Miller

Kyger. (Even my own granddaughter, hoping that her boat would win, was pleased with the winner.)

It is not practical to list all those persons or groups who helped to bring about this important event, but **we extend our heartfelt thanks to all of them...and especially to Sandy Greene who managed to coordinate all the efforts!**

Annual Community Picnic

It's that time again...our annual community picnic, Sunday, July 16, 5:00 p.m., in the Melvin Bradburn Park on Water Street.

The picnic provides an opportunity for Society members, Port residents, and their invited friends and relatives to meet the new people in the neighborhood. It's also a wonderful opportunity for those who no longer live here to "come home".

This year, we'll even have an Old-time Country Music band to entertain us. And the Museum will be open before and after the picnic for those who haven't visited it in a while.

Each family is asked to bring a "covered dish", appropriate for the family's size, to be shared in the potluck supper. Tableware and beverages are provided by the Society.

Preservation March

Cross Keys, Port Republic, and Lynnwood provided beautiful backdrops for an event on the first weekend in June in which more than 600 Civil War reenactors participated.

This fundraising event, "Shenandoah 1862", featured a preservation march and scenarios depicting regimental actions from the last two battles in Stonewall Jackson's famous "Valley Campaign." Living History was on display since the units camped at several sites in the area, including the village.

The event was sponsored locally by the SVBF Cross-Keys/Port Republic cluster. It was not advertised to the public, but its purpose was to raise funds for the preservation of local battlefields.

Cross Keys Battlefield, in particular, is one of the most pristine in the Valley, yet housing development and possible road construction threaten its preservation.

Donations from this event have totaled more than \$10,000 to date and there is the possibility that this amount will be matched, and therefore doubled.

Other News:

- The Home Directory for the Village of Port Republic is completed and been distributed. It's a handy resource. Our thanks to Peggy Richardson and her helpers.

Remember the Past---Preserve for the Future

Board of Directors: Tom Aycock, Anita Cummins, Kevin Gabel, Nita Gibson, Tamara Gibson, Sherry Gordon, Ellen Kaylor, James Oppy, Carol Poulson, Peggy Richardson, Joe Solometo, and Frances Wilkerson.

- The effort continues to save the history of the barn/cannery in New Haven and use its material to create additional exhibit space for the Museum.
- **And Hooray!** We have four big, beautiful, well-behaved sheep “mowing grass” in Riverside Graveyard. Thanks to Ellen Kaylor and her friends.

Coming up...

- July 8: SVBF Cluster Civil War “Kids Camp” at Widow Pence Farm, Cross Keys
- July 16: SPRP Community picnic, 5:00 in Melvin Bradburn Park
- Dec. 17: Christmas in the Village

A Bit of Port History- “A Personal Letter”

As we glean the large collection of documents we have in store, we note that many refer to important people, events, places, or transactions. However, we also find a number of personal letters, often referring to people whose names we don't recognize. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see that their concerns are very similar to those of many of us today.

In the following hand-written letter, I have taken the liberty to add punctuation to make it more legible. Our writer, like many in his day, did not bother with that...nor is his spelling first-class...but that, too, was not of supreme importance at another time in history...my own grandfather was a successful medical doctor, with a degree from Johns Hopkins, but to the end of his days, he misspelled the word, “medicine”. (A.C.)

The letter is written by J. B. Downs, to his twin brother, William S. Downs, owner of the Tannery in Port Republic.

May 22, 1880

Dear Brother

I received your letter stating that you were all well which I was glad to hear from you all & we are all well at presant & hope when these few lines reaches you it may find you & your family enjoying the health. I have some little work to finish up then I am coming back again & if you haven't had your bunk house don I will do it for you. I want you to send my bridle soon as you can. I have got me a new saddle which I paid twenty five dollars for. They has bin a great deal of sickness all round us this spring. I saw fanny a few days since. She was well & said she had not heard from the other girls for some time. I am going to Washington in a few days & then I will go to se them all. I saw Joshua & his wife a few days since. Sam had a fight last week with Tom Rector, Spence Rector's son. They was at Waterfall. They fell out on politicks. Rector was the best man... Tell Mr. Manvill that I was glad to hear from him. Tell him that I went to se Grant after I saw him. His canser is write under his ear & is fast to his jawbone. Their is severel cases up their. I saw a lady said she had a tumer. Nothing more at presant. I remain

Yours Truly

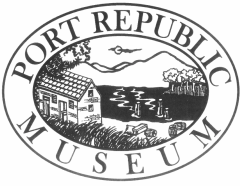
J. B. Downs

William, send my bridel as soon as you can as I have none. Have it made fair as I have a black horse. As soon as I get the briaddel I am coming up write a way.

SPRP is a non-profit organization All members are invited to meet the third Monday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at the Museum.

I enclose \$25 for membership 2006 through 2008. _____ or, I enclose \$10 for family membership for 2006. _____
(Members receive free admission to the Museum and our periodic newsletter.)

I enclose a tax-exempt gift of \$ _____.



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Name _____ Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Make checks payable to SPRP and mail to SPRP, P.O. Box 82, Port Republic, VA 24471)

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