

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

One of my most cherished possessions is a small leather pocket purse my great grandmother gave me for running an errand. I was about seven or eight years old at the time; great grandmother was 90. She had bought the purse about 1890. Born sometime between 1850 and 1854, she died in 1952.

The vice president of our board, Nate Yoder, has been leading a series of devotionals at our Heritage Center executive committee meetings focused on what we want to be remembered by, or about, after our death. Certainly a part of our trepidation regarding death is fear that we'll be forgotten; that no one will remember us.

My great grandmother secured herself in my memory with the simple gift of a purse.

As director of the Heritage Center I spend a lot of time working at, and thinking about, remembering. An important dimension of the project is to cultivate the fragile memory of our collective past. Part of the Heritage Center task is to secure our Brethren and Mennonite experience, not just so it can become useful to us in the present, but to acknowledge our forbears whose products we are. Cherishing where we come from is an essential aspect of our moral and spiritual integrity as human beings.

As we assemble the buildings, furniture, stories, and beliefs from our Brethren and Mennonite past here in the Shenandoah Valley, the Heritage Center will become a place where the past and the future meet, and where we who live now can draw on the rich and deep wells of our fore-mothers and fathers.

Needless to say, this task we have undertaken is a shared responsibility of all of us 16,000 Mennonites and Brethren here in the Valley. And we are grateful to the families who have made major gifts to us, particularly the Myers family for the 1854



Turner's Mill

Burkholder-Myers house; the Showalters and Martins for the Weaver-Brunk 1829 log house; the Halterman family for the 1904 one room-school/church house; and the Turner family for the 1804 Brenneman-Turner water-driven grist mill on Linville Creek.

Our challenge now is to find the money to restore and make available these wonderful buildings. We need the financial support of all 16,000 of us to make the Heritage Center a reality. I think our forbears who have gone before us must be remembered, both for who they were, and for who we hope to become.

Al Keim
Al Keim, Director

Grant awarded to restore Turner's Mill

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation has awarded a \$10,000 grant designated to restore the Turner's Mill. The review board unanimously agreed to fund this project with the maximum amount allowed. Only a small percentage of applicants were favored with this level of funding. In fact, only a portion of the applicants received any funding.

SVBF agrees that VBMHC will complement other Civil War focused tourist attractions, interpreting how the war touched the lives of the people of the Valley during that time in our history.

This is a matching grant, which means it is necessary for the community to contribute an additional \$10,000 for the project to complete our requirements for accepting the grant money. Several fundraising events are currently being planned to raise this necessary capital. Persons interested in supporting this exciting project should contact Brenda Wilberger.

Turners Mill is one of the largest mills in Virginia and is significant as one of the oldest surviving mills in the state. Built circa 1804 by Mennonite Abraham Brenneman, it was continuously in operation until 1988.

The mill is quite large and includes four floors and an attic. It is remarkably well maintained with both the structure and the machinery of the mill in near-original condition. The Flemish-bond brickwork, the carved beams, and the beaded floorboards are original 19th century workmanship.

Opening Turner's Mill to the public will preserve, interpret, and promote the Valley's Civil War heritage.

This is a major acquisition for the "Off 42 - A Driving Tour" aspect of VBMHC. The rich history of the mill and the surrounding area will be brought to life with interpretive programs.



more than 200 enjoy history presentation

John Heatwole, local historian and author, shared some of the oral history and folklore associated with the area. The June 1 presentation began at Weaver's Mennonite Church and concluded at the Burkholder-Myers House on the Heritage Center campus on Garbers Church Road.

your gift can make a difference!

What began as a modest dream to build a museum evolved into an exciting vision to establish an educational resource center to explore a contemporary witness through the lens of faith. The Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center will provide a special place to tell the common story of people, do research, review, recover and display artifacts, reflect on core faith values, celebrate responses to past cultural and historical events, and more.

The project is now well beyond what a small group of volunteers can handle alone. The steps forward are slow, yet purposeful and steady as funding and support are garnered. Fulfilling the vision requires the generous support of individuals, corporations and foundations.

I invite you to prayerfully consider how you can join with others to bring this project to completion. Gifts of time, talents, treasures, and money are gratefully accepted and judiciously used to meet goals. Every gift impacts the project.

You are part of the history - be a part of creating the legacy!

VBMHC is a non-profit, non-stock 501(c)(3) corporation under the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Brenda Wilberger



Your financial support is essential!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Daytime Telephone _____

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I would like to volunteer. Please send me a volunteer application.

Contact me about a program for my church or civic group.