

The **WV INDEPENDENT**  
**Observer**

JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

FEBRUARY 2022

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131 West German Street

PO Box 3088

Shepherdstown WV 25443

Published monthly. Printed by

FNP Printing, Frederick, MD.

THIS PAPER WANTS TO BE RECYCLED.



A last look at the current Hill Top House in Harpers Ferry before construction work began in late January 2022. Swan Hill Top, the development company, says that the activity of the early stages of the project may not be very visible as workers clean up and deconstruct the interior of the building to salvage wood, stone, and other materials for reuse in the new structure.

**TO OUR READERS** — People have been settling and moving around the region for a long time, as the newly-opened *Contributions: African Americans in the Shenandoah Valley* exhibition at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley reminds us (see page 6). Nick Powers, Curator of Collections at the museum, emphasizes that the local stories presented in this exhibition are intended to be interpreted in the broader context of American history. A few of the objects from this exhibition are presented in this issue, highlighting how these local stories are connected to our broader national narrative.

Looking back more recently, to 2007, the new owners of the Hill Top House (above) were planning to make some minor repairs and continue the hotel operations. Across the county, the real estate market was booming. By 2008, the Hill Top House was closed after the owners determined that the structure could not be salvaged. Likewise, the housing market sagged by half and stayed down for the next several years. Construction is finally underway at the Hill Top. And new home construction in Jefferson County is again booming, as evidenced by the number of building permits issued and the amount of construction equipment on the ground — a local version of the broader housing trends playing out across the region and the country (see page 4 for our report).

Even closer to home, our community is enriched by the many who volunteer their time. We present two examples in this month's issue — the Historic Landmark Commission which works to preserve examples of Jefferson County's past, and CASA-EP, which works to support the “children who are the adults of the future,” as described by Darah Kehnemuyi, a long-time CASA volunteer.



**Steve Pearson**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

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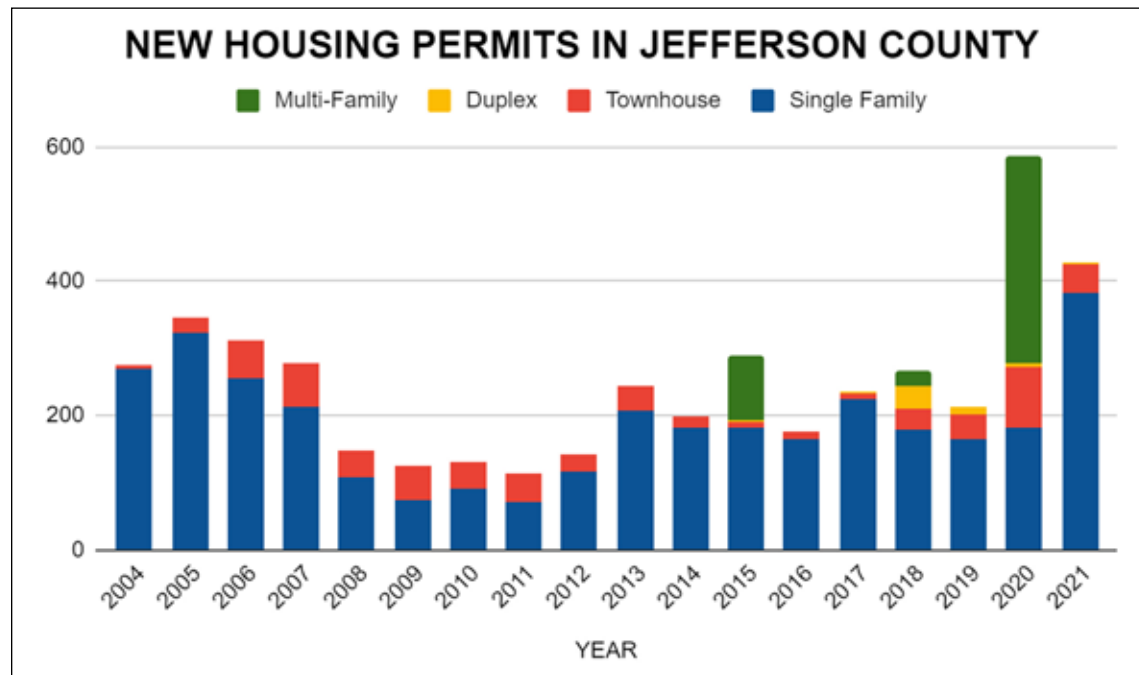
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// COMMUNITY

# OUR NEW NEIGHBORS ARE COMING

## Housing Construction In Jefferson County Expands



In 2021, the number of permits issued for construction of single family housing across Jefferson County was significantly higher than in any of the prior 17 years.

WHEN THE OBSERVER LOOKED at Jefferson County home construction trends in May of 2021, the County’s Office of Impact Fees reported that 149 residential building permits had been issued countywide (all jurisdictions) during the first three months of 2021. The numbers for the full year were even more impressive, with 427 permits issued. Looking at the chart above, the 2021 numbers for single family and townhouse construction (above, in blue and red) are almost double the annual rate seen in the past decade. Looking further back, the level of new home construction in 2021 was significantly higher than any of the “boom” years prior to 2008.

The demand for new home construction is not unique to Jefferson County. As *The Observer* reported in May, “new housing supply is not keeping up with rising demand. We estimate that the housing market is undersupplied by 3.3

million units and the shortage is rising by about 300,000 units a year,” according to a report by Sam Khter, Chief Economist at Freddie Mac.

### Thousands Of New Homes Ahead

The local slowdown in supply over the past decade is reflected in numbers provided by Jefferson County’s Office of Planning and Zoning, which reports that there are more than 6,500 approved, but vacant, building lots in the unincorporated areas of the county. Many of these lots are in subdivisions that were approved over a decade ago (before the 2008 financial crisis). This number does not include several major subdivisions within the city boundaries of Charles Town or Ranson, such as Huntfield, Norborne Glebe, or Fairfax Crossing. Together, these lots represent by-right development that stopped (or never started) after the 2008 crisis.



New townhomes rise behind Briar Run Park in Ranson. Jefferson County will need to discuss funding for parks, police, fire, schools, and other public services to serve a growing population.

Add the several major subdivisions proposed in the past year and there are over 10,000 new home parcels approved or proposed across Jefferson County. The map at right shows many of the larger developments where construction is just now being started (or restarted) along with several recently proposed developments.

### Regional Trends Come To Jefferson County

National and regional trends are definitely driving the local real estate market. Adam Shively, of Four State Real Estate in Charles Town, summarized the market as “local sellers want to move up, new buyers are looking to move in [to the county].” Shively remarked that the imbalance of supply relative to demand is particularly acute in the resale market. He shared numbers that showed a few dozen homes for resale across the entire county — compared to 300 to 400 for a comparable period two years ago. “We can’t catch up. In West Virginia, we kept selling throughout the pandemic, but sellers stopped putting homes on the market. Now sellers look around and ask ‘where do we go’ so they can’t put their homes on the market. A slowdown in the demand would help, but that won’t reset the prices. Compared to two years ago, prices for comparable houses are up \$100,000 or \$150,000.” Jackie Lewis



// COMMUNITY — CONTINUED

of Greentree Realty of Shepherdstown also remarked on the rising prices of resale homes, attributing it in part to buyers who are selling houses closer to Washington D.C. and have cash to purchase: “the last three houses that were sold in Cress Creek [a golf club community outside of Shepherdstown] were cash-only deals, between \$650,000 and \$740,000.” Lewis also noted that she’s seen many renters who now want to buy, a trend she attributes both to a desire to put down roots and the leverage available from low interest rates.

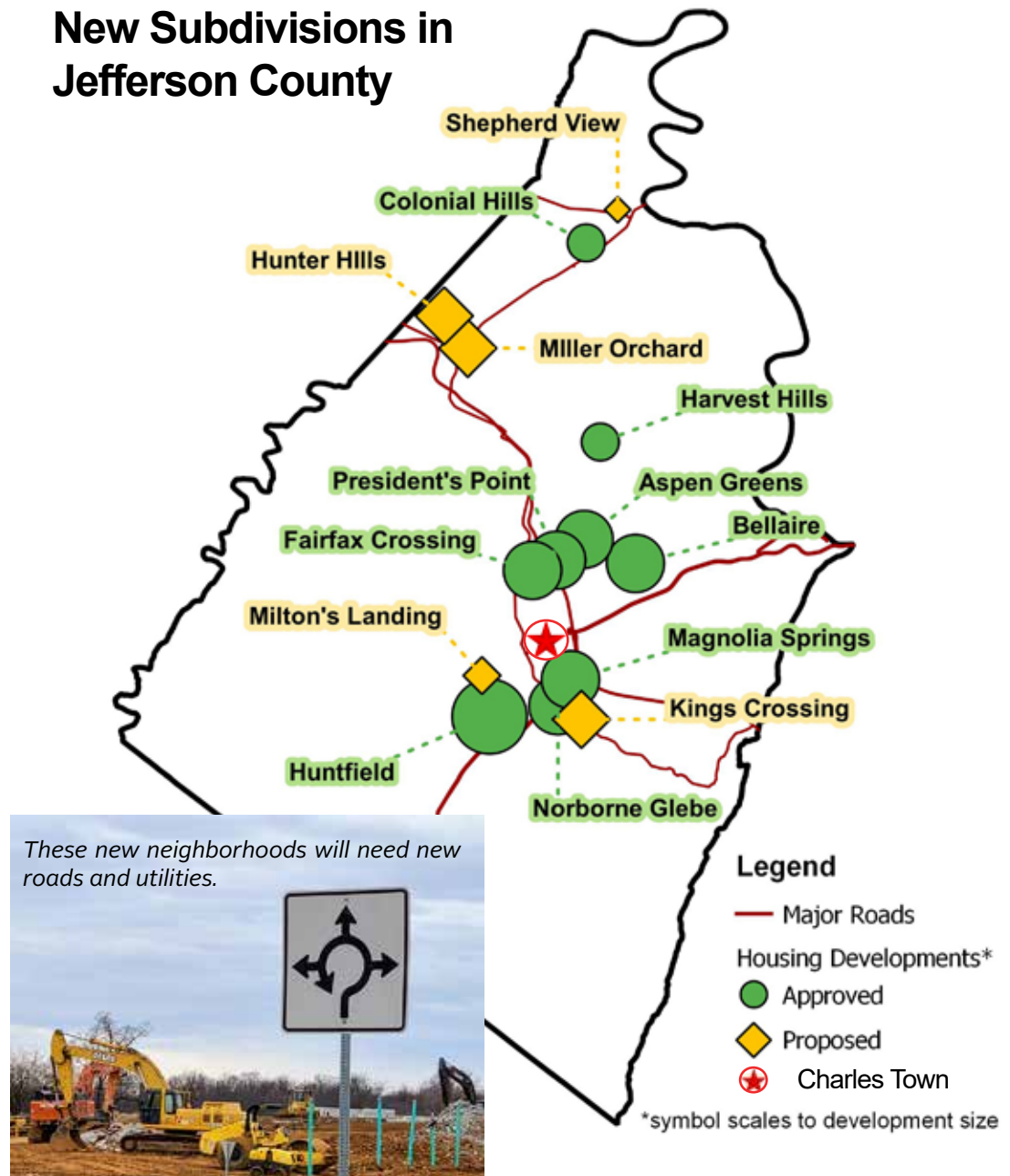
Can It Go On?

Lewis expressed skepticism about how long the demand-driven market would last, especially if interest rates rise. Shively is more bullish, seeing the current demand and pricing levels as a floor. Driving around the new housing developments in the county, the growth scenario seems to be more evident, with many “sold out” and “new phase coming” signs prominently displayed. National builders have moved into Jefferson County as well, a sign that they see consistent demand in this market. Lennar, the largest new home builder in the United States, began work on the Harvest Hills subdivision near Shenandoah Junction in early 2021. While the company has begun (or completed) construction on roughly half of the houses, all of the lots have been sold. Dan Ryan Builders, a name familiar to many local home buyers, has purchased the unbuilt sections of the Huntfield subdivision south of Charles Town. The original subdivision was approved for 2,800 additional homes and the company is now seeking to renegotiate the plan to allow for even more residences.

Adding it all up, there certainly seems to be momentum for a population expansion over the next several years.

By: Steve Pearson

### New Subdivisions in Jefferson County



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// HISTORY

# WINCHESTER MUSEUM TELLS STORIES OF FAMILIES UNITING & PERSEVERING

Museum of the Shenandoah Valley Presents New Exhibition



(Above, left) A descendant of potter Abraham Spencer (abt. 1806–1873) pauses in front of a display case during the Members First Look opening. MSV photo by Ginger Perry. (Above, right) Crock, about 1860–1873, attributed to Abraham Spencer in the shop of Samuel Bell (1811–1891), Strasburg, Virginia, MSV Shenandoah Valley Collection.

**NICK POWERS, CURATOR** of Collections at The Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, describes the museum’s newest exhibition — *Contributions: African Americans in the Shenandoah Valley* — as a living exhibition. “We’re hoping people will reach out with stories and objects that can help us tell this story. We think of African American history as Shenandoah Valley history and both as American history. We’ve been collecting these objects, but this is the first time we’ve had a space dedicated to telling these stories.”

### The Meaning of Everyday Objects

Powers hopes that visitors come away “with an understanding that the settlement of the Shenandoah Valley was an Euro-African settlement, that Black people were an integral part of the expansion and development in the Valley [before and after the Civil War].” He continued, “we hope that visitors learn how to look at objects in new ways, to understand who was involved in their creation, how they were used in daily life.” In context, the meaning of something as simple as a writing box can tell a story of struggle and resistance at a time when teaching enslaved people to read or write was a capital offence. “Many of these objects represent a resiliency and creativity that is part of the Shenandoah Valley story,” continued Powers. “When you look closely at the photo of the students at the Storer College women’s

dormitory (image next page), you can see several students who are displaying books in front of themselves. I see that as a message of defiance — the books represent not just knowledge, but the power of having that knowledge.”

“The pottery by Abraham Spencer (image above) tells another hidden story,” Powers remarked. “Robin Carter III was a well-established Virginia landowner and enslaver of hundreds. After the American Revolution, he had a religious conversion and ultimately freed all of these enslaved individuals. Abraham Spencer was one of the individuals manumitted by Carter. He found work as a potter, but as a free man of color, he lived under punitive conditions and often moved. The pottery in our display bears his mark, used to make sure he was properly paid for the pieces which survived the kiln firing process. It’s humbling to find objects that tell the story of people who flew in the face of this incredible effort to dehumanize them.”

**By: Steve Pearson**

*Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, 901 Amherst St, Winchester, VA. Open Tue-Sun, 11 am - 4 pm (winter hours through March). Admission: Adults \$15, Senior/Youth \$10, Under 12 free. See website (TheMSV.org) for parking directions, holidays, and membership options.*



Nick Powers, Curator of Collections, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley.

## A PEEK INSIDE >>>

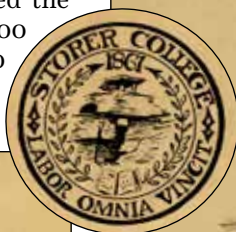
The *Connections* exhibition examines the lives of over 40 individuals who have contributed to the history of the northern Shenandoah Valley through personal objects, portraits, narratives, and video.

The exhibition runs through January 2023 along with a regular schedule of virtual and in-person programs (visit [TheMSV.org](http://TheMSV.org) > EVENTS for details). The museum’s permanent galleries showcase a rotating selection of its 23,000 objects related to the history of the Valley. There are also miles of trails on the 90 acre grounds of the museum — the park is open 7 am to dusk (free to visitors, dogs on leash welcome).

// HISTORY - CONTINUED

**>>> STORER COLLEGE — THE HILL OF HOPE**

STORER COLLEGE IN HARPERS FERRY, West Virginia played a large role in the Valley after the Civil War. The College received its first charter from the WV State legislature in 1869 as a normal school — a teachers college. In 1881, the Free-Will Baptists, the organization which supported the school’s founding, reported that the school had prepared over 200 teachers. A later history of the College reports that in 1895, all 20 of the “free schools [for Black students]” in Jefferson County were run by Storer Graduates.



(Left) Storer College students and teachers posing on Jefferson Rock, about 1890. (Right) Storer College students posing at Myrtle (later Moser) Hall, abt. 1879-1890. Photographer unknown. (Inset) Drawing of Storer College Seal, 1913, attributed to Louise Wood Brackett (1842–1936). All from MSV Collection, Gifts of Mrs. Anne Dungan, Mr. John C. Newcomer, Mr. Thomas W. Newcomer, and Mrs. Elizabeth Snyder.

**>>> THE MOSS FAMILY**

THE JOURNEY OF THE MOSSES of Winchester demonstrates how one Valley family pursued the promise of freedom. Mary Johnson Ligans (1840-1926) was enslaved by the Miller family of Winchester and trained as a cook. Emancipated in the 1860s, she married Thomas Winifred Moss, sought wages for her skills, and pursued education for her children. Mary’s daughter Henrietta (1861-1938) followed in her mother’s footsteps; Henrietta and her husband Alexander W. Davis built a business and invested in property. For Mary’s son, Charles Franklin Moss, freedom meant leaving the Shenandoah Valley. Charles trained as a photographer in Rhode Island, studied at Cooper Union in New York City, and eventually settled in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania working as both a portrait painter and photographer. Moss used his photography skills to empower Black families and organizations, promote self image, and counter racist stereotypes. In recognition of his skills, Moss became the first African American admitted to the National Association of Professional Photographers in 1914.



Family narrative adapted from the exhibit catalog. (Above) Portrait of Charles Franklin Moss (1878-1961). Courtesy of Stuart Bell Jr. Archives, Handley Regional Library, Henry Moss Brooks Collection. (Above, right) Photograph of Mary E. Johnson Ligans Moss (1839/1840–1926) and Thomas Winifred Moss (1831–1904), courtesy of Alexander and Bonnie Finley.





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## CASA-EP ADVOCATES FOR THE KIDS



Advocates receive 35 hours of initial training and ongoing support from CASA staff.

CASA - COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES – grew out of an idea developed by Seattle judge David Soukup in 1977 to appoint volunteers to advocate for the children in the neglect and abuse cases he was presiding over in his courtroom. Today, there are now more than 90,000 CASA volunteers nationwide. Locally, CASA of the Eastern Panhandle (CASA-EP) serves Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan counties. Michelle Sudduth, Executive Director of CASA-EP, describes the role of a volunteer advocate as “the voice of the child in the courtroom and an advocate for the child outside of the courtroom as well.” She noted that volunteers “interact with the children on a personal level, often becoming mentors, help with job applications, college applications – we’ve even had a volunteer who was asked to walk a former client down the aisle at her wedding.”

“It’s very meaningful work and our volunteers come from all walks of life,” Sudduth continued. “We attract people who are moved to help these kids, who are great problem solvers, and who can work in a complicated system. We have teachers, retired business people, police officers, lawyers, even a flight attendant. We provide the training – it’s 35 hours – and it’s very comprehensive.” Dan Clarke, a board member of the organization remarked that it was the training that “sold me. You go through real cases and learn how to think as an advocate. This is not your typical volunteer role. It requires a level of detail and commitment. But you have an amazing level of impact in each child’s life.” Darah Kehnemuyi, also a volunteer, described how meaningful his experience as a volunteer has been: “you have the chance to be the one adult in a child’s life that makes the difference.

Each case is very meaningful to me too – it warms my heart.”

Sudduth noted that CASA-EP has roughly 70 volunteers – and she could double that and still not meet the demand. “We had requests to serve 328 children in 2020 (in our three county area). In 2021, we had 453 requests. We’re also starting a new program, Fostering Futures, to work with older clients to help them with life skills before they age out of the foster care system. These kids learn from our volunteer mentors, but they also benefit from sharing their own experiences with their peers”



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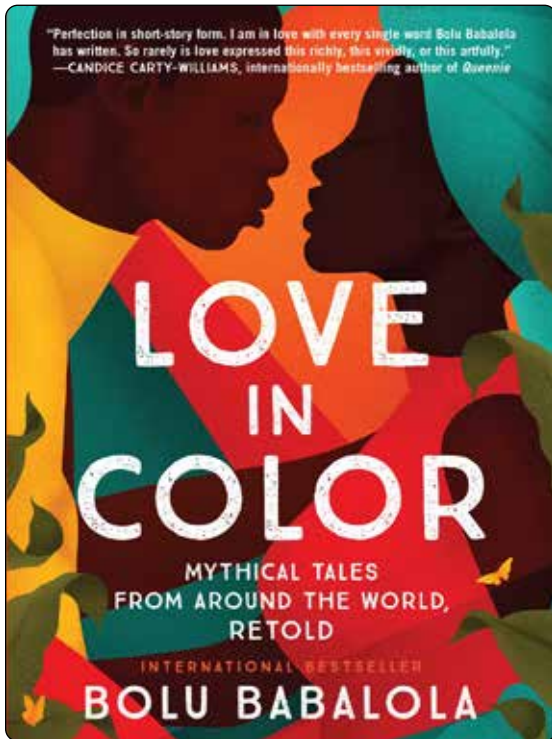
PERSPECTIVE // BOOK REVIEW

# IT TURNS ON LOVE

**Love in Color: Mythical Tales From Around the World, Retold**, by Bolu Babalola

**Publisher:** Harper Collins (2021)

**Review by:** Danielle Johnson. Originally from New York, Danielle Johnson is a writer and political scientist who has lived all over the world. She has a PhD in Politics from Oxford University and is writing her first novel. She lives in Shepherdstown with her husband, kids, and dog.



WHEN YOU THUMB THROUGH Bolu Babalola’s short story collection, *Love in Color: Mythical Tales From Around the World, Retold*, you’ll surely recognize some of the names that double as titles. Scheherazade, of the Arabian Nights; Nefertiti, a legendary ancient Egyptian queen; perhaps even Psyche, from the Greek story of Eros and Psyche. Many of the names may be unfamiliar, featuring myths from western and southern Africa, China, and Mesopotamia. But even if you know the original incarnations of these stories, Babalola’s versions will still feel entirely new.

Take Scheherazade, for instance. In the original version, a vengeful king takes a new virgin bride every night but beheads her the next morning. As the kingdom begins to run out of virgins, women are fearful and begin to flee. All except Scheherazade, a vizier’s daughter who offers herself as the king’s next bride. On their wedding night, after overhearing Scheherazade tell her sister a story that lasts until dawn, the king is so enraptured that he allows her to live an extra night, if only to finish her story. But as

the nights go on, Scheherazade keeps the king hooked on the twists and turns in her tales — giving him time to fall in love with her, and ultimately saving herself (and the heads of the women in the kingdom).

Babalola’s version turns the original on its head, placing Scheherazade in a modern-day urban setting in which she confronts the ruthless politics inherent in her role as the city’s most prominent fixer. Her love interest is not a king she is trying to seduce with story, but an academic on the opposing side of the political divide. Instead of trying to keep herself alive, Babalola’s Scheherazade finds herself telling the story of the thousand and one nights of their relationship, in order to keep her lover alive after his opponents arrange a car accident that nearly kills him: “They said I should talk to you every day, that it might get out of this indefinite state, that you may hear and come back to me – please come back to me – so I’ve been talking to you... 1,001 nights, but there has to be more. This is sacred. This is a love story.”

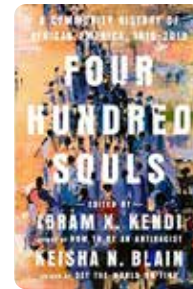
It is this idea of the indefinite state that underlies all the stories in this collection — the way that people without love are not quite complete, not quite whole. The women in these stories are powerful and empowered, but they have sacrificed to give that impression of themselves (a problem that has transcended the ages for women). As a result they never feel truly seen. Their power rests, at least in part, on artifice. As Nefertiti, the widow of a powerful gangster now running her own underground political revolution in the form of a night club, puts it: “Relationships were out of the question. I retained my power by my distance...emotionally, anyway.” And later, “everyone knows a part of who I am.” This would be unsettling to read if not for the conclusions of these stories, which show that with love it is possible to be both powerful and vulnerable, symbolic of a greater cause and authentic to oneself.

Babalola’s writing is lush and filled with sensory details, reflecting her characters themselves — especially the women, who in most cases are unabashedly sensual and sexual. Attem, for example, makes no secret of the fact that she used her body to seduce a king in order to save her family, nor does she feel shame that she continues to seduce men of her choosing so that she can feel some pleasure in her life despite her disgust for her elderly husband. And if they don’t start out that way, true love soon shows how they can feel empowered in their own bodies. It is love that makes them whole, able to embrace all aspects of themselves, regardless of whether they are pop stars or nerdy teens with vitiligo.

The stories of *Love in Color* are filled with love at first sight, love that transforms, all in unique settings that somehow feel completely realistic.

# REACHING TO THE LIGHT

**Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019**, by Ed. Ibram X. Kendi, Keisha N. Blain



One World (2022) \$20.00

In this unique, one-volume community history of African Americans, Kendi and Blain have assembled ninety brilliant writers, each of whom explores a five-year period of history using a variety of techniques and perspectives. This collection unlocks the startling range of experiences and ideas that have always existed within the community of Blackness. This is a history that illuminates our past and gives us new ways of thinking about our future, written by the most vital and essential voices of our present.



**Call Us What We Carry: Poems**, by Amanda Gorman

Viking Books (2021) \$24.99

The most recent presidential inaugural poet—and unforgettable new voice in American poetry — presents us with a luminous and stirring collection of poems. Gorman explores history, language, identity, and erasure through an imaginative and intimate collage. Harnessing the collective grief of a global pandemic, this beautifully designed volume features poems in many inventive styles and structures and shines a light on a moment of reckoning.

**Sprouting Wings**, by Louisa Jaggard



Crown Books for Young Readers (2021) \$17.99

The inspirational and true story of James Herman Banning, the first African American pilot to fly across the country, comes to life in this picture book biography, including art from a Coretta Scott King Award-winning illustrator. This well-researched book includes Banning’s own writings and an interview with the aviator’s great-nephew. In a journey that would span 3,300 miles, take twenty-one days, and inspire a nation, James Herman Banning proved that you can’t put barriers on dreams.

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# THE BRADFORD PEAR OUTGROWS ITS WELCOME

By Doug Pifer

*Doug Pifer is an artist, naturalist, and writer. He has a Master's Degree in Journalism from Penn State and has been an editor and art educator. His illustrations have appeared in various books and magazines and he has been a contributor to The Observer for several years. He lives with his wife and assorted animals on 5.7 acres in a historic farmhouse near Shepherdstown, West Virginia.*

IT SOUNDED LIKE SPRINGTIME in December. Three dozen robins were singing and scolding on Christmas morning. They had gathered to feed on the fruits of a Bradford pear, an ornamental tree that was the darling of landscapers thirty years ago but is now black-listed by many gardeners and nature lovers.

Bradford Pear, *Pyrus Calleryana*, has an interesting history that began early in the 1950s when pear orchards in the Pacific Northwest were decimated by “fire blight,” a disease that kills fruit trees. Agricultural researchers discovered that the Callery pear, a thorny wild tree native to China, had rootstocks highly resistant to the disease. These researchers imported Callery pear trees and grew them in nurseries where branches from choice pear varieties were grafted onto their roots. This eventually saved the commercial pear business from being wiped out by fire blight.

One of the Callery pear trees that was grown in this program was sterile, had a beautiful shape, profuse flowers, and no thorns. This cultivar was named “Bradford” after its discoverer.

Bradford pear became a favorite landscaping tree in the 1980s. It had a lovely, symmetrical shape. It thrived in a variety of climates and soils. It even tolerated the polluted air and compacted soil next to city streets, shopping centers, business parks, and parking lots. Its shiny green leaves turned from yellow to orange to deep red and stayed on the tree until late fall. Its white blossoms made a spectacular show in early spring.

But all things age, but not always gracefully. As they matured, Bradford pear trees became problematic. They were short lived. Their narrowly forking branches and soft wood were prone to breakage. A windy spell would frequently tear a large Bradford pear tree apart. The clouds of white blossoms, while stunning, emit an odor that many people compare to rotting fish.

While the original Bradford variety was sterile, most of the Bradford trees you see now have been cross pollinated and bear small, pinkish-brown “pears.” Most of these trees also have thorns. If you park your car under one of the fruiting trees after a night of heavy frost, you may return later to find your windshield smeared with their thawing, fallen fruit. Robins, starlings, and other fruit-eating birds gorge on these little “pears” during late fall. The birds, in turn, disburse the seeds wherever they poop. Now Bradford, or rather Callery, pear trees grow everywhere.

Localities in several states have banned Bradford pear trees. People are urged to dig up and destroy Bradford pear trees on their property. Disposing of them isn’t easy. After a tree is cut, its roots must be destroyed before they send up new shoots everywhere. A tractor brush hogging a field can get thorn-slashed tires. Putting cut branches though a wood-chipper creates mulch which may contain pear seeds that sprout in the spring.

A wild Chinese pear tree once saved the American pear industry and then became a favorite landscaping tree. Now reverted to its Callery roots, it is a pervasive reminder of the often bitter fruits and sharp thorns of unintended consequences.



Bradford pear blossoms. D. Pifer drawing.

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**GUIDED HISTORY HIKES**

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PERSPECTIVE // CONNECTING HISTORY

# PRESERVING THE PAST, ENRICHING THE FUTURE

## Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission



(Above, left) The Peter Burr property, the oldest standing wood frame structure in West Virginia, was designated a County landmark in 1975 and was added to the National Register in 1981. JCHLC acquired the property in 1988. The complex, located near Bardane, houses the Peter Burr Living History Farm. (Above, right) Historic Landmark Commissioners John Demer, Martin Burke & Jim King assess and document the Van Evera property near Shepherdstown before it was demolished this summer to make way for commercial development.

**THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT** was drafted as a response to the destructive results of the highway building and urban renewal programs initiated by the federal government in the 1950s and 1960s. Signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1966, the act significantly expanded the federal government's role in safeguarding historic properties. The act also established the National Register of Historic Places, a federal database of historic buildings, structures, objects, and sites recognized by the National Park Service for their significance in local, state, or national history.

### Committees and Commissions

At the state level, the act developed a federal-state partnership and mandated the selection of State Historic Preservation Officers. These state officers evaluate and designate individual buildings, structures or extended sites as historic landmarks based on criteria maintained by the National Park Service.

In West Virginia, state legislation also authorizes local landmarks commissions. Locally, the Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission is a branch of the Jefferson County government and consists of a board of 5 volunteer commissioners appointed by the County Commission. The Historic Landmarks Commission focuses on heritage education, historic resource development, and research, in addition to preserving the county's invaluable historic resources.

### Making A List, Sometimes Twice

The Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission first met on March 18, 1974. In its first year of operation, the Commission designated Traveler's Rest, Prato Rio, Lower Farm, Springdale, Piedmont, and White House Farm as Jefferson County historic landmarks. In 1975, the Commission added the Peter Burr House, Morgan's Spring, Locust Ridge, Harewood, General Darke's Farm, Bellevue, and Beverley to the list.

There are currently 69 National Register landmarks in the county and the Historic Landmark Commission has recognized 128 county landmarks (40 of which are also included in the National Register). The county has 6 historic districts — Charles Town (3 districts), Harpers Ferry, Middleway, and Shepherdstown. These districts encompass hundreds of additional structures designated as contributing to their historic character.

### Recent Work

In 2021, the Commission designated Saint Paul Baptist Church in Kearneysville as a county landmark. Spring Grove/Olive Boy and Taylor's Meadow/McMurrin Farm were also added to the National Register of Historic Places last year. Beyond just making lists, the Commission also provides grants for preservation. During 2021, the Commission secured a \$4,000 grant from the Eastern WV Community Foundation for restoration work at the Kearneysville Methodist

Cemetery and a \$2,500 CSX Grant for Duffields Depot (owned by the Commission) which allowed for repairs to the roof, reinforcement of the structure, and installation of exterior doors.

*The current commissioners are Martin Burke, John Demer, Jack Hefestay, Jim King, and Addison Reese. The commission also has a full-time AmeriCorps volunteer, Patrick Fuller. The Commission's website (JeffersoncountyHLC.org) hosts detailed information about all of the local and national landmarks in the county. For residents and property owners, the website has information about tax credits available for historic preservation, tour maps, and other educational resources. The Commission also accepts donations to fund its work.*



### By Addison Reese

Addison Reese is one of five commissioners serving on the Jefferson County Historic Landmark Commission (JCHLC). The Commission plays a key role in highlighting the county's diverse history through preservation of structures and historic landscapes as well as documenting the oral history of the people who live in these places.

If you have any records, photographs, and/or stories you would like to share about historic sites throughout the county, you can contact Reese at [AddisonReeseJCHLC@gmail.com](mailto:AddisonReeseJCHLC@gmail.com)



EXPLORE // SHEPHERDSTOWN

SOUL FOOD FARM HAS PLANS TO GROW



Sara Carley-Peña describes her two Nigerian Dwarf goats as "happiness wrapped in fur."

SARA CARLEY-PEÑA explained that she was a frequent visitor to Green Gate Farm, just outside of Shepherdstown, on field trips with her students. In early 2021, when she heard the Prillaman family had plans to sell the farm and move to New Hampshire, Carley-Peña reached out to express an interest. "It really fell together," she said, "there was an immediate connection. The Prillamans had really invested a lot to build up the farm over the past ten years and they were looking for someone who would be a steward for the land. When we closed on the deal, I admit I felt a little intimidated. I had a big vision that I could continue producing natural

and organic products, but didn't have a specific plan for the 18 acres and multiple buildings."

"I've been a social worker and a teacher — I've run outreach programs for runaway kids," explains Carley-Peña. "My focus has been on helping pre-teens and my teaching experience has been in earth science, environment, and nutrition. Somehow I figured I could use a working farm as a base for creative education. This April I am planning to start 'Fridays on the Farm' — a program that will engage middle school age kids in planning, planting and animal care. We'll have guest speakers too. It's about building a love of nature and an understanding



The Earth n' Root program will continue at the farm.

of nutrition. When you can grow the vegetables and take them home, it helps kids to think and understand what they eat."

"Fortunately, I'm not doing this all myself," she continued. "Jen Haas has been running the Earth n' Root nature program for preschool kids on the farm for several years and will be continuing. Samantha Savoca will be leasing the greenhouse to grow hemp for Meditative Medicinals, her CBD shop in Shepherdstown. Most importantly, Jaz Rondini will be managing the agriculture operations of the farm. I expect that we'll be running a kitchen garden, pumpkin patch, and of course, we'll be growing hay for my two miniature horses, Button & Barca, and two Nigerian Dwarf goats, Cookie & Cream. All of us have a lot of ideas and we'll be exploring what we can do in the next several years to make this place sustainable, both agriculturally and financially."

Soul Food Farm is on Facebook @ SoulFoodFarmLLC, email at SoulFoodFarmLLC@gmail.com. Earth n' Root website is Earth-n-Root.com, email jennifer@earth-n-root.com.

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EXPLORE // EVENTS & ACTIVITIES — STAFF PICKS

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Email [EXPLORE@WEARETHEOBSERVER.COM](mailto:EXPLORE@WEARETHEOBSERVER.COM) if you have an event or activity to include in our calendar.

JANUARY EVENTS

**JAN 30 (SUN) — TRAILS LESS TRAVELED: MURPHY FARM HISTORICAL HIKE** (moderately easy, 1.5-3 miles) by the Harpers Ferry Park Association · 10-12:30 am, meet at HFNP Visitor Center (171 Shoreline Dr) · \$10 (pre-registration required) · Register/Info: [harpersferryhistory.org](https://harpersferryhistory.org)

**JAN 31 (MON) — TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY: WILL IT CHANGE?** (webinar) Presented by the Stubblefield Institute American Conversation Series · 7 pm ONLINE · FREE · Info/registration: [Shepherd.edu/icpc-advisory-board](https://Shepherd.edu/icpc-advisory-board)

FEBRUARY EVENTS

**FEB 5 (SAT) — INVISIBLE WARRIORS: AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN WWII** (film and Q&A) · 7-9 pm at the Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville, VA · \$5 · Info/Tickets: [BarnsOfRoseHill.org](https://BarnsOfRoseHill.org)

**FEB 5 (SAT) — 49 WINCHESTER WITH COLE CHANEY** (alt-country soul) · 7:30 pm at the Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville, VA · \$15 · Info/Tickets: [BarnsOfRoseHill.org](https://BarnsOfRoseHill.org)

**FEB 8 (TUE) — WENDY FOLSOM, HOSTED BY SPEAK STORYTELLING** · 7:30 pm, online only · \$15 · Info/Tickets: email [info@speakstoryseries.com](mailto:info@speakstoryseries.com).

*Wendy Folsom has been performing as a storyteller for 20 years. Her upcoming program, "Only Love: A Mother's Journey Through Shifting Pronouns, Identities, and Perceptions," shares a personal story of what happens when a child comes out as transgender in a conservative community.*

**FEB 13 (SUN) — VALENTINE'S DRAG BRUNCH** · 11 am at Lilah Restaurant, 115 E German St, Shepherdstown (doors open at 9:45) · Info/reservations: FB @ [LilahRestaurant](https://LilahRestaurant)

**FEB 16 (WED) — OVER THE MOUNTAIN STUDIO TOUR: CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS** · Applicants must submit photos of work and a letter of introduction · Info/apply: [OverTheMountainStudioTour.com/post/renewal](https://OverTheMountainStudioTour.com/post/renewal)

**FEB 19 (SAT) — SHEPHERD JAZZ FESTIVAL CONCERT** (local middle & high school jazz ensembles) · 7:30 pm at the Frank Arts Center Theater · FREE · Info: [Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts](https://Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts)

**FEB 25 (SAT) — SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY WIND ENSEMBLE CONCERT** (w/ free pre-concert lecture at 7 pm) · 7:30 pm at the Frank Arts Center Theater · \$15 · Info: [Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts](https://Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts)

**FEB 26 (SAT) — BLACKENED BLUES W/ SEAN MURPHY AND QUINTIN WALSTON** (poetry, piano) · 7-8 pm at the Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville, VA · \$10 · Info/Tickets: [BarnsOfRoseHill.org](https://BarnsOfRoseHill.org)

**FEB 26 (SAT) — BIRDING THE BLUE RIDGE CENTER** · 8 am at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, 11661 Harpers Ferry Road, Hillsboro, VA · FREE (registration required) · Info/register [LoudounWildlife.org/events](https://LoudounWildlife.org/events)


*Need an evening activity? Put on your petticoats and join the SHEPHERDSTOWN MYSTERY WALKS* Nightly walking tours of haunted and historic locations in Shepherdstown · \$15 · Reservations required · Info/Tickets: [ShepherdstownMysteryWalks.com](https://ShepherdstownMysteryWalks.com)



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## MUSIC AT SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY

The School of Music is presenting a full calendar of concerts this spring. On February 18 (Fri) at 7:30 pm, the **Shepherd Jazz Ensembles** will jam at the Frank Arts Center Theater (\$ ticketed event) and then host middle and high school jazz ensembles from around the region at the **Shepherd Jazz Festival** on February 19 (Sat), 9 am - 5 pm, also at the Frank Art Center (free).

The **Shepherd Wind Ensemble** will present a concert on February 25 (Fri) – pre-concert lecture at 7 pm, concert at 7:30 pm at the Frank Arts Center Theater (\$ ticketed event).

On February 27 (Sun), 3 pm at the W.H. Shipley Recital Hall, Shepherd University student **Korinne Myers** will present a voice recital (free).

*Ticket purchase & additional information at [Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts](http://Shepherd.edu/music/calendar-of-concerts)*



## FABULOUS BOOK SALE — SAVE THE DATE



The Friends of Shepherdstown Library Annual Book Sale returns May 13-15, 2022. This annual event features thousands of books for sale at the War Memorial Building in Shepherdstown (102 E German Street). This is your chance to find the book you've always meant to read – or the surprise find you never knew you needed. Find bargains galore on hard covers, soft covers, paper backs, children's books, special collections, CDs, and more, with all proceeds to support the Shepherdstown Public Library.

*Information on donating books & media, volunteering, opening reception, and sale hours will be posted on the FOSL website ([fosl.wv.org](http://fosl.wv.org)) and Facebook page ([Friends-of-Shepherdstown-Library](https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Shepherdstown-Library)).*

## LOCAL ARTIST @ LOCAL SHOP

Diana Suttentfield will be exhibiting paintings at Specialty Business Supplies, 111 South Princess St, Shepherdstown, starting January 14. *Open Monday - Friday, 9 am - 5 pm. Info about the artist at [DianaSuttentfield.com](http://DianaSuttentfield.com).*





EXPLORE // NEW ART EXHIBITS

**BERKELEY ARTS COUNCIL SHOWS**

The Berkeley Arts Council's **Annual Members' Exhibit** runs through February 19 at the Berkeley Art Works, 116 North Queen St., Martinsburg. Hours are Wed-Thu-Fri 11 am - 5 pm, Sat 11 am - 4 pm. This exhibit features 33 works by 20 member artists and includes 2- and 3-dimensional works in painting, photography, clay, wood, fibers, polymer clay, collage, mixed media and assemblage; many of these works are for sale.

The council is also calling for artists for its **12th Annual Art & Earth Juried Art Exhibit**. The theme of the show is 'Art and Earth: My Art - My World' and entries should reflect the artist's view of nature, the environment, or reflect an Earth Day related theme. The exhibit is open to all visual artists throughout the continental United States, over the age of 18, working in any fine art or fine craft medium or technique, in 2- or 3-dimensions, representational, abstract, or non-representational. Entries must be original works of art that have been completed within the last three

(3) years, and have not been exhibited previously at the Berkeley Art Works. Deadline for Entries: Midnight, February 23 (Wed). The exhibit will be on display from April 6 to May 14. Entry forms & info at [BerkeleyArtsWV.org](http://BerkeleyArtsWV.org).



**ART IN THE HALLS** COLLECTIONS: NEW EXHIBIT AT THE MSV >>> PAGE 6 & 7

The newest **Art in the Halls** exhibition at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley features vibrant works by Carmen Crawford, Loretta Allison, and Ray Crawford through April 17. *More info on the web at [TheMSV.org](http://TheMSV.org).* (Above) "Dancing Through Time", 2015, by Carmen Crawford, acrylic on canvas. MSV photo by Ginger Perry.

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EXPLORE // HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL PARK

**A NATIONAL PARK IN OUR BACKYARD**



Harpers Ferry National Historical Park is much less crowded during the winter months, so it's easier to park and the trails are uncrowded.

The Harpers Ferry Park Association (HFPA) has announced a mix of indoor and outdoor activities for 2022. The HFPA serves as the non-profit partner of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and operates the Park Bookshop in Lower Town. For more information about HFPA, to register for programs, or to become a member, visit [HarpersFerryHistory.org](http://HarpersFerryHistory.org), email [info@hfpawv.org](mailto:info@hfpawv.org), or call 304-535-6881. Schedules and event restrictions are subject to change based on current Covid-19 guidelines from the National Park Service.

**Park Details**

Harpers Ferry National Historic Park is open year-round 9 am to 5 pm every day and offers a variety of trails, both in Harpers Ferry and nearby Bolivar Heights. Check the website ([NPS.gov/HAFE](http://NPS.gov/HAFE)) for shuttle hours, events, and maps. Main visitor center: 171 Shoreline Drive, Harpers Ferry. A daily vehicle park pass is \$20. Annual Harpers Ferry Park Passes are available for \$35 and cover admission for all passengers in a single vehicle. Shuttle buses run daily from the visitor parking lot across the National Park and Lower Town in Harpers Ferry.

**HIKE THE PARK: VIRGINIUS ISLAND RUINS**



The Virginius Island trail offers an easy, mostly level walk along the river; the ruins of the Shenandoah pulp mill along the trail offer a window into the town's industrial past.

**BLACK HISTORY TOUR OF CAMP HILL**



**A Trails Less Traveled Hike — February 26 (Sat), 10-11 am**

From John Brown to W.E.B. DuBois, Harpers Ferry has been a prominent stage for American history. During the Jim Crow era, Storer College students referred to the Camp Hill campus of Storer College as the Hill of Hope, as it represented a place of refuge, equality, and inspiration, even when local residents were not uniformly welcoming (the college's first Black president, Richard McKinney arrived in 1944 with a Ph.D from Yale and was greeted with a burning cross).

The Camp Hill tour ends with a stop inside the historic Lockwood House (newly preserved by the National Park Service) prior to its re-opening to the public. Guide David Fox served as an interpretive park ranger at Harpers Ferry for 30 years, retiring in 2018. He is interested in everything the park has to offer but especially John Brown's Raid, Black history and the intersection of natural and cultural history.

Meet at the front of the Stephen T. Mather Training Center, 51 Mather Place, Harpers Ferry. Easy walk on sidewalks and grass. \$10 donation per person, open to public. Registration required online at [HarpersFerryHistory.org](http://HarpersFerryHistory.org).

**FALCONS, OSPREY AND EAGLES, OH MY!**

**A Trails Less Traveled Hike — March 5 (Sat), 10:30 am – 12 pm**

Join HFPA for a guided hike to view nesting sites of osprey, peregrine falcons and bald eagles within Harpers Ferry. Hike leader Dave Cahan will discuss the nesting and hunting behaviors of these birds (with luck, participants will see some of these raptors on or near their nests). Cahan hikes the park's nearly 20 miles of trails frequently and is familiar with the historic and natural features of each.

Approximately 2 miles, rated Easy to Moderate, 200-ft elevation gain with areas of uneven rocky and muddy footing. Meet at The Point in Lower Town Harpers Ferry. Bring binoculars or a camera with telephoto lens. Pets welcome. \$10 donation per person, open to public. Registration required online at [HarpersFerryHistory.org](http://HarpersFerryHistory.org).

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