

# Historic Petersburg FOUNDATION, INC.

Fall 2021 News

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Justin Sarafin

[www.historicpetersburg.org](http://www.historicpetersburg.org)



***Our mission is to lead the preservation and restoration of Petersburg's historic architecture and neighborhoods and to tell their story.***



## President's Message

Historic Petersburg Foundation is in the preservation "business" and I am passionate about preserving Petersburg's historic fabric. It's the main reason that I accepted the presidency last spring. My hope is that I can have an impact on both the organization and the city.

I've been asked how, exactly, I plan to usher in change that will make a difference. Well, my ideas are many and a few of them might be considered a bit aggressive or radical by some. But, in my opinion, nothing great happens if you aren't bold, forward-looking, and, yes, even tough. In other words, my approach is to "rock the boat," in search of brighter horizons.

The word "preservation" can be a bit misleading. Preserving something essentially means keeping it in its present state. But HPF's real aim is to make things better – restore old structures and find new, relevant uses for historic properties, creating a more robust economy in the process. That's the end game. So, although we certainly want to prevent historic properties from deteriorating further, when you think about it, HPF is really in the improvement business.

The way I see it, HPF is a means to an end, not an end unto itself. Our goal is to make Petersburg a better place for all. Our vision is to accomplish that by saving our historic structures, along with the stories of the people and events associated with those structures. Doing so has been proven, in other places, to result in a stronger economy and higher quality of life. I think most of you would agree. You can see examples of towns and small cities everywhere, including Virginia, that have embraced this approach with great success.

Now you might wonder exactly how these towns and cities transformed themselves. I'd be lying if I told you that it was easy and accomplished by a few key individuals. I can assure you that is never the case. It's just like building a successful business, which I have done. It takes hard work and a belief that it CAN be done. It takes a team of dedicated individuals willing to "go the extra mile." Building that team is what I am trying to do right now.

As president, I have been looking for new board members and volunteers willing and able to contribute to the HPF process by offering their expertise and service for the good of Petersburg. People interested in pursuing "the end game" that I mentioned earlier. People excited about what we can accomplish together and ready to be a part of a hard-working, focused group. People who see what is possible, both short and long-term. People who understand that the greatest reward usually comes from giving it your all.

I am a strong believer in collaboration. I would like to see HPF join forces with like-minded people and groups to maximize collective resources and efforts. That is why I have also made it a priority to talk with other organizations and city officials about ways to complement each other and support each other's events and initiatives.

The truth is, we have the most historical small city in the US. We are at the junction of two major interstates. We have perhaps the best example of 19th century architecture in the world. If we can make Petersburg an attractive place for people to visit, the tourism generated will make the ongoing job of preserving its history and architecture much easier.

I hope you are encouraged by the direction I am taking with HPF. If so, I would love to hear from you. Whether it's to give suggestions, comment on my ideas, offer financial support, or get involved in any other way, I welcome your input. We're on the cusp of a new era for HPF and Petersburg. Please consider being a part of this exciting transformation. I promise you a rewarding experience.

## About Kyle

The HPF presidency transitioned from Louis Malon to Kyle Tucker in April. He and his wife LeAnn had moved to the area a couple of years before and were immediately intrigued by its rich history. That led them to HPF.

A native Virginian and graduate of the University of Richmond, Kyle is the founder of Dexios Corporation, a revenue cycle management and consulting company. He and LeAnn are also working toward opening a tour and souvenir company in the City.

In addition to spending time at their Lake Chesdin home, the Tuckers - including dog Avery - love wandering the many battlefields in the area.

Upon accepting the position, Kyle commented "It is an honor to be named president of an organization that serves one of the the most historic small towns in the United States."





by Martha Atkinson



## Meet the Executive Director

Tuesday, Thursday, and occasionally on Saturday, Justin Sarafin can be found at his office desk deep in thought regarding whatever projects happen to be on his list of top priorities for the day. He approaches his work with a sense of focused calm. Educated at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, Courtauld Institute in London, and the University of Virginia, Justin also has a long and impressive list of experiences and accomplishments. He has previously worked at such venerable places as Montpelier, Monticello, and Preservation Virginia.

Yet this humble gentleman, who hails from Ipswich, Massachusetts, is down to earth and is always willing to take time to answer questions about museum work, preservation, or just about anything. Justin began his tenure with HPF in April 2021 and spent his first few weeks getting up to speed with all the ins and outs of the organization. In addition to working with HPF Trustees, he has recently been focused on gathering information for the Network for Good platform which will be very beneficial for HPF once it is completed. Justin has also agreed to be a part of the Oversight Committee for the Save America's Treasure Grant for repair and stabilization of the city's Exchange Building.

When asked what he likes most about his new position with HPF, Sarafin replied, "I've had a great time getting to know the board and other community members. Those relationships are how we can get things done. In other words, it is not a single person's job." Since Justin has spent most of his professional life living and working in the Commonwealth, he considers himself well-versed in Virginia history. He has certainly earned it!

HPF looks forward to taking advantage of Justin's expertise for many years to come.

## UPDATE on the Jarratt House

by Kate Sangregorio

Since the HPF "Restoring the Jarratt House" event on November 15, 2020, the Jarratt-Sampson House project has continued to move forward. Stabilization of the house, which was Phase One of the project, was completed by Daniel and Co. and Virginia Masonry Restoration at the end of March, 2021! The rear wall has been completely reconstructed and many other immediate structural issues have been addressed. City staff is now seeking funding for future phases to get the building to a usable condition, and has been in discussion with Preservation Virginia to get their recommendations for successful community outreach to understand the best use of the space with neighborhood input.

In the meantime, the VA Department of Historic Resources (DHR) awarded a match grant to the City for nomination of the Jarratt House to the National Register of Historic Places. They have recommended the house be renamed the Jarratt-Sampson House, to recognize the significance of Lavinia Sampson as an important owner of the house, who was a member of the Pamunkey Tribe. The nomination is expected to be reviewed and approved in December by DHR.



## ALL THINGS GARDEN RAISES FUNDS FOR HPF

New ideas sprout at HPF all the time! This past spring, Bob and Bobbi Kennedy got the idea to sell plants and garden items as a fundraiser. They asked people to donate items to sell and, on April 24, set up at the Peter Jones Trading Center. Mother Nature obviously liked the idea, too - it was the perfect day to have gardening on the mind! In addition to the garden items for sale, a Master Gardner was on site for advice and a beautiful potting bench was raffled off. James Gale and his wife Kelsi Jewell even brought their chickens for people to meet! It was an enjoyable day for all and HPF raised over \$1200. Thanks, Bob, Bobbi and all the donors!! Attendees, too!



James with some of the feathered Jewells, the "Ladies of Low Street."



The potting bench was won by Chris Duvall.



## HPF welcomes new City Manager

Petersburg's new City Manager Stuart Turille received a warm welcome from HPF on August 10 at a reception held at the Thomas Wallace house on Market Street. It was the perfect opportunity for members to meet Mr. Turille and hear about some of his plans which include placing an emphasis on saving and rehabilitating historic structures in the City. He described how he has been meeting with various neighborhood groups and organizations to learn about needs and to get a feel for how he might leverage their talents. Over 50 people, including other city officials and community leaders, attended the event.



## Creation of Walnut Hill Historic District progressing nicely

After several meetings and much behind-the-scenes work by the Committee to Create a Walnut Hill Historic District, significant advances have been reported. Most importantly, in the Spring, the Committee was awarded a \$45,000 grant by the Cameron Foundation. This means that the important footwork that needs to be done prior to applying for the designation can proceed. Mark Wagner of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has been advising the group. Westover Avenue resident Louis Malon is managing the grant along with Brenda Priebe of Sycamore Street. They have hired the company Marstel Day out of Fredericksburg to do the necessary survey which is underway. Expected completion of the survey work is approximately 1 year.

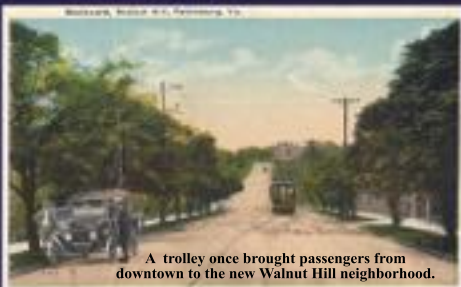


The Doughboy welcomes drivers entering Walnut Hill from the north.



## Golden Ball Tavern site to be enhanced

Planning is underway to transform the site of the 1750 Golden Ball Tavern on the corner of Market and Old Streets into a small park that will feature a display about the tavern chronicling its importance in Petersburg's history. Currently, a marker there gives a brief description of its past. HPF is working with Terry Ammons on the plan and hopes to involve other civic organizations in the project. With its location catty corner to the Peter Jones site, it should be a nice place to sit and reflect upon the area's history.



A trolley once brought passengers from downtown to the new Walnut Hill neighborhood.



## Exchange Building report nearing completion

Earlier this year, HPF engaged StudioAmmons to conduct an extensive Historic Structures Report (HSR) on the Exchange Building. This HSR will not only lay out a preservation plan to guide the work of this already funded project, but also serve as a pathway for additional preservation work in the years to come. Bid requests should be out soon for work on the 1840 dome roof, portions of which we believe are original. The roof replacement is the first stage of the renovation project and will ensure the ongoing integrity of the building for decades to come. As the HSR is completed and details of the history and renovation plans become clearer, we will provide public programming to share insights learned in the course of the investigations.

This renovation project on Petersburg's only National Historic Landmark building is made possible through a significant Saving America's Treasures grant, a generous match from the Cameron Foundation, and help from the City of Petersburg. We thank all our partners in getting this project underway.

HPF congratulates the Petersburg Preservation Task Force on the opening of the exhibit showcasing 400 years of Petersburg history in the rotunda of the Exchange Building.



The plan for the Golden Ball Tavern site includes park benches and a garden with plantings native to Virginia. Horticultural experts will be consulted.



# STEP WITH US INTO THE PAST *as we* MARCH TOWARD A BETTER FUTURE

As Peter Westbrook, a former Olympic athlete, once said, "So much of our future lies in preserving our past." That, in a nutshell, describes what HPF is really all about. And because we serve a city that has such a richness of historical treasures, the phrase has an even deeper significance. But the truth is that, without engagement and action, those words are nothing more than a nice saying. So we must add our own context.

Those of us who are dedicated to realizing HPF's goals sometimes hear comments that are far from the truth. "It's a bunch of old people." "They don't really DO anything." "They've lost touch." Yes, it makes us cringe. But it also makes us strive to change those erroneous perceptions. Our hope is that people like you might help us do that.

Below you'll find contact information for HPF members who can help you get involved or get more familiar with the organization. They'd love to hear from you! If and when you are inspired to join us in our efforts, we wholeheartedly welcome your help. You, HPF, and Petersburg will all be the better for it!

## VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH AN HPF EVENT OR PROJECT



Our new Membership Chair is Thomas Lewis. He would love to hear from you if you are interested in getting involved or even just wondering what the possibilities are. We always need help both at events and with behind-the-scenes planning. As for projects, just let

Thomas know ([lewiswilliamt@outlook.com](mailto:lewiswilliamt@outlook.com)) what your interests are. It's a great way to get to know other folks in town!



Kelsi



Amber

## Ask us a question/ Get more information

Kelsi is HPF's board secretary and social media guru. Amber handles fundraising. They'd love to answer any questions you might have about HPF and its plans to make a bigger impact on Petersburg. They can also share with you the reasons that they got involved. And if you have any ideas for the organization, they'd love to hear them! Email Kelsi or Amber at:

[kjewell@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:kjewell@sas.upenn.edu)  
[amber.ange@richmond.edu](mailto:amber.ange@richmond.edu)

## Introducing Stepping Out & Stepping Up

A new HPF initiative to build awareness of Petersburg's historical greatness!

### Here's how it works:

Send us a pic of you and/or your friends or family enjoying one of Petersburg's many historic sites. Or in front of a historic building that you would like to see saved. With the photo, tell us why you feel the site or building is important. We will share these photos and comments on Facebook. Each month we'll give a prize to the one that got the most likes/comments! So, step out, "step up to the plate," and start snapping and posting. Explore, weigh in on what you see, and be a catalyst for the change you'd like to see!



# PETER JONES GETS A FACELIFT

by Louis Malon

Thanks to the ongoing generous support of The Emma E. Bogart Trust, the Peter Jones Trading Post ruins are undergoing a multi-year stabilization effort. Phase 1 was completed this past spring and focused on the southwest corner of the structure. When the adjacent building was removed following the fire in the 1980s, many of the bricks in the remaining walls that were never intended to be exposed to the weather were left unprotected. Over the years, the bricks had begun to degrade as freeze-thaw cycles and vegetation growth had impacted the bricks and their mortar.

Using the Bogart funds, HPF engaged Virginia Masonry Restoration, fresh off their fine work at both Battersea and the Jarratt House to restore and protect the corner showing the most deterioration. As shown in the photo, the joints were repointed, using appropriate lime based mortar. Where needed, bricks carefully selected to match the remaining original bricks were used to replace missing units to create a solid surface against the elements. A thin parging was also helps supplement the protective exterior.



Phase 2, which should be underway as this Newsletter is distributed, will focus on the wall along the Market Street side. The topography of the overall site encourages surface water to drain toward the structure and this retaining wall, impacting the long term stability of the wall. The landside will be excavated and a drainage system will prevent water from being trapped against the wall, thereby forcing it away from vertical. Virginia Masonry Restoration will also be handling this work and, while the wall is exposed, will place additional moisture barriers along with a pipe drainage system. We will re-assess following this project to determine if sufficient funds remain in this grant phase to replace some of the bricks that have suffered loss of integrity due to surface water run-off over the years.

If not financially feasible at this time, we may seek another round of funding from Bogart to stabilize and protect this significant feature remaining from the earliest days of English settlement in Petersburg.

## Dr. Henri' Thompson Joins HPF Board

HPF recently welcomed Dr. Henri' Thompson to its board. An entrepreneur in residence at The MHT Companies and advisor to The Partnership for Education Policy, Dr. Thompson combines his knowledge of people, policy, and process to turn challenges into opportunities. Previously, he served in leadership positions at Johns Hopkins Medicine, Maryland State Retirement and Pension System, the U.S. House of Representatives Office of the Majority Whip, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.



## Walking Tours continue to draw crowds

HPF is still conducting regular walking tours through various historic neighborhoods. And they are still very popular!

In April, following All Things Garden, Grove Avenue was the route. It was a great follow-up to the garden event as many houses featured beautiful plantings.



In July, a special tour commemorating the Great Fire of 1815, which occurred on July 16 of that year, was held. The tour started where the fire started near a small stable between Bolingbrook and Back (now Bank) Streets. Author Tamara Eastman (*The Great Fire of Petersburg*) and local tour guide, Michelle Murrills, conducted the 2-hour tour, giving vivid descriptions of one the greatest tragedies to strike our beloved city,

## HPF film features Petersburg's Lost Treasures

Utilizing the skills of Petersburg newcomer Brian Skillen and two interns from VSU and VCU, HPF created a video highlighting lost architectural and historical treasures. The film focuses on the harbor, the Underground Railroad house on Pocahontas Island, and the Golden Ball Tavern. The intent of the video was to remind us of the impact of losing historic properties and consequently to encourage us to take care of what we are currently in danger of losing.

Calling on local experts to help with special projects is a new volunteer model for HPF. Brian "Lucky" Skillen is a professional filmmaker, writer, and international dance instructor. Brian's film credits include work on *Where We Danced: The Story of American Social Dance* (2012), *The Unwilling* (2016) and *Operation Wedding* (2016). He wrote *The Way*, the first in a trilogy about the Camino de Santiago. We are thrilled to have him as a Petersburg resident and part of the HPF family.

Petersburg's Lost Treasures can be viewed on You Tube or by going to the HPF website.





## Mark your calendar and watch for upcoming HPF events

### Christmas at Peter Jones

HPF is teaming up with the Battersea Foundation to host a stop on the Holiday House Tour. So hook up the sleigh and get it down to the Peter Jones Trading Station on Sunday, December 5th anytime from noon to five.

This festive stop will emanate an air of Christmases past, including music, hot cider, and a visit from the world's favorite old elf, Santa. We will also be selling real boxwood wreaths and kissing balls.

HPF is currently looking for volunteers and donations to help with this event. Please contact us if you would like to join in the fun.



### You can Pre-order, too!!

In addition to being sold at the holiday event, the boxwood wreaths and kissing balls can be pre-ordered and picked up at the HPF headquarters. You can find the pre-order form on the HPF website. Or call to order.



Made to last (stay fresh and green) the entire holiday season!!

The "good old days" apparently weren't always so good. This walking tour will be led by the head historian of Fort Lee and author Tamara Eastman, and local tour guide,

Michelle Murrills, who will take you on a twisted journey through the streets of historic Petersburg. Be prepared to learn about the murder, mayhem, and general naughtiness of times past in our beloved city!!

Tickets can be purchased on Eventbrite or by calling the HPF office.



### The Ball in the Burg will be back!

Mark your calendar for February 27, 2022 and plan to attend the 16th annual Ball in the Burg! Although the details have yet to be firmed up, we believe it will be in the beautiful new library event space! And it promises to be better than ever! Our theme for 2022 will be HEROES in honor of the many heroes that played - and continue to play - an important role in fighting the pandemic. Details to come!!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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