

Virginia Research Facilities—Shenandoah Valley—Frederick County



Newtown History Center in Stephens City

Newtown History Center of the Stone House Foundation

5408 Main Street
Stephens City, VA
Mailing: P.O. Box 143
Stephens City, VA 22655-0143

GPS Coordinates: 39°04'58.22"N,
78°13'05.93"W

Phone: 540-869-1700

Web: <http://www.newtownhistorycenter.org>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Newtown-History-Center/442327005778575>

E-mail: info@newtownhsitorycenter.org

County: Frederick

Open

June-August: Tues-Sat, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Sun, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

September- 3rd Sun. November: Wed-Sat, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Sun, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

December-May: by appointment; call 540-869-1700

Open free of charge during the Newtown Heritage Festival weekend. We are closed for the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's holidays.

Museum and Research Facility

Though not an archive or a library, the Newtown History Center's staff works hard to fulfill the wishes of the museum's founder and benefactress, M.L. Grove, who cared deeply for local family history.

The Center's History. On 24 June 1987 she sent a letter to Mr. John R. Riley Jr., a Frederick County, Virginia official. In this letter Miss Grove articulated her vision of "a small museum or center" that could be "not only a repository for material of interest, but could serve also as a nucleus for information about the history of this area and the people who lived here." Miss Grove predicted this "museum or center would attract . . . the attention of tourists or those interested in genealogical help."

The Center's Function. In turn the Newtown History Center collects and displays documents and artifacts related to individuals and families who have lived in and around the town of Stephens City for the last three centuries. Professional staff of the museum also continue to conduct historical research on these individuals and families to expand on the information that has already been collected.

Unique databases. What we do have at the Newtown History Center is a computer database with the names of people who lived in or near Newtown/Stephensburg from the time of the town's founding in the late Colonial Era through to the period of the Civil War. We also have a computer database focusing on the history of the town's lots that follows their chains of title, and provide other information mentioned in the legal deeds on file at the offices of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Frederick County in Winchester, Virginia.

For extensive research. In short, the Newtown History Center can help to answer most of the questions posed by family history researchers who are seeking information about the history and people of Newtown/Stephensburg/Stephens City. Those seeking extensive research help are encouraged to purchase a Family History Patron membership for \$100. To learn more of the benefits associated with this membership category, you are encouraged to check them out on our website.

Be Prepared

As we are primarily a museum, anyone can come and visit our exhibits and tour our galleries during our normal hours of operation. Researchers should call ahead to make sure the staff on hand will be equipped to answer their questions. Researchers who are seeking general help with their family history investigations should begin their inquiries at the Stewart Bell Jr. Archives in the Handley Regional Library in Winchester, Virginia. Our research library at the Newtown History Center does not, for the most part, contain anything that cannot be found at the Stewart Bell Jr. Archives.

Admission fees to the Newtown History Center are adults-\$2.00, children over 6-\$1.00, families-\$5.00. The Center is open free of charge during the Newtown Heritage Festival weekend. We are closed for the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's holidays.

Copies:

- Most material can be found and photocopied at Stewart Bell Jr. Archives, so we ask researchers to go there for these copies.
- The few things that cannot be found at the Archives but can be found at the Newtown History Center will be copied by Center staff at the rate of 10¢ per copy.
- The History Center has no microfilm viewer/printers that use a USB port.
- In special circumstances we entertain formal requests for digital image scans.
- Cameras are allowed for artifacts, documents, and books if they will be used for private non-commercial purposes.

Holdings

Maps, cemeteries. The Newtown History Center has the original plot map of the Green Hill Cemetery, Stephen City's latest cemetery that was established in the 1870s. We also have transcriptions taken from the tombstones in the three older

town cemeteries that date to the earlier 20th century when most of the grave markers in those yards were still legible.

African American. In the last decade we have also begun to conduct research and collect information and artifacts associated with the town's African American community.

In addition, we have the following sources.

- Yearbooks: *Newtown Pippin*; late 1930s through early 1950s
- Newspapers: *Stephens City Star*, 1880-1883 (Microfilm of each issue is available at Stewart Bell Jr. Archives.)

Collections

- Steele family papers and diaries (19th and 20th centuries)
- Stephens City School class photos (early & middle 20th century)
- Scarlet Rebels Drum and Bugle Corps collection (middle 20th century)
- Family Bibles (Steele, Weaver, Argenbright, etc)
- Ambrose family photo collection (life and Boy Scout activities in Stephens City; middle and late 20th century)

Publications for sale

Images of America: Stephens City

Two Peoples, One Community: The African American Experience in Newtown (Stephens City), Virginia, 1850-1870

History of Orrick Chapel Methodist Church (free on Newtown History Center website)

The Life of a Potter, Andrew Pitman

Early Days and Methodism in Stephens City, Virginia

Byron C. Smith

Director & Curator

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[540-869-7102](tel:540-869-7102)

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