



The first lime kiln at Boteler & Reynolds' cement mill, constructed in Shepherdstown in 1829. The natural cement produced there helped build the C&O Canal.

PRESERVATION

The JCHLC strives to preserve historic sites that are critical to understanding the county's story. We document these structures and share their stories with the public in a variety of ways. We also work with local, state, and federal partners to preserve these buildings and landscapes. JCHLC is engaged in hands-on preservation work at sites we own around Jefferson County, which include a cement mill on the Shepherdstown Battlefield, the oldest wood frame house in West Virginia, the Peter Burr Farm, 1751, and Duffields Depot, 1843, the oldest combination passenger and freight station in the US.

EDUCATION

The JCHLC understands the importance of sharing our local history to engage the public in the work that we do. We publish brochures, driving tours, develop interpretive panels, and share stories and photographs on our Facebook page. We also hold workshops to share available information on preservation, such as historic tax credits and farmland preservation easements. A number of resources are available on our website, and we are happy to put owners in touch with appropriate preservation agencies.



Duffields Depot 1843, the oldest combination passenger and freight station in the US. PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN WILLINGHAM.

HERITAGE TOURISM

Jefferson County's naturally beautiful landscape has only been enhanced by its collection of rolling farms and quaint historic towns. Historic preservation is critical to heritage tourism. Historic structures and landscapes attract and serve travelers. A good heritage tourism program also improves the quality of life for local residents. The JCHLC works to promote the historic districts and sites of Jefferson County to aid in economic development and to promote the economics of historic preservation.

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Front: Cameron's Depot, site of a Civil War battle in 1864. COURTESY OF THE JEFFERSON COUNTY MUSEUM.



Preservation, Education, Heritage Tourism





Harewood, built in 1770 for George Washington's brother Samuel, is the finest and best-preserved of the county's many Washington homes.



Peter Burr Farm, built in 1751, is the oldest wood frame structure in West Virginia. Photographed for HABS WV-42 in 1983.



The Jacob Homar Barn, built in 1832, is one of only two remaining brick bank barns in Jefferson County.

ABOUT US

The Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission (JCHLC) is a branch of the Jefferson County government and operates under the authority granted to landmarks commissions by the West Virginia legislature. The JCHLC focuses on heritage education and tourism, historic preservation, and historic resource development.

The JCHLC's mission is to preserve historic sites, structures, and rural landscapes within the unincorporated areas of Jefferson County and to educate the public about the county's heritage.

The JCHLC consists of five volunteers appointed by the county commission for three-year terms. These volunteers have education and experience in various fields such as architecture, architectural history, archaeology, historic preservation, conservation, landscape architecture, and history.

LANDMARK COMMISSIONS

The JCHLC serves the unincorporated areas of Jefferson County; Charles Town, Harpers Ferry, and Shepherdstown appoint their own landmarks commissions to oversee their respective historic districts. Landmarks commissions are recognized in the WV legislative code in Chapter 8, Article 26A, which states that, "West Virginia heritage, represented by such historic buildings, structures, sites and districts can best be identified, studied, preserved and protected for the general welfare of residents of this state and this nation by authorizing and empowering action for this purpose at the local level."

The JCHLC met for the first time in March 1974. The Commission is empowered to buy and sell property and hold and monitor easements. It advises on new planning projects and maintenance of county owned structures. Between 2004-2007, JCHLC oversaw the completion of an extensive historic resource survey that serves as a planning tool for Envision Jefferson 2035, our county's long-term comprehensive plan.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Jefferson was formed from Berkeley County in 1801. The early settlement period began in 1731 when German immigrant Jost Hite brought 16 families into the valley from Pennsylvania. In 1748 George Washington came to survey Lord Fairfax holdings in the Northern Neck of Virginia. In 1752, with the money he earned, Washington purchased his first piece of property here, 1,459 acres on the Bullskin Run. The 18th century saw a mix of large-scale plantation development by Tidewater families, early industrial development in iron works and mills, as well as small yeoman farms. Social and political life was dominated the Washington and Fairfax families.

Jefferson County contains a wealth of historic resources. The current inventory maintained by JCHLC contains approximately 1,825 structures and sites. Further, 16,000 acres of Jefferson County lie on federally designated battlefield land from five Civil War battle sites.