



Sharpsburg Town Crier

*Max Grim and
Warren Davis Edition*



Volume 32

May 2024

Number 5

The Amazing Odyssey of the Mumma Bible

(Editor’s Note: It’s hard to imagine that at 73 years, this Bible’s remarkable journey completely eluded my own voyage in the pursuit of the history of this place. It was last Fall when one of my fellow “gym rats”, who is also a docent on Antietam Battlefield, asked me if I knew if the Mumma Bible was in German. “What’s the Mumma Bible?”, I asked. That began a personal journey that resulted in this article. By the way, the Bible is in English, as you’ll see.)

The story opens at the Dunker¹ Church, a mile or so north of town. Congregant Daniel Miller had provided the Bible to the congregation 1851 and it was placed in the brightly white-washed Church on its completion in 1853. It might have rested there until today had fate, catastrophe of war, and a series of remarkable events not intervened.



On the morning of September 17, 1862, Dunker Church stood on the Confederate extreme left. It’s dazzling white exterior in the morning sunlight made a convenient visual focus for the initial Federal attack. The dawn attack and savage counterattack came to be known as the Cornfield Action. Later that day, the Church and surrounding area was enveloped in the West Woods Action. This Church, its congregation devoted to Peace, witnessed one of the heaviest scenes of bloodshed in the Civil War.

The Mumma Bible
Today

On the afternoon of that same day, Dunker Church was made into a field hospital, along with dozens of other nearby churches, barns, and homes. It was to be a surgery/hospital for weeks after the Battle. In addition, the adjacent fields were used as temporary burial grounds. Through all this, the Mumma Bible was openly displayed in the Church, witnessing the bloody surgery and preparing the scene for its journey.

Corporal (one account records ‘Sergeant’) Nathan Dykeman 107th Regiment², Company H, New York State Volunteers “removed” the Bible from the Church on September 28, 1862.

Dykeman, the Regiment, and the Bible then went on a harrowing journey over the next three years. The Regiment was engaged in all the familiar battles we know from the history of the Army of the Potomac (e.g., Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, dozens more), but then took a most remarkable turn. In October 1863, the 107th was transferred to the Army of the Cumberland and was thus

We Remember

(See Page 4)



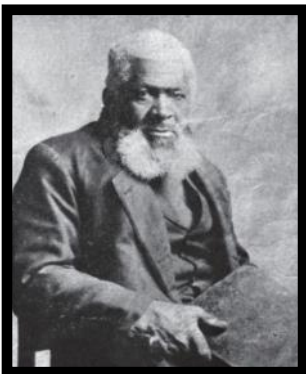
engaged in all the major actions in the South: Siege of Atlanta, March to the Sea; Siege of Savannah, and many more.

Corporal Dykeman and the 107th ended their war by marching with all three Federal Armies past the White House in the Grand Review³ on May 24, 1865. (It's possible that the Bible was in Dykeman's pack as he marched in this parade, the most famous parade in American history!)

Dykeman (and the 107th Regiment) was eager to return home after three years of war and looked forward to mustering out and getting back to Mill Point, NY. They all marched happily to Bladensburg, MD, to board the train home and in a moment of inattention, Corporal Dykeman walked in front of a moving locomotive and was killed. A friend in the Regiment took his possessions, and the stolen Bible, home to Mill Point and into the care of Dykeman's sister. Sadly, we do not have her name.

This Corporal and this Bible had tramped through mud, exhaustion, hunger, disease, all weathers, and deadly Confederate iron and lead and was finally to find rest in New York State, right? No! This story isn't even half over!

In 1903, Dykeman's sister sold the Bible to the Regiment's post-war reunion organization. The old 107th took the decision to try and return the bible to that far away and long ago (38 years) Dunker Congregation. But how?



John T. Lewis with the Mumma Bible

Then someone in the Regiment remembered that a Dunker lived nearby who might be able to help.

At this point, the story careens off the rails and melds completely into another narrative, but hang in there with me!

That Dunker who was asked to help contact Sharpsburg's Dunkers (they had by then become the Brethren) was John T. Lewis, an African American, a freeman. There are many articles written about Lewis in African American literature in which the Mumma Bible is a mere footnote. As you will see his story veers into American Literature, too.

But I get ahead of myself...

John T. Lewis was born in 1835 in Linwood, MD and had an early introduction to the Dunker Church. He was literate and kept a library of books on many subjects, not just religious ones.

As a young man, he went north and first settled near Gettysburg, PA, but with the uncertainty of the status of African Americans, he headed farther north, to Elmira, NY. He worked as a farm laborer, but eventually married a freed slave woman and with her built a produce growing business.



John T. Lewis and Mark Twain

On August 23, 1877, Lewis was returning to his farm with a load of manure in his two-horse wagon when he saw a runaway buggy with three passengers careening down the hill towards him, about to crash over the hill. Lewis leapt from his wagon and brought the run-away team to a halt. The occupants of the buggy were part of a local wealthy family. The author Mark Twain had married into that wealthy family and was visiting there. Some accounts relate that Twain witnessed the event! It is believed by many American Literature authorities that John T. Lewis was Twain's inspiration for "Jim" in the "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."

Lewis, reading through church periodicals, was able to locate and contact the pastor of

the Sharpsburg Dunker (by then, Brethren) community, the Elder John E. Otto. We have John Otto's words, he wrote...

"Sharpsburg, Dec. 4th, 1903

"This Bible was taken from the Church after the Battle of Antietam by Sergeant Nathan F. Dykeman, September 28, 1862, Regt. 107, Co. H., N.Y.S.V. He is now dead and it fell into the hands of his afflicted sister. She presented it to the Company at their reunion this fall 1903 for which they gave her ten dollars.

"Their desire was to send it back to its home in the Brethren Church at Antietam Battlefield if it was still in existence. Through the kindness of Brother John T. Lewis, Elmira, N. Y., they received my name and address. They wrote me, I answered. The Bible is here after an absence of 41 years, 2 months, 6 days. It is supposed to have been placed in the church by Daniel Miller.

name and address. They wrote me, I answered. The Bible is here after an absence of 41 years, 2 months, 6 days. It is supposed to have been placed in the church by Daniel Miller.

"John E. Otto"

The Bible had come home. You MIGHT think its journey had ended. You would be **WRONG!**

Although in that moment, the 'new' Brethren Church had been built, the Bible was restored to the mostly unused old Dunker Church. Souvenir hunters had taken bricks from it and there were large holes in the walls. It was thought that the Church would be broken into and the Bible be stolen again. It was removed for safekeeping to Fahrney-Keedy Home, Mapleville, MD, and was taken out for special occasions, such as on the 75th

anniversary of the Battle.

It then passed into the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Newton Long of Baltimore, MD. Long was a grandson of the Elder Long who had read from it on September 14, 1862, the Sunday before the Battle. (They heard the thunder of the Battle of South Mountain as he read!) Mrs. Long was the great-great-granddaughter of Daniel Miller, the original donor of the Mumma Bible.

For obscure reasons, the Bible was then given into the temporary care of the Dr. and Mrs. Walter Shealy⁴, Sharpsburg's town physician and wife. At this point, its journey enters the haze of history. Some accounts feature it passing through the hands of the Washington County Historical Society. Today, it resides in the collection of the Dunker Church's current custodians, Antietam National Battlefield park.

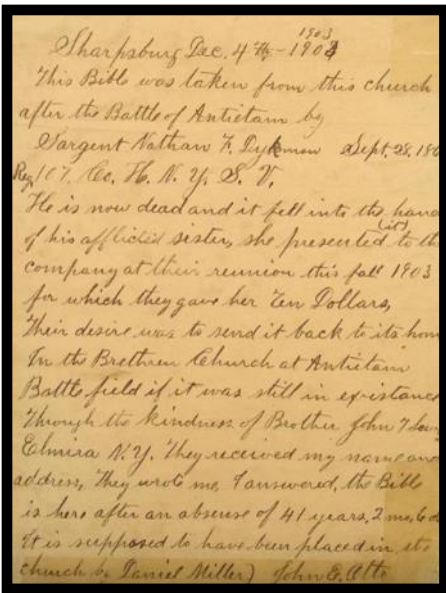
The history of our small place is filled with remarkable narratives like that of the Mumma Bible. As with all history, this one is filled with gaps.

The Editor's biggest puzzle is how it came to be called the "Mumma" Bible for none of that family is found in the narrative.

Many thanks to Ms. Stephanie E. Gray, National Park Service, for her kind submission of two of the photos, including one that demonstrated that it is indeed written in English.

- Editor

¹ Established in Germany in 1708, the Dunkers were members of the German Baptist



The Mumma Bible opened to Exodus, another long journey.

Brethren sect who adhered to a literal interpretation of the New Testament. Though similar to other sects like the Quakers, Amish, and Mennonites in their beliefs, the Dunkers distinguished themselves by their total immersion “dunking” method of baptism, through which they received their name.

² The 107th was organized at Elmira, NY, in the counties of Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben several months before Antietam for three years of duty.

³ The Grand Review of the Armies was a military procession and celebration in Washington, DC, on May 23–24, 1865, following the Union victory. Elements of the Union Army in the United States Army paraded through the streets of the capital to receive accolades from the crowds and reviewing politicians, officials, and prominent citizens, including United States President Andrew Johnson, a month after the assassination President Abraham Lincoln.

⁴ There are many still living who remember Dr. Walter Shealy. The Editor was himself delivered into his hands in 1950.

About the Town



Ernie Wetterer: We Remember

The Town Crier here records the passing of an important member of our community. He embodied the meaning of what it means to be an “all-in” part of who we are. It was a rare event indeed that did not feature...and was not improved by...his just being there! The Editor first met Ernie when taking over the Crier which had been in the caring hands of

his wife Jan until her passing. The 2025 Edition of Town Crier will be devoted to Ernie’s memory and the January feature article will be a more complete remembrance.



- Editor

Ms. Heidi Vertrees: Finalist for Children's Fiction Award

The Town Crier congratulates, Ms. Heidi Vertrees for her being awarded Finalist for Children's Fiction in the 2024 American Legacy Book Awards. It is for her book, “Victor Survives Being a Kid.” You can find this book in our library, on Amazon (<https://a.co/d/h3LUtde>), and sometimes even at local businesses (e.g., Battleview Market). The town is fortunate to have among us a spirit like hers that offers thought-provoking ideas for children.



- Editor

Master Gardeners Class of 2024

Washington County Master Gardeners announce the graduation of its Class of 2024. The fourteen graduates successfully completed 40 hours of training to become volunteer educators with the University of Maryland.



Master Gardeners teach people safe, effective gardening practices that build healthy gardens and communities. They give educational talks, create demonstration gardens, teach children, offer therapeutic horticulture programs, recognize Bay-Wise¹ landscapes, and host information booths at events. Last year, Master Gardener volunteers gave over 5,000 hours of service to the community.

If you're interested in the Master Gardeners program, contact Ms. Annette Cormany, Extension Educator, Horticulture, at acormany@umd.edu or 301-791-1604.

¹ Bay-Wise is a University of Maryland program that promotes the health of our local waterways, Chesapeake Bay, and our environment.

American Legion Kicks Off Poppy Campaign

Miss Poppy Kimber Eichelberger, 7 year old daughter of Gerald and Kelly Eichelberger, presented Sharpsburg Mayor Russell Weaver with a poppy before the May 6 town council meeting.



Miss Poppy Kimber Eichelberger and Mayor Russ Weaver

The presentation was planned to coincide with the upcoming Memorial Day holiday and officially kick off the annual Poppy Campaign of Antietam Unit 236 American Legion Auxiliary.

The poppy is a symbol of remembrance for all who made the ultimate sacrifice in military service to our nation. On Memorial Day, it is asked that you join us in honoring them by wearing the little red flower, handmade by

veterans.

- Ms. Ava Gift, President Antietam American Legion Unit 236

Artifact of the Month: Marker Table

The Sharpsburgh Museum of History was recently the recipient of this cherry wood table, the kind gift of Ms. Joanne Roulette Happ. Ms. Happ is a direct descendant



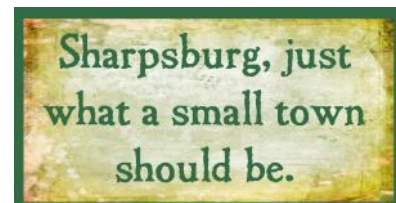
of the Roulette family which endured the heavy fighting and aftermath of the Bloody Lane Action. The wood came from a tree that stood along Bloody Lane and was the work of a town Carpenter/Undertaker, Eugene Marker. The table is complete and includes expansion insert panels.

Community Calendar

May 16: **Curb-Side Bulk Clean-Up**

May 25: **157th Memorial Day Commemoration** (Town Square Ceremony 11AM, Parade at 2PM)
Sharpsburg Town Hall
106 E Main St, Sharpsburg, MD 21782
301-432-4428

May 27 at 11AM: **National Park Service Memorial Day Commemoration**
Antietam National Cemetery
Top of Cemetery Hill, Sharpsburg.



May 30 at 3:30: **Community Story Time**

Sunny Meadows
7437 Sharpsburg Pike
Sponsored by Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

June 1 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Gary Rohrer- MG William B. Franklin**

Pry House Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

June 3 at 6PM: **Town Council Meeting**

Sharpsburg Town Hall
106 E Main St, Sharpsburg, MD 21782
301-432-4428

June 3 at 7PM: **Jim Rosebrock, The Empire State at Antietam**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

June 5 at 1:30PM: **Homeschool STEM, Learning physics with LEGOs.**

Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

June 6 anytime the Library's Open: **Taiwan Adventure, Boba Tea (Try different favors of Boba tea)**

Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

June 10 at 7PM: **Dr. Gordon Dammann, Changes in Medicine from The Civil War to World War I**
Civil War Lecture Series

Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

June 13: **Lion's Club Dinner Program at 7PM, "From Frederick to Sharpsburg: People, Places, and Events of the Maryland Campaign Before Antietam"** See Poster, Page 10

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 209 W. Main St, Sharpsburg, MD
RSVP by June 6 at sharpsburglions@gmail.com

June 13 at 3:30: **Adventure in Nature Summer Reading Club Kick-off!**

Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

June 15 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Laura Marfut – Col. John R. Brooke**

Pry House Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

June 17 at 7PM: **Kevin Pawlak / Dan Welch, "Never Such a Campaign": The Battle of Second Manassas, Aug. 28-30, 1862**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

June 24 at 7PM: **George Franks, The Army of The Potomac After Gettysburg**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

June 29 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Jim Buchanan – MG John Sedgwick**

Pry House Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

July 1 at 7PM: **Dr. Brad Gottfried, At the Forefront of the Armies: The Role of the Cavalry During the Maryland Campaign**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

July 8 at 7PM: **Sharon Murray, Dixon S. Miles Reconsidered**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

July 13 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Tom McMillian -Brig. Gen. Lewis A. Armistead and Brig. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock**

Pry House Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

July 15 at 7PM: **D. Scott Hartwig, One Man's Experiences: Major Rufus Dawes and the Battle of Antietam**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

July 17 from 2PM to 5PM: **Kids Fest at the Ag Expo**

7313 Sharpsburg Pike, Boonsboro 21713

July 22 at 7PM: **Dr. Alex Rossino, Longstreet's March to Hagerstown and Back, Sept. 11-14, 1862**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

July 27 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Michael Hill – Brig. Gen. Thomas Meagher**

Pry House Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

July 29 at 7PM: **Dana Shoaf, The Evolution of Civil War Ambulances**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

August 5 at 7PM: **Dr. Tom Clemens, Washington County's Forgotten Military Hero**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

August 10 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Sharon Murray – Colonel B. F. Davis**

Pry House Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

August 12 at 7PM: **Dr. Jim Broomall, "The hills were black with spectators': Civilians on the Antietam Battlefield**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

August 19 at 7PM: **Steve Stotelmyer, The Legend of Barbara Fritchie**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

August 24 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Joe Stahl – Col. Harrison S. Fairchild**

Pry House Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

August 26 at 7PM: **John Schildt/Laura Marfut, "Roads to Antietam"**

Civil War Lecture Series
Sponsor, Rohrbach Inn at St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 W. Main St.
301-432-5079

September 7 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Jim Rosebrock – Col. Stephen D. Lee**

Pry House Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

September 21 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Harry Smeltzer – Col Albert L. Magilton** Pry House

Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

October 5 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Marty Pritchett – Col. James A. Walker**

Pry House Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

October 19 at 2PM: **Commanders of Antietam, Jim Smith – Brig. Gen. Max Weber**

Pry House Barn, 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
president@antietaminstitute.org

Recurring Events

Throughout the Summer: **Where Are the Wonders of the World?** (The picture will change every week. Tell us where the wonder is located and win a prize! For tweens and teens.)

Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

Second Wednesdays from 12Noon to 1:30PM: **Lunch and Fellowship at the Brethren Church**

123 E Main St.
301-432-4944 / sharpsburgcob@outlook.com

First Wednesdays of the month at 1PM Adults: **Book Share**

Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

Thursdays at 3:30PM: **Storytime**

Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

Second Thursdays every month, **Lion's Club** 7PM, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 209 W. Main St, Sharpsburg, MD 21782
sharpsburglions@gmail.com

First Saturdays at 10AM: **Lego Club**
Sharpsburg Library
301-432-8825

Area Churches

Christ Reformed Church
117 West Main Street
Sharpsburg
301-432-6182
Sundays: 9AM

United Christian Fellowship
18823 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756
301-432-0110
Sundays: 8:45AM Fellowship, 9AM Sunday School, 10AM Worship & Children's Church

Sharpsburg Church of the Brethren
123 E Main St, Sharpsburg
Sundays at 10AM, Sunday School at 10:30AM
301-432-4944

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
209 West Main Street
Sharpsburg
301-432-7098
Sundays: 10AM, Sunday School (Second and Fourth Sundays starting September 25)

Burnside First Church of God
3904 Mills Rd, Sharpsburg
Sunday Worship - 9:00am, Sunday School - 10:15am

Sharpsburg Bible Church
5134 General Stuart Court, Sharpsburg
301-432-5309
Sunday School 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM, Sunday Morning Worship & Children's Church 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM

Mayor & Councilpersons

Russ Weaver – Mayor
Jacob Martz – Vice Mayor
Mia Parsons – Council
John Hammond – Council
Ed Beeler-Council
Robbie Waters – Council
Joe Kudla – Council
(Debbie Smith – Town Clerk)
106 East Main Street
PO Box 368
Sharpsburg, Maryland 21782
Phone: 301-432-4428
Fax: 301-432-8990
<https://sharpsburgmd.com/>
townofsharpsburg@comcast.net
<https://www.facebook.com/TheTownOfSharpsburg>
Zoning Administrator-Tim Lung
Sharpsburg.md.zoning@gmail.com

msa 5/15/24 Ver1.0

ATTACHMENT:



Sharpsburg Lions Club

Dinner Programs

The Sharpsburg Lions Club is hosting a dinner program for only \$10.00.

June 13

"From Frederick to Sharpsburg: People, Places, and Events of the Maryland Campaign Before Antietam"

Author, Steven Stotemyer will discuss his latest book "From Frederick to Sharpsburg" and how it sheds light on some of the other participants and events long obscured in the shadow cast by America's bloodiest day.

Steve is a distinguished author of the Maryland Campaign. He is a native of Hagerstown, Maryland, served in the U.S. Navy and holds a master's degree from Hood College. Steve helped form the Central Maryland Heritage League in 1989 which was successful in preserving part of the South Mountain Battlefield.

He is the author of *The Bivouacs of the Dead: The Story of Those Who Died at Antietam and South Mountain*, and most recently *Too Useful To Sacrifice: Reconsidering George B. McClellan's Generalship in the Maryland Campaign from South Mountain to Antietam*.

Dinner Menu: Fried Chicken, baked beans, assorted salads and dessert.

The dinner program will start at **7:00pm** and is held at St Paul's Episcopal Church, 209 W. Main Street in the parish hall at the back of the church.

Please **RSVP** by June 6th to sharpsburglions@gmail.com