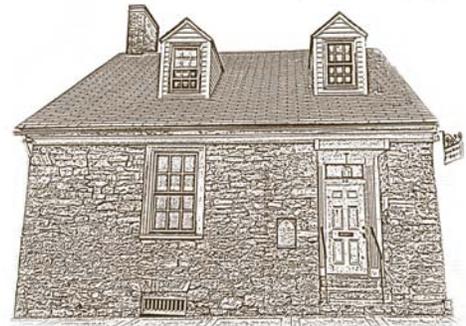


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City Partners to Uncover a Piece of Harrisonburg's History

THOMAS HARRISON HOUSE



History Revealed and Restored

Harrisonburg, Va. – The city of Harrisonburg is partnering with several local organizations to research and restore the historic Thomas Harrison House in downtown Harrisonburg.

Dr. Carole Nash, archeologist with James Madison University (JMU), and her students have started a four week survey of the cellar kitchen and site to uncover artifacts and to collect additional information about the time this historic structure was built. Once they complete the archeological dig in the cellar, they will move to the parking lot surrounding the house.

Any artifacts discovered will be photographed and processed at a lab and eventually put on display. Later, Dr. Nash's team will also use ground penetrating radar to assist in looking under the many layers of gravel and pavement in the parking lot. This will help the archeological team better pinpoint the location to dig below the surface for pieces of Harrisonburg's history.

"It has been a dream of mine to work on this house and lot," explained Dr. Nash. "We hope to discover more about what life was like in this time period in Harrisonburg."

The city purchased the Thomas Harrison House from Asbury United Methodist Church in 2014 with plans to restore a significant piece of Harrisonburg's history. The city has partnered with Asbury United Methodist Church, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Margaret Grattan Weaver Foundation, Frazier Associates, Architects, and Planners, and JMU to complete this study.

"We are excited to be a partner in this process to restore and preserve a significant piece of history from within our community," explained Kurt Hodgen, city manager. "It is our goal to share the progress and findings with the community as the project progresses."

About the Harrison House

The Thomas Harrison House dates back to the 1750's and is one of the few remaining homes in the state that was built and occupied by a town's founder. When Thomas Harrison deeded two and a half acres of his land to the public good in 1779, the city of Harrisonburg was born. The home is made from stone and located just west of the intersection of Main and Bruce streets.

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The restoration will be funded by the city and the Margaret Grattan Weaver Foundation. Ultimately, it is envisioned that the Thomas Harrison House will be restored to a period reflective of Thomas Harrison's lifetime and be a showcase for the history of the Harrison family, this community, and the region. At some point during the archeological research, the house and artifacts discovered will be open to the public for viewing.

Additional information about the Thomas Harrison House and this project can be found at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/thomas-harrison-house.



Pictured above: The front of the house, which faces Bruce Street and the hearth that is located in the cellar of the home.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.



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