

Last week, the county library with the help of the county administrator and many faithful county library supporters purchased the diary of Jacob Stiegel. It's not a daily account of Stiegel's life nor does it tell important dates or events in Shenandoah County. In fact, the book is a tax ledger.

The 1795-1797 manuscript shows tax records, receipts and debts, carefully enumerated and recorded in the distinct style of a tax collector or a clerk of the court.

It is a book that has been in the Stiegel family for generations. Mickey Helsley, a member of the Shenandoah County Historical Association, saw the item listed for sale at Green Valley Auctions.

"She called me. I called Vince Poling to see if he could authorize some money for me. He was able to give me \$200," said Cooper. She said in passing conversation she heard Herb Parker of Fort Valley Library mention his own interest in the book. "I told him to put his money with us," she said. She pulled together a few more resources so when the book went for \$950 she had the funds to purchase it.

Cooper had found out that the book was going to be auctioned for at least \$900. "None of us had that much to begin with. But by pooling our resources, we were able to purchase this," she said. She said next time something like this comes up she wants to be better prepared.

This fall, the annual fund drive

See LIBRARY, A2

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Library thrilled with old book

Lisa G. Currie
Valley-Herald staff writer

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EDINBURG - Shenandoah County archivist Karen Cooper has added a very special edition to the library archives at the Shenandoah County Library in Edinburg.

"It tells us names of people who were in the county," she said, as she carefully - oh, so carefully - turned the thin yellowed pages of the diary.

She was hesitant to bring the book out before the Virginia Library Association teaches her and others about preservation and how to handle the 200-year-old manuscript.

Some of the pages are torn, corners ripped and the binding has come apart. But for Cooper the book is priceless.

"We don't have anything like this at all," she said, gently caressing with loving

fondness, rubbing her fingers so delicately over the pages of tiny, precise writing, which resembles script or calligraphy.



COOPER SHOWS OFF BOOK.

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