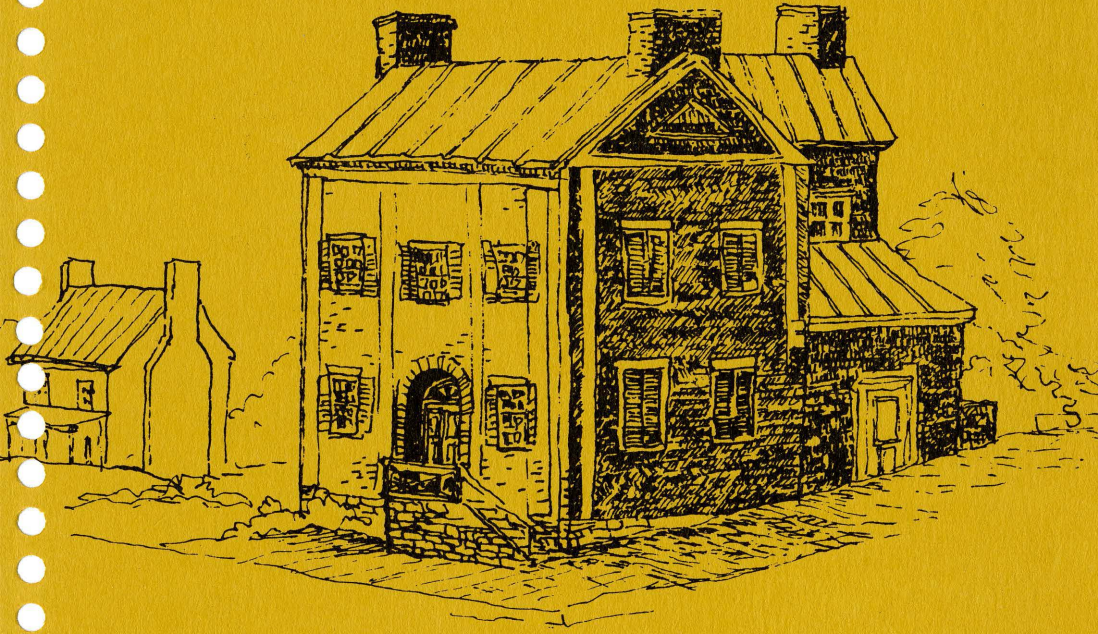


ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



VOLUME EIGHT OF THE PROCEEDINGS,
1970-1974

RHS

VIII

Cover Drawings:

Front—The Campbell House
(Rockbridge Historical Society Headquarters),
by Barbara Crawford.

Back—The Old Blue Hotel
(c. 1818; demolished 1947; as it appeared in the 1880s),
by Carrie Clark.

Proceedings
of the
Rockbridge Historical Society

Volume VIII (1970-1974)



Larry I. Bland, Editor

Joellen K. Bland, Assistant Editor



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Introduction

If George Santayana is correct in saying that "a country without a memory is a country of madmen," then Rockbridge County is sane indeed, for the memory of its people is long and is continually enhanced by its historians. This collection of essays, garnered from twenty quarterly meetings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, spans the period from the prehistoric to the present. Methodologically, the historian's standard practice of archival research is leavened generously with oral history.

Rockbridge's Scotch-Irish Presbyterian heritage constitutes an important theme for the county's students of its history; but there are other important themes. The traditionally strong, deeply rooted Virginia family leads naturally to an interest in genealogy. And when one's ancestors built with such vitality, it is not surprising to discover here an abiding concern for the preservation and history of local architecture. Finally, this small county is the home of three institutions of higher education, each of which has had indelible intellectual, social and cultural impact upon the community and its historians.

The seventeen signed essays in this book have been arranged roughly in the chronological order of their subjects. They represent varied stages in their authors' researches. Some were preliminary reports presented extemporaneously or from notes; the papers herein printed were written later. Other essays were more on the order of interim reports of ongoing studies which the authors subsequently expanded or condensed. A few essays were the authors' final effort on the subject described. In some cases the editor has condensed an essay to fit the space available here. Three presentations before the Society were never essays in the accepted sense, and the editor has supplied a brief description of the topic. If the author supplied footnotes and other scholarly apparatus, these were printed in the expectation that future researchers would benefit from the sources cited.

Many people labored to create this book. Most important were the authors of the essays whose unremunerated efforts are printed here. Secondly, Richard Fletcher, the Society's president during 1979-80, encouraged and supported the publishing project; equally important was his tenacity in locating and obtaining the essays and many of the illustrations.

Two institutions deserve much praise for their technical assistance. The George C. Marshall Research Foundation provided the editor, office space and equipment. The Historical Society purchased its type from the

Lexington *News-Gazette*; but more importantly, the paper's long-suffering production department, particularly James Dedrick and his assistants, Sharon Ludt and Jane Rorrer, helped to create a book where only manuscripts and ideas had existed. Thanks are also due to Barbara Crawford and Carrie Clark for donating their artistic talents for the front and back covers; to Royster Lyle and many others for their assistance in obtaining pictures, and to Betty Kondayan and Sarah Radick of the Washington and Lee Archives. John Jacob's assistance in lay-out was invaluable.

Few people find writing easy or quick work. Writers of history, inevitably discovering themselves constrained by relatively unmalleable facts and surfeited by ideas and possible interpretations, can sympathize with Tristram Shandy's description of the problem:

When a man sits down to write a history, . . . if he is a man of the least spirit, he will have fifty deviations from a straight line to make with this or that party as he goes along, which he can no way avoid. He will have views and prospects to himself perpetually soliciting his eye, which he can no more help standing still to look at than he can fly; he will moreover have various Accounts to pick up: Inscriptions to make out: Stories to weave in: Traditions to paste up at this door: Pasquinades at that: . . . To sum up all; there are archives at every stage to be look'd into, and rolls, records, documents, and endless genealogies, which justice ever and anon calls him back to stay the reading of: —In short, there is no end of it.*

But as the essays in this and previous volumes of the *Proceedings* demonstrate, there is indeed an end of it, an enjoyable and valuable one. Perhaps previous and future contributors will be less intimidated by Shandy's description of the process having seen these results. ☆

* Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (New York, 1940), pp. 36-37.

Early Man In Rockbridge County

PRIMITIVE, NOMADIC INHABITANTS, members of a Paleo-Indian culture, roamed the Shenandoah Valley thousands of years before the descendants of European and African civilizations arrived a mere two and one-half centuries ago. These "Amerinds" were a blend of several races rather than true Mongoloids; their features usually included dark skin, straight black hair, relatively little body hair, prominent cheek bones, and hawk-like noses.

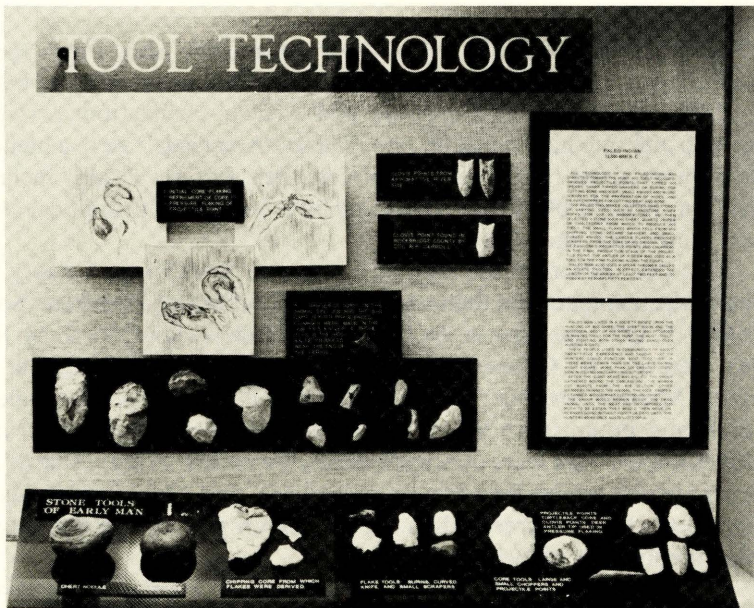
This description of the earliest humans in Rockbridge County was given to the members and their guests at the Rockbridge Historical Society's May 3, 1971, meeting at the Lexington Presbyterian Church by John Henry Reeves, Jr. Colonel Reeves is the Professor of Biology at the Virginia Military Institute; but in addition he is an archeologist, paleontologist and botanist, to list only his scientific credentials. Illustrating Colonel Reeves' talk were dozens of projectile points, pottery shards and scrapers which young Pete Davis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paxton Davis, found along Woods Creek when the Lexington golf course was dug up during the summer of 1970.

Colonel Reeves described Davis' artifacts as coming from several cultural levels which demonstrated that the people who used them were inhabitants of the region from 7000 B.C. to 500 B.C. The earlier artifacts

were used by nomadic bands who took pleasure in making polished, pointed stones and spear weights for hunting. These wanderers moved through the region in small groups, led by a very old man or woman—a person perhaps thirty or forty years old. Their lives were hard and short. Their teeth wore down rapidly from the poor food. They cooked soup in bark or skin containers, warmed with hot clay balls heated in the ashes of their fires.

These early people achieved a great technical breakthrough when they learned to make pottery, the broken remains of which young Davis discovered. These new cooking vessels probably enabled the people to improve their diet and consequently their health. At this time they began to live a more sedentary life. Villages appeared as the people began to practice agriculture—growing corn, potatoes, tomatoes and tobacco. They even practiced dentistry.

The earliest inhabitants of Rockbridge County adhered to a rigorous moral code. Mentally retarded children were not abandoned to certain death or left to the family, but were considered to be a gift of the gods and were treated with care and affection by the entire community. Marital laws were strict; those not conforming might be expelled from the group and stoned. Punishment for transgressions of the moral code could be swift and sometimes deadly. ☆



Early man's tools are displayed at the VMI Archeological Museum.

Log Buildings in Rockbridge County

Royster Lyle, Jr.

THIS PAPER WILL DISCUSS a segment of the folk building styles which started in the western Virginia area in the eighteenth century and which in certain ways influenced the later forms of more sophisticated architecture. Concentration will naturally be in the Rockbridge County area where the majority of my research was done.

Frank Lloyd Wright wrote in 1910 that "the true basis for any serious study of the art of architecture still lies in those indigenous, more humble buildings everywhere that are to architecture what folklore is to literature or folk song to music and with which academic architects were seldom concerned."

Any discussion of the indigenous architectural forms in the Valley of Virginia must necessarily begin with the log cabin, the log house and the log barn. During the past several years I have photographed or examined over one hundred log buildings in the Rockbridge County area and, with the assistance of several recent articles, have been able to draw several conclusions about the styles and types found in the county. Ac-

Royster Lyle, Jr., of Lexington, Virginia, is Associate Director of the George C. Marshall Research Foundation and curator of its museum, an architectural historian, and the editor of volume six of the Society's *Proceedings*. Mr. Lyle addressed the Society on October 26, 1970, in Lejeune Hall at the Virginia Military Institute.

comparing this investigation has been an effort to determine the various cultural influences that caused these particular forms to develop.

It is important to mention that there is a wealth of extant source material available in this part of the country. I was, of course, able to examine only a small percentage of the log structures still standing in the county. I expect that there are probably few places in the United States with a greater concentration of remaining log buildings. The area is fertile ground for further serious study.

To explain fully the movement of log construction into the Valley of Virginia, it is necessary to begin in the mid-seventeenth century when the Swedes began settling in the Delaware Valley in the area near Philadelphia. C. A. Weslager, in his book *The Log Cabin in America*,



Log corn crib, White Rock Mountain.

states that “because the use of horizontally-laid notched logs, both round and hewn, as an accepted form of settlement housing, made its American debut in New Sweden, the area is of utmost importance for a thorough understanding of the origins and diffusion of what came to be known as the American log cabin.”

This is principally the same conclusion reached by Harold R. Shurtleff in his book *The Log Cabin Myth*, published forty years ago. Shurtleff wrote: “Each group of European colonists in the 17th century erected the sort of dwelling they were accustomed to at home. The only 17th century colonists who brought with them a log-house technique were the Swedes.” Shurtleff, who was director of research at Colonial

Williamsburg in the 1930s, spent most of his scholarly book proving that the early settlers in New England and Virginia did not build log houses in spite of the folklore that has survived.

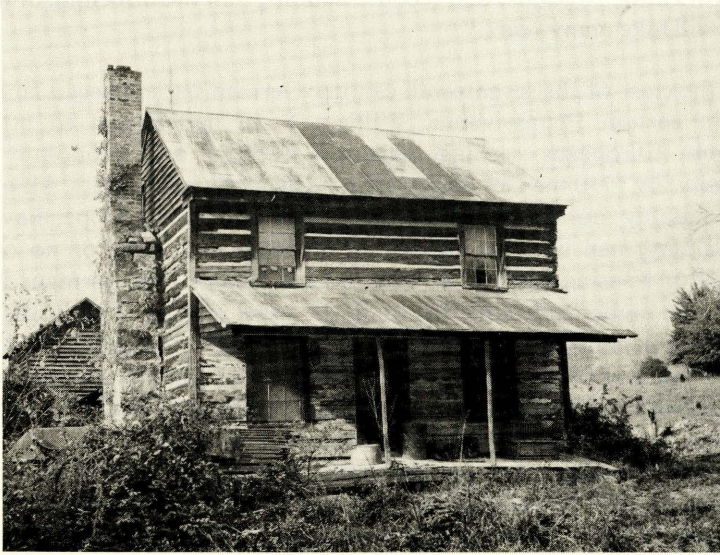
Samuel Eliot Morison said that Shurtleff found "strongly entrenched in the public mind a myth that the log cabin was the earliest form of dwelling of the English settlers. Whenever there was question of restoring Jamestown, or Roanoke Island, or some other earlier colonial village, he was confronted by a strong public bias in favor of the log cabin." Shurtleff notes that Professor Thomas J. Wertenbaker, who made his own investigation of earlier colonial housing, concluded that there were no log houses in Virginia or New England until the eighteenth century. But, Shurtleff concludes, "So firmly established is the Log Cabin Myth, and so widely has it been disseminated by illustrations, picture post cards, pageants, and reconstructions, that the dispelling of [this myth] will take many years."

At the close of the seventeenth century German settlers began landing in eastern Pennsylvania. William Penn had hoped to attract desirable Europeans seeking religious freedom and economic opportunity; by 1710 the Germans were arriving in large numbers. Many of them, notably those from Switzerland, the Black Forest, Upper Bavaria and Saxony, had lived in log houses at home and knew of no other method of housing for people with modest means. The Germans were soon to be numerically superior to all the other groups. And it was the German folk culture that soon became dominant in this area, including that of housing construction. That Swedish and Finnish log buildings were present in Pennsylvania is perhaps important, but the German influence from this point on became the most persistent.

Three decades after the Germans had begun settling in Pennsylvania, the first Scotch-Irish arrived from northern Ireland. Of all the American colonies, Pennsylvania best suited the restless, lowland Scots who were already living in an unhappy foreign land. William Penn offered to the Scotch-Irish, as he did to each European group, a government based on universal male suffrage and a promise of economic success for a man who was willing to work. As a Quaker and a pacifist, he made no provisions for a militia or any military establishment and he guaranteed in his charter complete freedom of conscience. Between 1717 and 1735 approximately 250,000 Scotch-Irish came to America from Ulster, most of them stopping first in Delaware and southeastern Pennsylvania. The Scotch-Irish who settled in New Castle, Delaware, were exposed first to the Swedish-Finnish log housing and those who settled west of Philadelphia to that of the Germans.

The houses of the Scots in lowland Scotland had been almost

nondescript; many were one room “shanties of stone, banked with turf, without mortar, the crevices stuffed with straw, heather or moss” to keep out the weather. In Ulster, after they had moved across to northern Ireland, things were little better. Charles Hanna, in his book *The Scotch-Irish*, referred to the Ulster dwellings as “poor thatched houses” and “houses covered with clods.” Some historians agree that the Scotch-Irish brought with them no housing culture or tradition, let alone one of log. Unlike the English settlers who knew of or had seen log buildings on the Continent, the settlers from Ulster knew nothing of log houses. In addition, they apparently brought with them “no traditions of horticulture, orchards, and vineyards, nor skilled craftsmanship, whether for house-building, furniture or farm implements.” Dr. James Leyburn, in his sociological study of the Scotch-Irish, paints the Ulsterman and his



Log house, Route 632.

descendants as almost without an artistic culture. “In the earliest days of settlement there was no time for the artistic, even if the motive had been there. A home was a house to be lived in; a church was a building in which one might hear the Word; a school was a place for teaching and learning.”

Yet, in spite of this, it was the Scotch-Irish immigrants from Pennsylvania and their descendants who became the dominant American pioneer and from whom developed the American frontier culture—not the least part of which was log building construction.

In 1730 a new land policy was instituted by Governor William Gooch of Virginia—that of granting great tracts of land in the Valley of Virginia to individual entrepreneurs. By this time settlers had already found most of the attractive farm lands in Pennsylvania, while the flow of settlers from Germany and Ulster continued unabated. Many of the Germans had by the 1730s pushed their way across the Potomac River and had taken up much of the finest land in the northern end of the Valley.

In 1736 Governor Gooch gave William Beverly and Benjamin Borden two grants of 118,491 acres and 92,100 acres respectively. Beverly's land covered the area to the North, including the modern county of Augusta and the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro. Borden's land was the southern part of Augusta and almost the whole of Rockbridge, including what later became Lexington. One of the stipulations was that Borden should have a hundred families settled on the land before he could receive title. Within two years he succeeded in securing the necessary settlers from Pennsylvania and in 1739 he received clear title.

Within the decade after 1736 these two tracts were so predominately Scotch-Irish that they were known as the "Irish Tract." Charles Hanna recorded that in 1738 these Scotch-Irish settlers had constructed ninety-two cabins on the Borden tract. Land dispersement, or "cabin right" was based upon the settler's having built a log cabin upon the tract he claimed.

Weslager records that during their stay in Pennsylvania the Scotch-Irishmen did not learn log construction easily. He says: "Whereas the skilled German or Swedish cabin builder was capable of hewing logs with two or four flat surfaces, and interlocking them with carefully executed notches to produce tight, square, even corners, Scotch-Irish builders, at least at first, did not possess this sophistication, and both their round and hewn log cabins were crudely notched, having wide gaps between the logs to be chinked with mud, moss, wood, and stones, just as they had caulked the stone walls of their lowland shanties." But undoubtedly the craft learned by the Scotch-Irish from the Germans and Swedes improved and developed to a certain degree of sophistication as is evidenced by an investigation of examples still extant in this area of Virginia.

Only recently have students of architectural history begun to look seriously at early log construction as an important form of American building. Hardly can a log cabin be called an architectural type, but as a building method it is of special significance in certain areas because of the forms that resulted from this sort of construction. Social geographers became interested in log construction (and all early folk buildings for that matter) as a way of tracing the diffusion of various ethnic groups throughout the country.

As the Valley of Virginia was a key route to the west and southwest, this area is receiving special attention. Two imaginative scholars, Fred Kniffen and Henry Glassie, have been the leaders in developing a number of outstanding studies on housing types, corner timbering methods, chimney construction, roofing materials, and so on. Little can be written on the subject today without reflecting on their first-rate books and articles.

Kniffen and Glassie are quick to admit that much more field work needs to be done on the remaining log buildings in every area. There are few places left where log construction is still employed as an authentic method for housing, certainly not in the Valley. Farm buildings, particularly those involving the tobacco culture, are still being built of log in many sections of the South. Log construction as a modest housing form has been almost completely replaced in the South by balloon frame houses and more recently by prefabricated, pre-cut and mobile homes.

In my field work in Rockbridge County I found that the log structures built originally for housing can be divided into two categories: log cabins and log houses. Some studies have divided folk buildings into square houses and rectangular houses, regardless of the construction materials, but I found that this did not appear practical in this area.

In Rockbridge County the log cabin appears to range in outside dimensions from 12 x 15 feet to about 15 x 18 feet. There are, of course, exceptions, but this is about average. On the whole the cabin is less well built than the house and corner timbering methods seem to be more crude. The cabin is almost always smaller with one room downstairs and a loft above. The loft is usually reached by a ladder through a corner opening in the ceiling. In most cases there is only the front door, with one front window on the side toward the chimney. The older buildings had no windows. I found no convincing evidence of dirt floors; the fireplace levels would indicate board floors from the beginning. A good example of a typical Rockbridge cabin is located at the Kerrs Creek bridge at the junction of state secondary roads 631 and 602.

It is doubtful that the early pioneer planned the cabin as a permanent dwelling; it was just the quickest way of establishing a residence. Undoubtedly he expected as soon as possible to build a more substantial house of log or stone (and perhaps of brick—although this came a little later) to accommodate his family. Since he already knew log construction, the larger log house was in many cases his next effort. The log house in our area is usually 16 x 20 feet to about 19 x 24 feet, appearing nearly square, but a little wider than deep.

The most characteristic house has two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs with a central front door and one chimney at a gable end. Some of the larger houses have two chimneys. The stair is entered direct-



Early log cabin, Kerrs Creek, Routes 631 & 632.

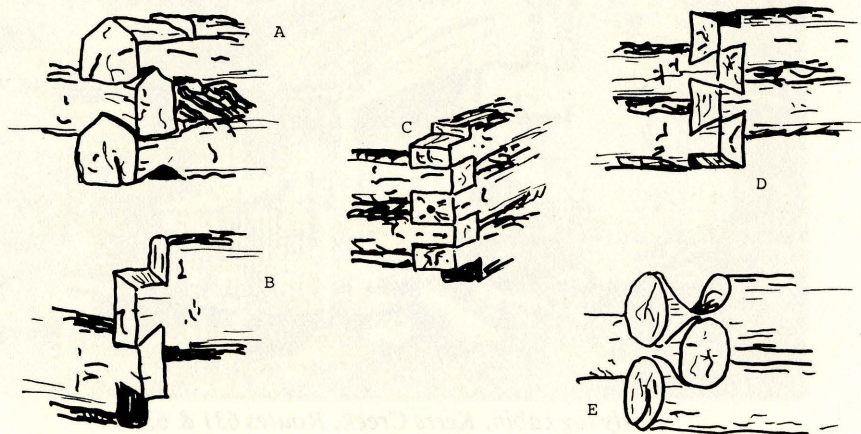
ly from the front door or in some cases is a box stair in the back of the house. The original partitions between the rooms were vertical boards; interior log walls are unusual in a house. Both the cabin and the house almost always have a front porch which was a principal work area. The interior house walls and the porch were generally whitewashed.

One of the most interesting special characteristics of the log construction is the different ways the log ends are notched and joined—what is called corner timbering. Little seems to be known about why certain forms of notching are more prevalent in some places than in others. In the Valley of Virginia the most common log ending type is V-notching. Other types which can be found are half dove-tailing (uncommon), and full dove-tailing (rare); outside Rockbridge County square notching and saddle notching can be found. I have seen square notching in Amherst and Bath Counties, and round notching in Botetourt County. Most of the log endings on buildings used for

residences are cut flush with the corner, while on many of the farm buildings the logs extend to various lengths.

In the better built cabins and houses in the Valley there is a special form of chinking and daubing. Chinking is placing wood slabs tightly at an angle in the log interstices. Then the interstices were made more solid by adding a mixture of mud and lime, known as daubing. The combination of the thick log walls and the careful chinking and daubing thus made the log structures, as Thomas Jefferson put it, "warmer in winter and cooler in summer than the more expensive constructions of scantling and plank."

Two types of early wood roofs can be found: clapboard (long nar-



Corner-timbering methods in the Southern Mountains: A) V-notching; B) half dovetail; C) Square notching D) Full dovetail E) Saddle notching.

row wood shingling) and smaller shingles. A clapboard roof is not to be confused with the New England term, clapboard, which in Virginia is generally called weatherboarding. Many of the exposed log sides of houses in the Valley were covered with weatherboarding shortly after they were built to protect the logs and the daubing from the weather. This has made it particularly difficult to examine the majority of the extant log buildings, but has had the effect of preserving the buildings. Today many of the very early structures are still in excellent condition.

Anyone who has built a log cabin with a "Lincoln Log" set will fully understand the impossibility of adding another log room to a log cabin without tearing down the entire building and starting over. Because

of the obvious need for the early builder to enlarge his log cabin, various methods were devised to circumvent this problem. The most common solution throughout the South, although not in Rockbridge County, is called the dog trot, wherein two cabins are set side by side with a hallway between. In most cases the houses were later weatherboarded and the area between the cabins became the front hall.

A more common local double cabin form is the saddle bag, which is two cabins (pens) built on either side of a central chimney, leaving a small area exposed on either side of the chimney. Most of the additions to log buildings were of frame construction, as this was much easier to



Double pen log barn, Marble Valley.

attach to the original house. This type can be observed frequently throughout the county. Still another way of adding to a log house was to build a second pen abutting the first and cutting a door through the two thicknesses of logs.

Dating cabins and other log buildings is difficult because few records were kept and, as it was a folk form, succeeding generations built almost identical structures using the same basic methods.

Most of the log structures throughout Virginia and the South were not built as residences but as farm outbuildings. Among the most interesting is the double crib barn so prevalent in Pennsylvania and throughout the Valley of Virginia. In Rockbridge County the double crib or double pen barns come in many variations, but the basic plan is the

same. The two square pens are generally 15 x 15 to 20 x 20 feet with a passage between about the same width as the pens. In most cases sheds have been added which have helped in the buildings' preservation.

What part log construction has in the total picture of the architecture of the Old Dominion needs considerably more study. But there is no question that it was the most important building method of the early settlers (and their descendants) in Rockbridge County and in a large section of the state. The new findings from extensive field work concerning the methods used in early log construction will be helpful in the many reconstruction projects now under way across the state. It will mean the difference between an authentic restoration and one carelessly done. How much more impressive it will be to announce that you have recently begun work on a full dove-tailed saddle bag rather than merely a log cabin. ☆

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New Providence Presbyterian Church 1746-1856

Roy K. Patteson, Jr.

THE SCOTCH-IRISH PRESBYTERIANS were among the more numerous settlers who came into the Valley of Virginia. Most of them came from Ulster, in the northern part of Ireland, just across from Scotland. Their lives in Ireland had been marked by a rebellion against England, by resentment from their native Roman Catholic neighbors, and by heavy restrictions upon their rights. Fighting, famine and pestilence reduced their numbers in Ireland, and after nearly a century of discrimination under English laws, they sought relief by migrating to America.

The first Scotch-Irish Presbyterians settled in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In 1706 they formed the Presbytery of Philadelphia with seven ministers. From the beginning these ministers dedicated themselves to the difficult task of supplying the "desolate places" of the colonies which were without a minister. They mutually covenanted to encourage the formation of Christian societies wherever

Dr. Roy K. Patteson, at the time this address was delivered, lived in Rockbridge Baths, Virginia, and held the position of Director of Development at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton. He holds a Ph.D. degree from Duke University in Biblical Literature, Languages and History. Dr. Patteson's presentation to the Society was made on July 29, 1974, in the auditorium of New Providence Presbyterian Church near Brownsburg.

possible and accepted assignments to itinerate into Virginia whenever possible.

The Scotch-Irish began to move, legally and otherwise, into the Shenandoah Valley in search of free or cheap land. In 1734 the lieutenant governor of Virginia, William Gooch, granted an Englishman named Benjamin Borden a patent for 500,000 acres. This land comprised a portion of what became Rockbridge County in 1778. The land was granted to Borden on condition that he settle one hundred families on it. He advertised the land in Ireland, offering one hundred acres to each family who would build a cabin on it. By 1737 families began arriving, and in late 1739 Borden obtained his patent. Another grant about the same time was issued to William Beverly and some others for almost 120,000 acres. This grant included the area around what was soon called Staunton and was known as Beverly Manor, a name still retained in the vicinity.

In May, 1738, John Caldwell, acting in behalf of himself and some other Presbyterian families about to settle in the Valley of Virginia, requested the Synod of Philadelphia¹ to send a delegation to Williamsburg to seek the colonial government's permission to practice their religion in the region. The synod appointed a committee which drafted a properly deferential letter assuring Lieutenant Governor Gooch that the settlers, like all members of the Church of Scotland, were completely loyal to the "illustrious House of Hanover, and have upon all occasions manifested an unspotted fidelity to our gracious sovereign King George," and merely desired the favor of "the liberty of their consciences. . . ."

Governor Gooch's favorable response was read to the Synod at its May, 1739, meeting.

. . . as I have been always inclined to favor the people who have lately removed from other provinces, to settle on the western side of our great mountains; so you may be assured that no interruptions shall be given to any minister of your profession who shall come among them, so as they conform themselves to rules prescribed by the Act of Toleration in England, by taking the oaths enjoined thereby, and registering the places of their meeting, and behave themselves peaceably towards the government.

It is apparent from this how desirous the English were of protecting themselves from the Indians and of fortifying their claim to the western areas of the continent by establishing a white population in the Valley of Virginia.

In 1740 the Presbyterians in the Valley made a formal request for the services of a pastor to the Presbytery of Donegal.² In September of

¹ The number of Presbyterian ministers and members had increased sufficiently for four presbyteries to be formed. In 1717 they met together as the Synod of Philadelphia.

² The Presbytery of Donegal had been organized in 1732 in the region centering on Lancaster, Pennsylvania, for the purpose of serving the frontier region.

that year the Reverend John Craig accepted a call for the congregation of Shenandoah, and he was set apart for the work of the ministry in the southern part of Beverly's Manor. Craig later described the Valley as a "new settlement without a place of worship or any church order, a wilderness in the proper sense, and a few Christian settlers in it, with numbers of the heathen traveling among us." The Indians could be troublesome, he noted; it was always best to give them what they wished to eat or drink in order to avoid trouble.

About this time severe differences became apparent in the Synod of Philadelphia among the ministers, centering chiefly on the question of proper qualifications for ministers. The division was also occasioned by the "Great Awakening" which had spread throughout the country as a result of the evangelical preaching of Jonathan Edwards, and later of George Whitfield. This revival movement led to differing views regarding the place of personal experience (i.e., inner-calling of the spirit) and of the emotions in religious experience.

The matter came to a head in 1741 in the Synod of Philadelphia; the result was a division of the church which would last for seventeen years. The more conservative ministers, who would later be known as the "Old Side," protested on June 1, 1741, against the abuses which they attributed to the "New Side" ministers. After the reading of this protest, a vote was taken which showed the revivalist party in the minority. The New Side ministers thereupon withdrew and formed the Synod of New York.

The Synod of New York brought the Presbyterian Church to the congregations of the Valley of Virginia. The Presbyterian societies which had been established by the Synod of Philadelphia were actually aligned with the Old Side portion of the church, but the Old Side's lack of ministers and zeal prevented them from doing extensive missionary work in the Valley. In contrast the New Side was more aggressive and sent men such as Samuel and John Blair to organize churches on both sides of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

John Craig, who remained aligned with the Old Side portion of the Church, supplied the congregations and meeting houses in the Valley as early as 1740, although there had been no formal effort to organize a church. The Presbyterians who were there at first met in homes, in shelters constructed as meeting houses, or perhaps in the open in good weather.

In 1743, Reverend Craig, having accepted the pastorate at the Augusta Stone Church, as well as at Tinkling Spring, visited the New Providence community, which was then only a Presbyterian society and a part of the "South Mountain Meeting House," located near the spot where the Old Providence Church now stands. Craig preached in many

of the homes and administered the sacraments in the New Providence area.

In 1746 the Reverend John Blair, a New Side minister, organized the New Providence congregation in the Spottswood area. Blair had been educated at the Log College in Pennsylvania; later he was to become the Professor of Theology and the Vice President of New Jersey College at Princeton. Ordained in 1742, he made two trips to Virginia, the first in 1745, when he visited the Valley and other points east of the Blue Ridge. In 1746 he returned and organized the congregations of North Mountain (later known at Hebron and Bethel), Timber Ridge, Forks of James and New Providence. In this way the itinerations of other ministers before him, such as William Robinson in 1743, had borne fruit. Now churches were regularly organized and permanent Presbyterian pastors would soon follow.

On May 20, 1748, a notice was entered into the records of the Augusta County Court which stated:

On the motion of Matthew Lyle, yts ordered to be certified that they have built a Presbyterian meeting house at a place known by the name of Timber Ridge, another at New Providence, and another at a place known by the name of Falling Spring.

The first meeting house of the newly-organized New Providence Church was located at or near the spot now occupied by Old Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The stone structure which stands adjacent to the present brick building is said to occupy the place where the original log church stood. At this time the geographical limits of the congregation would have extended from near Bethel on the north, to North Mountain on the west, to the Blue Ridge Mountains on the east, and to the Timber Ridge area on the south. The first church structure was a log house typical of its time. Perhaps, as was common practice at the time, it was built on land owned by one of the members. It is unknown when it was constructed—as early as 1745, when the Great Awakening was reaching into the Valley, is the best judgment—or how long it survived. This Christian society was initially known as the “South Mountain Meeting House.”

South Mountain Church was flourishing by 1748, for at that time the congregation attempted to call a Mr. Byram to the pulpit. Byram had spent the years 1746-47 in the Rockbridge area and had contributed to the Awakening there. Probably under his influence, and with the expectation of calling him, the first regular meeting house was completed. Nevertheless, Byram refused the call.

Meanwhile, the Timber Ridge congregation was also having difficulties. Timber Ridge had formerly called William Dean, who had ac-

cepted the call but had died shortly thereafter; he probably never began his regular work in the congregation. This, plus Byram's refusal, encouraged the two congregations to form a union to secure supplies until settled ministers could be called. This relationship endured until 1767.

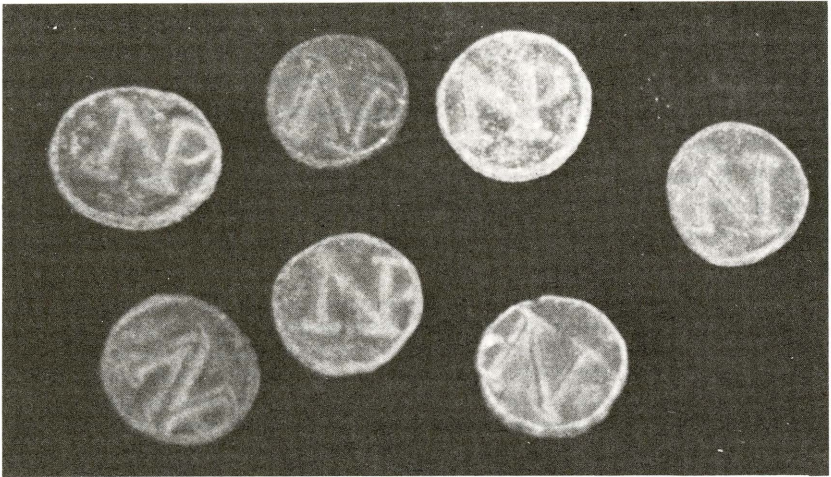
In August, 1753, a call, signed by one hundred-fifteen people of the Timber Ridge and New Providence congregations, for the services of John Brown, was presented to the New Castle Presbytery. The call was a contract and is interesting as a historical and social as well as a religious document:

Worthy Dear Sir: we being for these many years past in very destitute circumstances, in want of the ordinances of the gospel among us, many of us under distressing spiritual languishment, and multitudes perishing in our sins for want of the bread of life broken among us, our sabbaths wasted in melancholy silence at home, are sadly broken and profane by the more thoughtless among us, our hearts and hands disengaged and our spirits broken with our mournful condition, and repeated disappointments of our expectations and relief of this particular; in these afflicting circumstances that human language cannot sufficiently, we have had the happiness by the good providence of God, of enjoying a share of your labors, to our abundant satisfaction; and being universally satisfied with your ministerial abilities in general, and the peculiar agreeableness of your qualifications to us in particular, as a gospel minister, we do, worthy and dear sir, from our hearts, and with the most cordial affection and unanimity, agree to call, invite, and request you to take the ministerial care of us: and we do promise that we will receive the Word of God from your mouth, attend on your ministry, instructions, and reproofs, in public and private, and submit to the discipline which Christ has appointed in his Church, administered by you, while regulated by the Word of God, and agreeable to our Confession of Faith and Directory. And that you may give yourself wholly up to the important work of the ministry, we do promise to pay unto you, annually, the sum which our commissioners, Andrew Steele [representing New Providence] and Archibald Alexander [representing Timber Ridge] shall give in the Reverend Presbytery, from the time of your acceptance of this our call; and that we shall behave ourselves towards you with all that dutiful respect and affection that becomes a people toward their minister, using all means within our power to render your life comfortable and happy. We intrigue you, worthy and dear sir, to have compassion on us, and accept this our call and invitation to the pastoral charge of our immortal souls, and we shall ever hold ourselves bound to pray.

We request the Reverend Presbytery to present this our call to the said Mr. Brown, and to concur in his acceptance of it, and we shall always count ourselves happy in being your obliged servants.

John Brown was a twenty-five year old, Irish-born, American-educated ministerial candidate in the Presbytery. He accepted the call and was ordained on October 11, 1753. We do not know when his installation took place, or even whether he was formally installed, but he became the first installed minister of New Providence Church.

Shortly after Brown accepted the call, a majority of the members of New Providence suggested the desirability of moving the church to the Hays and Walkers Creeks area because of the sizeable number of church members living there. The date of construction of the new log church on



Pewter communion tokens made for New Providence Church. These tokens were required in order to receive communion. They were given out by the elders during their periodic visits to inspect the behavior of church families. The custom originated in Scotland.

Moffetts Creek is uncertain, but it must have been shortly after John Brown accepted the call to the area. The deed to the first property owned by the church, given by Joseph Kennedy to the trustees on August 21, 1754, notes that the meeting house was already under construction. This first parcel of land contained slightly over three acres.

While the log structure was being built, the question of a name for the church arose. It is not clear why this should have been a problem at this time, since the church's name had already been entered as "New Providence" in the Augusta County courthouse and in the records of the Synod of New York. Some people may have felt that the old South Mountain congregation should have retained the "Providence" or "New Providence" name, since the name was originally used there; others may have believed that as the original church was simply relocating, it should retain its name. Perhaps the best explanation for the name is that some members of the South Mountain congregation near Spottswood, Virginia, had formerly belonged to a "Providence" church near what is now Norristown, Pennsylvania, and had brought the name with them. Those who continued to worship at the old Spottswood site eventually took the name "Old Providence."

The log church used by New Providence on Moffetts Creek would have been a temporary structure and certainly would have been inadequate for a growing congregation. Work probably began on a stone

building to the west of the log church as soon as possible. The Timber Ridge Church had begun the construction of its stone church in 1755. New Providence's stone church occupied the site over which the present larger brick building now stands. All evidence of the original stone foundations of the older building has been obliterated. The land on which the stone building rested was deeded to the congregation by Robert Wardlaw and his wife Martha on November 14, 1771.

We cannot trace the account of John Brown's ministry in the minutes of New Castle Presbytery, since these minutes are lost for the years 1731 through 1758. We do know that he was much involved with the affairs of Presbytery as reflected in the minutes of Hanover Presbytery which was soon to be formed.

On September 3, 1755, the Synod of New York appointed Samuel Davies, John Todd, Alexander Craighead, Robert Henry, John Wright, and John Brown to be a Presbytery under the name of Hanover. John Brown attended the first meeting of this new Presbytery on December 3, 1755. The formation of this new Presbytery did much to heal the division within the eastern and western parts of the church and provided for the alternate meetings of the Presbytery on either side of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The Presbytery met in November of 1756, at which time each minister was asked to agree to preach one Sabbath in a nearby vacant congregation. This was a practice which would mark the ministry of John Brown and other local Presbyterian ministers. At a meeting at New Providence on October 25, 1759, John Brown was appointed to preach one Sabbath at Brown's Meeting House and three at the Forks of James before the fall meeting of Presbytery. This latter church would later become the New Monmouth Church to the west of Lexington. Brown also preached at Otter River, Bedford, New London, and Catawba. These early ministers, working through their Presbytery, encouraged the local congregations to combine their numbers wherever possible.

John Brown's first home was centrally located between the New Providence and Timber Ridge Churches to which he ministered. The house was named Mount Pleasant, and was located within a half mile of Fairfield and about the same distance from the Classical School which he operated. This school was located near the site of what is now the former railroad depot on the ridge just west of Fairfield. The school became Liberty Hall and was moved to Timber Ridge in 1774. It later moved to Lexington and became Washington College.

On October 11, 1767, Brown initiated an action in the Presbytery to terminate his relationship to the Timber Ridge congregation. Despite the protestations of the Timber Ridge people and the earnest pleadings of the

Presbytery that he continue in his dual capacity, Brown decided to confine his efforts to the New Providence congregation, and resigned at Timber Ridge.

It may have been at this time that Brown moved to the neighborhood of Brownsburg. He made his second home in what was later known as the John Withrow house. This structure stands diagonally across Moffetts Creek from New Providence Church. A two-story building of logs, constructed about 1740, it was torn down in 1802 and replaced by the building now on the property. Some portions of the early buildings may still be seen on the property, including a spring house, granary, and slave quarters.

John Brown's tenure at New Providence lasted through the Revolution and into the postwar period, but information on his activities is scanty. Rockbridge County was not a theatre of action in the war, although at times it was expected to be. The youth of the area were subject to the draft, and William Graham, the teacher at Liberty Hall, headed a contingent of men raised in the vicinity. The war brought inflation and social unrest. The churches, including New Providence, suffered declining attendance, reflecting both the disturbing influence of the war and the introduction of new ideas about the "rights of men" being generated in France. After the war, with the return of men from the conflict, there seemed to be a general decline in morality and personal discipline. The Sabbath was ignored and drinking was widespread.

One aspect of the reaction against the irreligious tendencies of the previous decade was a religious revival in 1787 which spread from a center around Hampden-Sydney in Prince Edward County. William Graham was responsible for the promotion of the revival in Rockbridge. But New Providence and other churches in the northern part of the county regarded the revival with suspicion. That New Providence was not greatly affected by the revival was probably due in part to the influence of John Brown. By this time Brown had been at the church for thirty-four years, and the influence of his values on the direction of the church's life were well established. The revival was a phenomenon primarily among the younger generation which was excited by the "elders' praying circles" asking for fresh outpourings of the Spirit. John Brown and his elders would have rejected the "jerks, groans and cries" which sometimes attended the conversion experiences of the young.

The postwar period also witnessed the beginning of a rapid growth of westward migration. The growth in the Presbyterian Church in the west and the south since the creation of the huge Hanover Presbytery in 1755 demanded organizational changes. A number of new presbyteries were formed from the former Hanover Presbytery in 1785-86. The Lex-

ington Presbytery was formed west of the Blue Ridge and met at Timber Ridge Church on September 26, 1786. John Brown presided over this historic occasion and was elected the Presbytery's first moderator. Not surprisingly, the first matter of business was the "alarming state of religion."

The Lexington Presbytery embraced a huge triangular area—roughly from the modern cities of Hagerstown, Maryland to Christiansburg, Virginia, to Parkersburg, West Virginia. It was one of four presbyteries in the Synod of Virginia, which was organized at New Providence Church and held its first meeting there on October 22, 1788. John Brown, the senior member present, opened the meeting, and William Graham was chosen moderator.

When John Brown was installed at New Providence, twenty-one year old George Washington was visiting French forts in the west to protest their attacks on Americans. Forty-two years later, in 1795, when Washington was nearing the end of his second term as President of the United States, John Brown decided to lay aside the heavy responsibility of his pastorate. Despite the pleadings of his beloved congregation, on September 10, 1795, Brown presented his request to the Presbytery for the dissolution of his pastoral relation to the New Providence Church. He had been failing in health for some time and his voice was weak. Moreover, some of his children had already moved west to Kentucky and he wished to join them. He moved to that state in 1797 and supplied the Woodford Church until his death in 1803. He is buried in the graveyard of the Woodford Church between two former New Providence elders: William Wardlaw and Andrew Steele.

In the period following John Brown's resignation the New Providence was supplied by a Reverend Scott. On February 29, 1796, the congregation met and issued a call for the Reverend Samuel Brown, who was promised a salary of \$400 per year, afterward raised to \$500. Brown, no relation to his predecessor, was of Scotch-Irish ancestry, but was born in Virginia. He had studied at Liberty Hall Academy and had been licensed to preach in 1793. Prior to coming to New Providence, he had worked as a missionary for two years. Samuel Brown preached his first sermon at New Providence on June 5, 1796, and was ordained by the Lexington Presbytery on September 23.

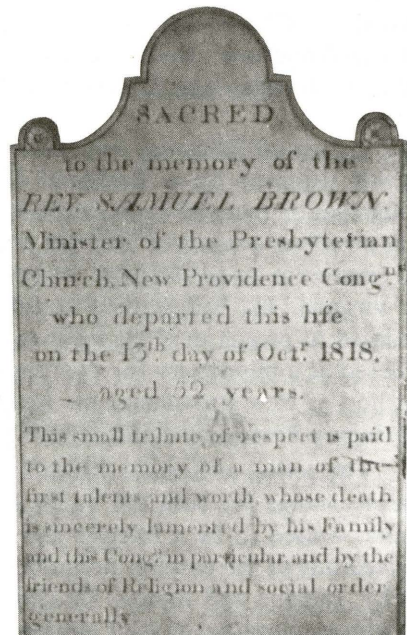
The period of Samuel Brown's pastorate (1796-1818) was one of immense change for both the Valley of Virginia and the new nation. The Valley ceased to be a frontier region as the line of furthest settlement moved out of the eastern mountains into the fertile woodlands of Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. In 1803 the nation doubled in size with the fortuitous purchase of the Louisiana Territory. The Indians, who in the

1770s had killed Brown's wife's family and kidnapped her for several years, ceased to threaten the white man east of the Mississippi River. The unfortunate natives had chosen the wrong side in a second American-British struggle, the War of 1812.

The Great Revival swept the country, disturbing congregational tranquility, dividing denominations, and changing the religious map of the country. The Revival covered portions of the pastorates of Samuel Brown and his successor James Morrison. During this period a religious awakening swept the Presbyterian church which doubled the church's membership. In the Lexington Presbytery thirty-nine new churches were organized, with the result that Lexington Presbytery became the largest in the denomination.

New Providence also grew and ultimately became the largest rural church in the denomination. This growing membership created new demands on the church building. In 1812 a new brick edifice was constructed to replace the 1755 stone building, now grown old and inadequate. The new building was more substantial with an entrance on the end, and with an aisle between pews arranged along each side. A balcony was provided for slaves. Men and women were seated on opposite sides of the aisle.

Reverend Samuel Brown's personality and piety doubtless had no little influence on the dynamic growth of New Providence. When Dr.



Original gravestone of Rev. Samuel Brown (d. 1818) stored in New Providence Church after being replaced by the present large monument.

Ebenezer Junkin, New Providence's fifth installed minister, wrote his history of the congregation in 1871, he interviewed Thomas Walker, who had been ordained an elder during Reverend Brown's pastorate. Even allowing for guided reminiscences, Reverend Brown emerges as a powerful and pious figure.

His talents were of a very high order. His judgment in all matters was sound and practical. In cases where it seemed difficult to arrive at a correct decision, he seemed to seize with facility the true view; and the clearness of his statements hardly failed to bring others to concur with him. His preaching was impressive and interesting. In his personal appearance he was tall and lean, his eyes sunk deeply in his head. His voice, though not sweet, was distinct; his manners earnest—seeming to be inspired by a deep conviction of the truth and importance of his subject. His gestures, according to my recollection, were few, but appropriate. In address from the pulpit he was eminent for strength, conciseness, and perspicuity . . . Plain, instructive, and practical in his discourses, he brought the principles of the Bible to bear upon the conduct of his people in all their relations. He also held forth very strongly the great Calvinistic doctrines of the scriptures. . . . He frequently became very much animated when preaching, and sometimes the tears were seen to trickle down his cheeks. His sermons were short, generally. . . . The longer he lived among his people, the more they became attached to him. He mingled amongst them on easy and familiar terms; took an interest in their welfare, both temporal and spiritual. He was a man that never shrank from any responsibility that properly belonged to him in any circumstances in which he was placed and his opinions probably carried more weight in them than another man in this end of Rockbridge County.

On April 7, 1818, Samuel Brown preached at the meeting of the Lexington Presbytery. In the months after the meeting his health declined, although he continued to preach with his usual fervency and power. On October 13, 1818, while preparing to attend the meeting of the Synod at Staunton, he died, very suddenly, at age fifty-two, "universally lamented, in the prime of life, in full intellectual vigor, in the midst of his usefulness, and when the love of his people, so far from abating was becoming deeper and stronger."

After a search, the congregation issued a call on April 10, 1819, for James Morrison to become the new pastor at New Providence. Morrison was a descendant of a family which had come from Scotland to Pennsylvania in 1750 and moved to North Carolina in 1757. James Morrison had received a degree from the University of North Carolina in 1814, then had taught while pursuing theological studies under Robert Hett Chapman, the university's president. Morrison had been licensed to preach by the Orange Presbytery in 1817 and ordained later that year. Prior to receiving the call from New Providence, he had served as a domestic missionary in eastern North Carolina. On April 22, 1819, at the spring meeting of the Lexington Presbytery in Fincastle, Morrison was received as a member of the Presbytery and accepted the New Providence position. He was installed on September 25, 1819, beginning a pastorate that lasted thirty-seven years.

Rockbridge county, Va the 10th of April 1819.

The Congregation of New Providence being in sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you the Rev. James Morrison, and having good hopes from our past experience of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call, and desire you to undertake the pastoral office in said Congregation: promising you, in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord: and that you may be free from worldly cares, and avocations, we hereby promise, and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of Six hundred dollars in regular annual payments during the term of your being, and continuing the regular pastor of this Church. In testimony whereof we have respectively subscribed our names this 10th day of April Anno Domini Eighteen hundred, and Nineteen.

New Providence's "call" to Rev. James Morrison, April 10, 1819.

On April 27, 1820, after Morrison had been at New Providence for seven months, the annual report to the Presbytery from the one hundred thirty-six member congregation stated that

the Reverend James Morrison . . . has performed his duties much to the satisfaction of his people ever since he became our Minister; hath preached every Sabbath and frequently on weekdays, in different parts of the congregation, examined twice and has been attentive to the duty of visiting the sick. On the other hand the congregation has attended well on preaching and examination and have paid their minister four hundred dollars, the amount due for eight months the time he has been with us prior to the commencement of the present year.

The first book of New Providence's *Session Minutes* began nearly simultaneously with Morrison's arrival in April, 1819. The principal actions of the Session (i.e., the elders' meeting) during this period was to receive members into the church. From June 19, 1819, to August 7, 1842, two hundred fifteen adults were baptized. Between June 17, 1819, and August 4, 1845, five hundred ninety-three infants were baptized. The first pages of the *Session Minutes* includes a list of four hundred members and a list of twenty-five elders who were ordained between 1820 and 1843. Blacks were received into full membership; they were recorded as "men of color," with a first but no last name.

The Session sometimes acted as a court. It was not uncommon for members of the church to be formally charged with crimes and tried by the Session. In 1820 one member was charged with "intemperance, profanity, and Heresy," primarily because he held to a doctrine of universal

salvation. He was forthwith suspended from the communion of the church until he gave evidence of repentance. Other suspensions are recorded for crimes such as fornication, theft and neglecting the means of grace.

On November 24, 1819, immediately after James Morrison's installation, the women of the church organized a Female Benevolent Society. The Society's object was to raise money to aid missionaries and to assist pious young men to qualify themselves for the ministry. This organization is believed to be the earliest mission organization in the Presbyterian Church. In their first year, by soliciting subscriptions from church members and selling patchwork quilts, the women raised \$147 to send to a struggling church in Sherman, Texas.

During the 1820s New Providence membership declined as members dropped out, moved away or were disciplined by the Session. This trend was reversed during the early 1830s. The establishment of the church's first Sunday School in 1830 and the establishment of a school in Brownsburg, with monthly services of preaching, perhaps encouraged the moderate growth it experienced in 1831, when ninety-one members were added. The church reached its peak pre-Civil War membership of five hundred ninety-one in 1833. The immediate cause of the rapid rise in



*Rev. James Morrison (d. 1870);
at New Providence 1819-1856.*

membership in 1833 was the evangelist Isaac Jones, who apparently had been secured in the hope that New Providence might gather the harvest from the revivalist movement.

Despite the "Jones Revival," New Providence failed to hold its recent converts. Between 1837 and 1865 the Lexington Presbytery lost more than fifty percent of its members; New Providence shared in the general decline. There were a variety of reasons for the decline: movement to other denominations, lack of interest, and migration to the west. But internal divisions between Old School and New School Presbyterians were also important. This division occurred in 1838 over issues such as slavery, doctrine, and especially over the Plan of Union with the General Association of the Congregational Church of Connecticut, which the New School favored. James Morrison moved with the majority in the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1837 in defeating the New School-supported Plan. The New School seceded from the General Assembly, taking about forty-five percent of the membership.

By 1837, New Providence had lost over one hundred members by suspension, dismissal or death, and the membership was down to four hundred eighty-nine. On June 1, 1837, by order of the Presbytery, twenty-two members were dismissed in order to organize the Mt. Carmel Church at Steeles Tavern. By July, 1841, the membership had decreased to three hundred sixty-four with the removal of fifty-nine names for various reasons, including death. In 1848 the church again purged its roll, reducing its active communicants to two hundred sixty-two. By 1849 the church reported two hundred forty-one members, of which sixty were slaves. Thus twenty-five percent of the church was composed of "men of color" who occupied the balcony of the sanctuary. Like the other Valley churches, New Providence experienced great difficulty in meeting its obligations to its pastor during the period of decline.

Reverend Morrison's problems were not limited to membership rolls and General Assembly politics. When he began his pastorate he inherited all the social problems present in the church community. Prior to the revivals of the 1830s he had begun to agitate for temperance. A Temperance Society was organized in the church in 1829; by 1835 it had four hundred thirty-five members. Morrison's conflict with his parishioners' habits nearly cost him his job; initially seven of his eight elders owned stills. But eventually most of the church members joined the Temperance Society, and the production of whiskey by congregation members dropped from about 15,000 barrels per year to about 5,000. A lengthy treatise on the evils of strong drink appears in the *Session Minutes*, probably taken from James Morrison's sermon notes.

James Morrison's health during the 1850s declined; it had never been particularly robust during his tenure at New Providence. Apparently some discussion within the congregation had already begun regarding his tenure by the thirtieth anniversary of his installation in 1849. On that occasion he recounted the difficulties which the church had overcome in the past three decades. He had, he noted, preached 2778 sermons in thirty years, missing but four Sabbaths due to illness. He greatly enjoyed his connection with New Providence, he professed, despite offers of greater salaries elsewhere.

Since I have been here I have repeatedly been solicited to remove and in three instances to the best or amongst the best churches in the southern country. I have always declined and generally said nothing about it. My best days have been spent here, and my earnest desire is to preach here whilst I am able to preach the gospel, and there is no spot upon earth where I so earnestly desire my body to lie until the morning of the resurrection as in that graveyard. But whilst I say this, I wish also distinctly to say that I do not wish to impose my services on an unwilling people.

Morrison's health continued to be a problem. In 1852 he was forced to reduce his labors. The church secured first Reverend James B. Ramsey and then Reverend Samuel H. Brown to assist him. In the autumn of 1855 Morrison indicated his willingness to resign in order to go south to a better climate, but he was asked to remain for the sake of church unity. He remained, but asked for a twelve month leave of absence. In December, 1855, amid the tears and prayers of his congregation, he began his leave.

The vacation succeeded in improving Morrison's health, and he returned to New Providence in August, 1856, four months earlier than agreed upon. But there were murmurs of dissatisfaction in the congregation. He was soon visited by a committee of six elders who requested that he resign because of his ill health. He declined the invitation. On October 17 a Session meeting was held for the purpose of having a discussion with Morrison "on the subject of his resignation as pastor of the church." The Session meeting decided to call a congregational meeting on November 2 to allow the congregation to vote by secret ballot on the question of Morrison's resignation. The ballot was 99 in favor of the dissolution of the relationship and 34 against.

Representatives of the congregation were selected to attend the meeting of the Presbytery on November 20 to apply for the dissolution of pastoral relations between James Morrison and New Providence Church. A minority opinion, signed by fifty members of the congregation, was filed with the Presbytery, deploring the manner in which the Morrison case was handled. Nevertheless, the Presbytery dissolved the pastoral relationship, chided the church for failing to work with the minister in

his declining years, and commended Reverend Morrison to all churches to which he would come.

Morrison continued to live among the people he so long and faithfully served, loved and honored by them. His health was too poor to allow public service, but he was still devoted to the congregation's spiritual welfare. He died in November, 1870, at age seventy-six, and was buried in New Providence's graveyard.

During the final months of Morrison's pastorate, the old brick church was torn down and work was begun on the present structure. From log to simple native stone to brick, New Providence had progressed in a century from frontier meetinghouse in a British colony to bulwark of a prosperous agricultural community in an independent nation. Through all this eventful time New Providence Presbyterian Church was fortunate in having three strong pastors: John Brown, Samuel Brown and James Morrison. ☆

Lexington Presbyterians, 1819-1882: Personalities, Problems, Peculiarities

James G. Leyburn

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO I began to wonder what provisions were made for the religious needs of blacks in Lexington and Rockbridge County during the days of slavery and before they had a church of their own. In the course of my investigations I came across so many revealing and diverting sidelights about that singular breed of Lexingtonian, the Presbyterian, that I gave up my original search and prepared this paper instead.

The period covered by this paper runs from 1819, when the Lexington Presbyterian Church became independent from the New Monmouth Church, to 1882. The latter date marks the end of the ministry of Dr. Mullally, and also the end of a series of memoirs written by my father about his childhood. My chief interest here is in the personalities and idiosyncrasies of nineteenth-century Presbyterians; but it might be well to think of them in the actual setting of their church buildings. Even in external details something of the character of the people is revealed.

The Lexington Presbyterian Church was formed in 1789, twelve

Dr. James G. Leyburn, formerly a professor of sociology at Washington and Lee University and dean of the college there, was President of the Society when this address was delivered. The members and guests of the Society heard Dr. Leyburn's presentation on January 31, 1972, at the Virginia House Restaurant in Lexington.

years after Lexington was chartered and named. From that year onward it held its own services, but for thirty years it was a component part of the New Monmouth (or, as it was then called, Hall's) Church. One minister and one Session sufficed for both congregations. In 1796 the Lexingtonians determined to build their own building, and subscribed \$2500 for that purpose. Apparently the devastating fire that swept the town later that year caused a postponement of the project, so that only in 1802 was their substantial edifice¹ completed under the noble white oak tree, still standing in the Presbyterian cemetery. (The graveyard was owned by the Presbyterians until the 1950s. The first church, like the present one, had a gallery around three sides.

Two services were held each Sunday, with an interval between the morning and afternoon meetings. A large oak grove extended from the church gate all the way to Wood's Creek, and this was a rambling ground during the intermission. The elders of the church took seriously their charge of caring for the spiritual welfare of members of the congregation. Session records contain many entries of discipline meted out to those who had been guilty of dancing, card-playing, or breaking the Sabbath. On communion Sundays the pastor distributed to those members deemed worthy to partake of the sacrament small tokens made of tin or pewter, about the size of a dime. Only persons with tokens were allowed to come forward and sit around the communion tables in the aisle in front of the pulpit. This practice continued until 1833. The Session minutes for January 5 of that year record two interesting resolutions: first, "that the plan of successive tables and also the use of tokens, be dispensed with tomorrow, and Mr. Douglas [minister James W. Douglas] administer the Lord's Supper as shall seem to him most for edification." The second resolution was "that the invitation of blacks to communion be limited to those who are in good and regular standing with some church of white Christians." The next entry, written after the service, reads: "The Lord's Supper was administered, Rev. Ruffner assisting, to about 225 whites and 10 blacks. Collection \$20. Expenses \$4.85."

Although offerings were taken at each service, most of the expenses of the church were met throughout the six decades covered by this paper by the sale and rental of pews. Members paying the largest sum had the choicest pews. In 1819 Washington College bought three pews

¹ The building was fifty feet square and eighteen feet high. In 1819 the church was considerably enlarged by the construction of an addition, fifty by twenty-five feet, on the southwest side of the building. Two years later, at a cost of \$225, a Session House and Pastor's Study—a single-story house, eighteen by sixteen feet—was built of brick some twenty-five feet east of the church.

W. H. Blight			
W. H. Blight	J. P. Rhoads		Mrs. ...
J. H. ...	J. W. ...		A. J. ...
J. S. Smith	Dr. Wilson		E. S. ...
	in firm Alexander		Prof. ...
J. H. Anderson	Pastor		Mrs. ...
W. J. Shuler	J. E. ...		Mrs. ...
	J. W. ...		Mrs. ...
A. T. Barclay	Col. ...		Mrs. ...
J. ...			Mrs. ...
J. Alexander	J. S. White		Mrs. ...
J. H. ...	Col. Ross		Mrs. ...
J. ...			Mrs. ...
J. ...	C. M. ...		Mrs. ...
A. S. ...	J. S. ...		Mrs. ...
J. ...	E. J. ...		Mrs. ...
W. M. ...	Dr. ...		Mrs. ...

Lexington church pew arrangement (late 19th century).

for the use of its students. A free pew was set aside for the poor of the community. In a Session minute of 1834 it was noted that John Henson, on leaving Lexington, “offered to present his pew to the church on condition that no higher rent than one dollar per year be levied on it, and that it be rented to such indigent females who may jointly contribute that sum as an annual stipend.” His offer was accepted.

Pew owners sometimes fell into arrears. An 1835 entry resolves that “some system should be adopted by the Trustees . . . to enforce the payment of stipends, by requiring all delinquents, after sufficient notice, to forfeit their pews agreeable to the provision of the constitution, or pay the amount levied on them.” In 1838 the Session “Resolved that the accounts of the congregation be committed to the hands of Mr. W. C. Lewis for collection and adjustment, and that he be allowed ten per cent for the trouble he may have; the per cent to be increased in cases which seem to demand it.”

When the new [present] church was completed in 1844, box pews were installed with numbers and latches on each door. As my father put it, reminiscing about the 1870’s, “A regular price was fixed for these pews, according to their location and desirability. One’s family pew belonged to him as fully as the house he rented, and no stranger or visitor

was supposed to enter one of these pews without invitation.”²

By 1843 the congregation had so increased that the Session called a congregational meeting “to consider the propriety of providing for a more comfortable place of worship.” It was decided not to try to enlarge for a second time the building in the cemetery, but to erect a new church in a more central position. The ladies of the congregation formed a Female Working Society, and chiefly by means of what the minister called a series of “Fairs,” they accumulated sufficient funds to purchase the present large lot at the corner of Main and Nelson Streets as well as the one now occupied by the manse on White Street. Work on the new church was begun immediately and the cornerstone was laid, with appropriate ceremonies, on June 22, 1844. The total cost of the new building was \$12,000. It should be noted that the thrifty Presbyterians saw to it that the bricks from the old church were used to build the new manse.

The present church building is the one constructed in 1843-44 except that the present wings on the north and south sides were added much later. Father’s account of the interior of the church in 1880 is full of life.

The choir was in the balcony in the rear of the church . . . with Professor Nelson, the leader and tenor at one end, and Mr. John Barclay, the deep bass, at the other end, with the sopranos and altos between. The two older of Professor Nelson’s daughters, and two of Professor White’s daughters, and later the Preston ‘girls’ and Miss Katie Hopkins, constituted the choir. The students filled the gallery at one side of the church, and the cadets filled the other, entering by stairways on opposite sides of the vestibule. The end of the South Gallery nearest the pulpit was set apart for the Colored people, with a separate stairway leading up to it from the outside. We had a number of Negro members of our church in those days, and they and the Negro drivers of the carriages had this gallery provided for them. They were always invited to come down on communion days, and occupy the seats to the left side of the pulpit, and were served the bread and wine along with the other members.³

Shortly after the construction of the church, an adjacent Lecture Room was built. This housed the Sunday School classes, and as its name suggests, served as a public meeting place for lectures and social occasions. Here, too, father makes a diverting comment: “Mayor Howawought [Boley spells his name Houghawout; he was mayor from 1885 to 1897] (pronounced Huckabout) lived just across an alley from

² Father added that he would not “recommend this method of raising money for church purposes.” Nevertheless, despite such an antiquated method of finances, the congregation frequently raised the salary of its ministers—from \$450 in 1828 to \$600 in 1832 to \$800 in 1834 and to \$1250 in 1844. This last figure was regarded as very high in terms of the dollar value of the day.

³ “Instead of the main central aisle of the present church, there were two aisles, one on each side of the church, with a double row of pews along the walls on each side of the church.” Leyburn memoirs.

the Sunday School. . . . He was a great fox hunter, and kept a number of hounds. His dogs often joined in the chorus during the services in the Sunday School building, much to the distraction and annoyance of the worshipers.”⁴

The Presbyterians themselves are far more interesting than their buildings. It is tempting, though unwise, to generalize about these Scotch-Irish Lexingtonians with all their pronounced characteristics. As one of their descendants I have no hesitation in suggesting that they often prided themselves, not merely on their moral principles, but also on most of their convictions, and on the tenacity with which they upheld both. If outsiders accused them of sheer stubbornness, I suspect that many of the Presbyterians would have regarded that accusation as a compliment.

They were rich and poor, pious and sinners, and the class system in Lexington made clear distinctions. The list of officers of the church read like a roster of Lexington’s first families. The stateliness and decorum of these leaders of the community may be visualized from father’s comment on his grandfather, Dr. Alfred Leyburn, an elder from 1832 to his death in 1873: “Grandfather was a very dignified man, quite reserved and carefully dressed. I don’t remember ever having seen him go out without wearing his long Prince Albert frock coat and high stove-pipe hat, even when he was only going to ride over the farm on horse-back to see what was going on and give some directions to the hands.”

These Presbyterians and their ancestors for generations had prided themselves on the rigorous education of their ministers; as a result of this tradition, most Presbyterians were willing to listen more patiently than other Protestants to long, scholarly, and abstrusely theological sermons. True, some objected; and if there were time I would comment on the strenuous efforts (one in the eighteenth century and one in the nineteenth) to lighten the educational requirements of ministers, to urge them to speak to the heart rather than the mind, and to engage in the emotional appeals of revivals. In fact, during the era covered by this paper the entire denomination was in the throes of a controversy on this issue.

⁴ The first Sunday School had been established in 1831 by Mr. Garland, a professor at Washington College. Father noted that the Lecture Room was simply

one large room, with no separate class rooms. Very little attention was given in those days to proper classing of pupils. All of the men were put in one class, and the women in another, which were called Bible classes. Then, all of the girls were put in one class, and all of the boys in another, with very little attention given to age, though sometimes the very small ones were put in a separate class of their own. General Jackson organized a Negro Sunday School, which he and some other officers and members of the church taught there every Sunday afternoon. The Negro Sunday School was carried on for years after General Jackson’s death by officers and members of the church.

It had violent repercussions in Lexington in the 1840s, and in that episode we have our first acquaintance with one of the most excitable and exciting of Presbyterian personalities.⁵

In March, 1840, the minister of the Lexington church, W. M. Cunningham, resigned. In August the Session received a letter from a Scottish minister, the Reverend John Skinner, D.D., asking permission to preach in Lexington. Since he held degrees from the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and came with high recommendations from his last congregation in Scotland, the Lexington Session invited Dr. Skinner to preach. Skinner's last Scottish church had presented him with a gold watch "as a parting token of their enduring love," and he was praised for "his talented exertions in the cause of Religious Liberty." We do not know why he wished to migrate to the United States. He made a good impression on the Lexingtonians. Negotiations took their leisurely course: a call was issued Dr. Skinner in 1841 and in October of that year he was installed as pastor.

His first years as minister were highly successful, to judge from progress in the church. Membership increased so greatly that six new elders had to be elected. It was Dr. Skinner who led the congregation in its decision to construct the new church building on Main Street. He was remarkably efficient in overseeing the financial affairs of the church: not only was his own salary oversubscribed, but he interested the members in contributing to mission work and other benevolences. Dr. Skinner took very seriously his duties as pastor. In 1843 he divided the congregation into nine districts, and assigned specific elders to take spiritual oversight of each district. He read out from the pulpit a list of the homes he intended to visit during the week; and he also announced the amount of last week's collection for Missions. His zeal for benevolences gives us the first clue as to why, within a few years, he was to become the center of a perfect storm of criticism. One Sunday morning he read an announcement that one of the church members, whom he named, had given "6¼ cents to convert the world."

For six years the records of the Session betray no hint that Dr. Skinner was losing support among his people. The Church's report to Presbytery in 1845 lauded him for his diligence in preaching, visiting the

⁵ In those days the young candidate for the ministry was assigned an exegesis in Latin—for example, "*In quibus consistat vocatio ad evangelii ministerium?*" After preaching a sermon before the Presbytery, he still had to stand an examination [see Presbytery Minutes for 1823] "on Church History, from the beginning of the world until the close of the canon of revelation; also on natural theology, and the evidences of Christianity." The candidates who came before Presbytery in 1830 were examined on "literary and scientific courses as follows: Latin, Greek rhetoric, logic, moral philosophy, chemistry, geography, natural philosophy, astronomy, Euclidean trigonometry, and algebra."



*Rev. John Skinner;
minister, 1841-1847*

sick, attending the weekly prayer meeting, encouraging benevolences, and guiding church organizations. But on August 18, 1847, a letter was read to the Session, signed by John B. Lyle and seven other members of the church, stating that an increasing number of people were dissatisfied with Dr. Skinner both as preacher and as pastor: his sermons were generally regarded as too coldly theological, and his dealing with people lacked human warmth and “spirituality.” Several members of the Session shared these critical opinions, and apparently they hoped that by letting Dr. Skinner know that he did not please many people, he would quietly seek other pastures.

Skinner immediately asked leave of Presbytery to resign his pastoral charge “on the ground of a letter addressed to him, by eight gentlemen of the congregation.” It is obvious, however, that he expected Presbytery forthwith to refuse his resignation, to support him wholeheartedly, and to inform his critics of their presumptuousness. The Session was represented at the meeting of Presbytery by Major J. T. L. Preston, who was called upon at the meeting to amplify the charges in the letter. So began the epochal Skinner case (sometimes called the “Skinner War”), which resulted in a trial before Presbytery whose minutes cover three hundred thirty-two pages, and which culminated in appeal to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. During the months of the controversy Lexington hummed like a hive of angry bees; language became vituperative and tempers frayed. Lexington

Presbyterians seemed to be reliving ancient Scottish history with its long record of feuding.

The intricacies of the controversy before the church courts are too complex to recount here. What is of more immediate interest is Dr. Skinner's reaction to the Lexingtonians. Major Preston explained to Presbytery the growing discontent with Dr. Skinner's long, theoretical sermons, with his pulpit manner and his grating voice when he elevated it, with his foreign mannerisms, with his urgency in promoting benevolent causes of the church, with his failure during pastoral visits to inquire into the spiritual life of the members while questioning their knowledge of the catechism. This bill of particulars seemed to arouse the fury of Dr. Skinner who clearly felt that his dignity had been affronted. From that point on the offended Scotsman threw tactfulness to the winds.

First he published a pamphlet naming his "enemies," and charging them with all sorts of un-Christian behavior. The persons Skinner named thereupon published a paid notice in the *Lexington Gazette*, with copies in Richmond, Washington, and New York papers, defending themselves and asserting that Skinner's pamphlet "contains statements absolutely untrue, and insinuations and misrepresentations, both slanderous and unfounded." Skinner's outrage seemed then to vent itself by indiscriminate attack. He fulminated against a Presbyterian professor at Washington College for having preached in the Episcopal church. He accused some of his elders of reading a church paper (the *Christian Observer*) which he considered unorthodox. He further excoriated them for favoring revivals and emotionalism, which he abhorred.

The young ladies of his congregation drew his most concentrated attack. He suspected it was they who were made restless by his tedious sermons and the reason, he said, was easy to discover. They found too attractive "the fascination of sin and the engrossing of the soul . . . with the novelties of the fashions, the luxuries, the attractions of the gay assembly, and the easy descent from the Ball room . . . down to the abysses of infamy and death." He asserted that to him nothing was more odious than to witness a young lady entering "the House of God, on a Sabbath morning, with such a bundle of robes and ribbons, and meretricious flowers, and strange stuffings, so nicely pinned and padded about her person, as to indicate that she must have spent at least two solid hours in her toilette, rather than on her knees preparing herself to find the services of her minister to be sweet rather than tedious to her soul."

In denouncing the sin of dancing he even attacked an Episcopal vestryman, Colonel Francis H. Smith, superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute, for promoting and serving as patron of the Annual

Ball at VMI. How could Colonel Smith reconcile his piety with such sinfulness? Dr. Skinner said:

I have trembled for my young ladies, who were members of the Church, being seduced into an attendance at that Ball, by the tempting and flattering urgency of the young men, who to all their attractions of person and manner, add the additional one of the gay soldier's uniform. I have gone to town, with a palpitating heart, [the morning]after the ball was over, fearing lest that the first tidings that might greet my ear might be, 'Sir, a member of your Church was at the ball last night.' The Ball is opposed to the religious feelings of the whole religious community. And I have been surprised that in a matter of this sort, Colonel Smith should expose himself to the odium of the religious public.

Even the older ladies of his church came in for criticism. "We have had a Ladies Working Society connected with this church for the last four to five years," he said. True, their efforts had purchased the lots on which the new church and new manse were built; "but I have had so many misgivings about it at times and the policy of the church having wheels within wheels, as well as extra wheels,—and so often have been called to vindicate my Church from the slander of its being under 'Petticoat Government.'"

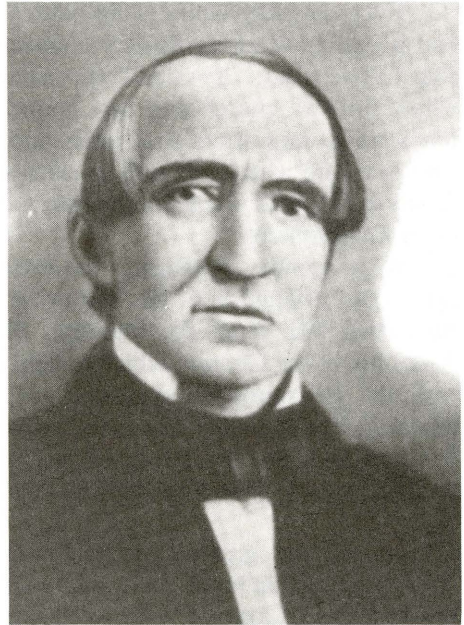
After months of hearings the Presbytery, by a vote of 20 to 4, accepted the resignation of Dr. Skinner from the Lexington pastorate, and suspended him from the ministry. Skinner appealed to the General Assembly of the Church, which upheld the severing of pastoral relations with the Lexington church, but not Skinner's suspension from the ministry. The irascible Scotsman forthwith shook the dust of Lexington from his feet. Presbytery dismissed him to the Presbytery of Newton [Massachusetts?] He eventually settled in Canada where he died in 1864.

One of the greatest possible blessings came to the Lexington congregation in the successor to Dr. Skinner. Dr. William S. White, beloved pastor of the Charlottesville church, accepted the call to Lexington in 1848.⁶ He had the gift of kindly sympathy and understanding, an easy and gracious manner with all sorts and conditions of men; and thus his nineteen-year ministry restored peace and harmony to the distraught Lexington congregation.

⁶ Dr. White's character is summed up in the letter written by the Session in Charlottesville to the Lexington Session:

Always the first and foremost in every benevolent enterprise [during his twelve years in Charlottesville, Dr. White's] labors have been as untiring, as they have been eminently judicious, and free from the slightest fanaticism which so frequently mars the efforts even of the well meaning and sincere. . . . In other spheres his usefulness has been exemplified in a degree which has won him the love, and entitled him to the gratitude of our entire county. . . . In parting with the Rev. Wm. S. White Presbyterianism here loses one of her most noble standard bearers, and we, our best and most cherished earthly friend.

During his ministry Stonewall Jackson became a member of the church; and in 1857 the first deacons were elected—Jackson, Mr. J. W. Barclay, and Professor A. L. Nelson. When the war broke out in 1861, Dr. White visited army camps in Virginia, wrote letters to all members of the church who were in the army, and was in frequent correspondence with General Jackson. On the eve of Hunter's Raid, June 7, 1864, according to Mrs. Margaret Junkin Preston, "All has been wild excitement this afternoon. Slaves and wagons loaded with negroes poured in from Staunton. Everybody was in alarm. In the midst of it, after hearing that the enemy was in possession of Waynesboro and Staunton both, we went



*Dr. William S. White;
minister 1848-1867*

to the daily prayer meeting. There Dr. White calmed the people by a succinct statement of facts, so far as it was possible to obtain them. . . . He inculcated calm reliance upon God; said that the force advancing would not reach us today; and appointed the meeting for tomorrow, saying that we should come, unless it was dangerous for the ladies to be on the street." The enemy arrived in Lexington on the eleventh, and General Averill established his headquarters in Dr. White's yard.⁷

Perhaps the most famous member of the Lexington church was Thomas J. ("Stonewall") Jackson. He was called to the professorship of

⁷ Because of his strenuous exertions during the War, and the added burden of a three-month trip undertaken from September to December 1865 to collect funds for Washington College, Dr. White's health was broken, and in 1867 he asked the Session to accept his resignation. He died on November 29, 1873.

Natural and Experimental Philosophy, and the instructorship in Artillery at VMI in 1851. It is said that he was "quite worldly" before he came under the influence of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of Lexington, but that phrase seems to mean only that he enjoyed dances and conviviality. His first wife, Eleanor Junkin, was a most devout and pious Christian, and she had great influence over her husband. She remonstrated with him for attending the drill of a Highland regiment on Sunday; he promised to think the matter through for himself. The result was that he laid down an almost Puritanical law for his own observance of the Sabbath. He would not post, receive, or read a letter on Sunday; he attributed the failure of an attack during the war to the fact that it was made on Sunday; he would not receive or use powder which his quartermaster had brought to him on the Sabbath.

Elected a deacon in 1857, he was assiduous in the performance of his duties. Dr. White wrote:

On one occasion General Thomas J. Jackson was appointed one of the collectors for the Bible Society. When he returned his list it was discovered that at the end, copied by the clerk of the Session, was a considerable number of names written in pencil; to each of which a very small amount was attached. Moreover, the Session, recognizing very few of the names, asked who those were. Jackson's characteristic reply was 'They are the militia; as the Bible Society is not a Presbyterian but a Christian cause, I deemed it best to go beyond the limits of our own church.' They were the names chiefly of free negroes. Jackson taught a Sunday School class for boys, and then became superintendent of the Negro Sunday School.

Dr. White records that Jackson

threw himself into this work with all his characteristic energy and wisdom. . . . To the moment he was always punctual at the opening of the school. Although wholly ignorant of the science of music, and having neither ear nor voice for singing, he yet learned to sing: 'Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,' [so] that the school would recognize it and carry it along. Sabbath after Sabbath he would stand before his school of blacks and raise this hymn and tune for them.

Dr. White writes further:

He issued monthly reports to the owners of the slaves. These reports he delivered in person, calling each month at every house where one of his pupils lived. When necessary he conferred with the family about matters connected with the behavior or misbehavior of the pupils. Under his management this school became one of the most interesting and useful institutions in the church. So deep was the interest he felt in it that, during the war, when he was at the front, in the midst of active campaigns, he would find time to write asking about it, and otherwise showing how closely it lay on his brave heart.

Jackson was constantly troubled with indigestion (dyspepsia, as it was called in those days). It reached the point of his asking the Session to accept his resignation as deacon and as superintendent of the Negro Sunday School. The Session declined to accept the resignation. Mrs. Preston writes that "the attacks of dyspepsia made him extremely drowsy. He us-

ed to furnish considerable amusement when he would go to sleep in church, for he insisted on sitting erect in his seat, which made his nodding all the more evident." When the church was enlarged by the addition of wings on each side of the building, a marker was placed on the pew nearest that in which Jackson used to sit. A wag suggested that the marker be inscribed: "Here slept Stonewall Jackson through every service of the church."

Just after the First Battle of Manassas, Jackson wrote to Dr. White: "My dear Pastor: In my tent last night after a fatiguing day's service, I remembered that I had failed to send you my contribution for our Colored S. S. Enclosed you will find my check for that object, which please acknowledge at your earliest convenience, and oblige, Yours faithfully, T. J. Jackson." As we all know, Jackson died after the battle of Chancellorsville. He was buried in Lexington on May 15, 1863, with Dr. White officiating, assisted by the Reverends William F. Junkin and James B. Ramsey.

My father's reminiscences of the two decades following the War are full of memories about the church. Since his family lived in the country, the interval on Sunday between early breakfast and dinner after the carriage ride home from church was a long one for the children. The whole family sat in its box pew, which was conveniently provided with footstools, on which the smaller children delighted to sit. Their mother realistically cared for the children's needs by bringing a paper sack of cookies, "and while the minister was finishing up his long and sometimes tedious sermon, the door of the pew being closed, we children sat on the foot-stools and had a quiet little picnic, without in the least disturbing the minister or the other worshippers."

Father several times alludes to the lengthy sermons preached in his childhood. He noted that the minister had usually reached only his "thirdly," and rarely his "fourthly" and "fifthly," when the Baptist church, "in those days just back of ours, with only a narrow alley-way between them," was already finishing its service. "We were often diverted and made even more restless by hearing them singing their closing hymn and then passing our church on their way home, while our good Dr. Francis Patrick Mullally, from County Tipperary, Ireland, was just getting well warmed up to his climax." That minister's climaxes must have been memorable. The Penick family cherishes a story dating from Mrs. Penick's childhood. One Sunday morning when Dr. Mullally was storming heaven's gates with his peroration, his small son called out, "Don't holler so loud, Daddy. I loves Gawd."

Father's memoirs show that the Session still in the 1870s exercised surveillance over the morals of the Presbyterian flock. He records:



Edward R. Leyburn, the author's father, whose reminiscences (1870-1890) are the basis of this essay.

Next to the bank was the Walz Delicatessen Shop, which also sold beer and wine. Mr. Walz and his family were members of the Presbyterian Church. At one time the Session of the Church cited Mr. Walz to appear before them, and demanded that he give up selling intoxicating liquors. His answer was that many of his best customers were members, some of them officers, of the Presbyterian Church, and offered to give names and dates. My recollection is that nothing further was done or said about the matter.

The first Episcopal service in Lexington was held in 1840, in the Presbyterian church.⁸ Soon thereafter a church was built on the present site and was called Grace Episcopal. Many Presbyterians were helpful in contributions and interest. There was, of course, a great deal of good-natured banter between members of the two congregations. For example, when Mrs. John Bowyer and her daughters joined the Episcopal church, Colonel Bowyer remarked, as if surprised at the discovery, "I'll be damned if I am not a Presbyterian still." A Lexingtonian who boasted of aristocratic English lineage and who was a member of the Episcopal church, asked a man who had left his fold upon his marriage to a Presbyterian wife, "Well, sir, how do you like being in the church with the tradespeople?"

The one bit of humor I have ever heard in connection with General Lee concerned a Presbyterian. When Lee was president of Washington College and a vestryman in the Episcopal church, the Presbyterian minister was Dr. John W. Pratt. He was a brilliant preacher. A student at the college, writing of the period, said that

⁸ It was conducted by an English minister, the Rev. Mr. Tyne.

to sit for three years under his ministry was no small part of a liberal education. The majority of the students from both the college and the institute were drawn by his eloquence to the Presbyterian Church. He had a very beautiful daughter, named Grace, who was very popular socially and whom the students were much given to looking down on from their seats in the gallery. Once at a meeting of the Episcopal vestry someone expressed the regret that Dr. Pratt's eloquence was drawing all the young men to the Presbyterian Church. General Lee . . . quietly remarked, 'I should not be surprised if Dr. Pratt's "Grace" had as much to do with it as his eloquence.'

Until 1844 the hymns at the Presbyterian church were lined out by a precentor, two lines at a time; but Dr. Skinner persuaded the Session to purchase three hymnbooks—one for the pulpit, one for the Lecture Room, and one for the mission outpost at Ben Salem. He further urged the members of the congregation to buy their own hymn-books for their family pews. The Session then voted 7 to 4 not to restore "the mode of singing in public worship by parcelling out the lines of the Psalms and Hymns." Three years later Dr. Skinner seemed to regret the interest he had stirred up in congregational music, for he said, bitterly, "When ladies and gentlemen become enamored of their own musical performances, they are apt to love but little, discourses of any character or length." It may be only a coincidence that John Blair Lyle, who initiated the letter criticizing Dr. Skinner, was a great lover of music. It was said that "few richer voices ever led the music in the sanctuary;" and he and his circle would rehearse in Mr. Lyle's bookstore the hymns scheduled for the next Sunday service.

I cannot resist one final comment from my father's reminiscences of his childhood.

Sunday with us was an entirely different day from all the other days of the week. The atmosphere seemed different. There was a quiet calm and peace that seemed to rest even upon the animals. There was never any question as to whether we would go to church, any more than whether we would have breakfast or not. We all knew that we would go to church unless we were too sick to get out of bed.

His boyish eyes saw most of what happened in church. He said that as a child I used to watch the ladies as they floated down the aisle in church, and wonder how they would manage to squeeze through the narrow doors of the pews with their wide hoop-skirts, and how they would be able to sit on the narrow seats after they got in. I often wondered, too, why women disfigure themselves with 'bustles,' instead of being satisfied with the attractive figures God had given them.

Although this paper ends with 1882, when Dr. Mullally finished his ministry at the Lexington Presbyterian Church, the congregation has now been in existence for more than eighteen decades. During that time only nineteen ministers have served the church. Some among them are now mere names; two were presidents of Washington College; one, Dr.



Lexington Presbyterian Church in the early 20th century (built 1845).

Skinner, will live in memory as a monument of irascibility. Three of the nineteen, however, blessed the church by serving it for a third of its entire history. During the kindly ministrations of these beloved pastors—Dr. William S. White, Dr. Alfred T. Graham, and Dr. J. J. Murray—perhaps even Lexington Presbyterians have become mellowed in disposition and have achieved an enlarged vision of what it means to be Christian. ☆

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The Early Iron Industry In Rockbridge County

T. T. Brady

IN 1619 AT Falling Creek, just below Richmond on the James River, the Virginia Company, under the leadership of Captain Bleuet (and later John Berkeley), constructed and operated the first pig iron producing blast furnace in the New World. Also, the first *wrought* iron was processed in the forge associated with it. Unfortunately, this venture in iron came to a tragic end in 1622 when all the workers were killed and the installation destroyed in a savage Indian massacre. Although interest in and the need for iron prevailed in the colony, it was 1714 before another operating furnace was established in Virginia by Governor Spotswood at Germana, in what is now Spotsylvania County. Through the remainder of the eighteenth century several furnaces were established in Virginia, but primarily in the valley between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains. In the latter part of that century the industry developed in this area. In 1779 Daniel Dougherty operated a forge near the mouth of Irish Creek.

Tate T. Brady, a resident of the Richmond area and the District Manager for the Virginia Electric and Power Company, was born at Buffalo Forge in Rockbridge County. His great-great uncle was William Weaver, one of the pioneer iron manufacturers in the region. Mr. Brady's research findings were presented at the Society's April 23, 1973, meeting at Southern Seminary Junior College in Buena Vista.

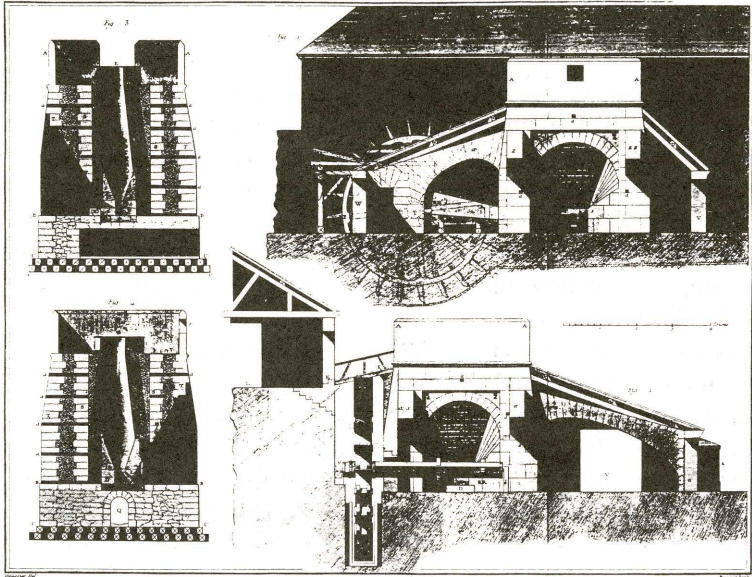
Why all this interest in iron? One of the driving forces in England for colonization was the need for new sources of iron. The charcoal needed to operate the blast furnaces required vast amounts of timber. In England, with limited forest areas, the industry was rapidly denuding the land and the government was becoming alarmed over the consequences. In later years Parliament ordered the cessation of blast furnace operations in some areas and directed that the installations be dismantled. There were conservationists even then. Of course, the need of iron for tools, machinery, utensils and weapons was most important in the development of the new colonies; iron was a marketable commodity to sell to England and other countries of the Old World.

Who were the giants of iron in its heyday here in Rockbridge? Colonel John Jordan, William Weaver, Thomas Maybury, William W. Davis, and Samuel F. Jordan were the prime movers in the new industry during the first half of the nineteenth century. Colonel Jordan was a man of many talents, active in many enterprises of business and construction in this region. In addition to his iron operations he built roads, canals, and public buildings. He was also engaged in milling.

William Weaver was a young energetic man who came here from Philadelphia to "look into an iron operation that was in some difficulty," recognized a business opportunity, invested his energy and money, and never moved back to Pennsylvania. Early in his career here he was in partnership with Thomas Maybury. Weaver also engaged in a variety of enterprises in addition to his iron operations. Samuel F. Jordan, husband of one of Weaver's nieces and the son of Colonel Jordan, came from Clifton in Alleghany County to work for Weaver at the Bath Iron Works, and in later years built and operated the Buena Vista Furnace. William W. Davis owned the Gibraltar Forge which no doubt operated in conjunction with the Bath Iron Works. (There is an entirely separate story concerning the Weaver-Jordan-Davis relationship.)

Kathleen Bruce in her book, *Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era*, (New York, 1930) listed nine furnaces in Rockbridge County, although I have some reservation about whether two of them were actually in the county. Of the various furnaces and forges in the county, Glenwood is the best preserved and Buena Vista next, although it has suffered considerable damage in recent years.

While one might think of these furnaces as crude installations with no real basic design, I believe the opposite to be true. J. P. Lesley in his book, *The Iron Manufacturer's Guide to the Furnaces, Forges and Rolling Mills of the United States*, published in 1859, gives the dimensions of most of the furnaces he surveyed in compiling the data for his *Guide*. Practically all furnaces were eight or nine feet across the bosh and thirty-two to forty feet high, so there must have been basic plans for



FURNACE, or, *Fournaie*, a *Br.* Elevatoire de Coppe d'un Fourneau

Plate on "Forges" from Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, volume 25.

construction. I believe there is a definite relationship in the design and construction of the furnaces here in the county. The general design of these furnaces are indicated by plates from Diderot's *Encyclopédie* published in French from 1713-1784. Although the furnace stacks here in the county—Glenwood, for example—are somewhat larger than the French design, the proportions are almost identical. Whether by coincidence or not, in a contract William Weaver had with Phillip Hull in 1827 to build the Bath Forge, the length of the hammer wheelshaft was specified to be twenty-six feet in length, the same shaft length as in the French plans for the forge.

It is quite obvious from reading the specifications accompanying these drawings that there were definite engineering, construction and thermodynamic problems to overcome in the erection and operation of such a furnace. For example, in the French plan exhaust gas ducts vent the stack, thus preventing its destruction from accumulated vapor pressure.

The earlier furnaces had bellows to provide induced draft in the furnace in order to achieve the high temperature necessary to melt the ore. A later improvement was the air pump similar to the Hopewell, Pennsylvania installation. In both instances the power supply was the water wheel, either overshot or undershot. Later in the nineteenth century some of these water powered installations were converted to steam

power. The Glenwood and California furnaces, for example, were converted to steam.

An "iron plantation," as they were sometimes called, was quite a sizable operation for its time. At Bath Iron Works, for example, there were some sixty-five workers with a plantation population of about one hundred-fifty people. These were practically self-sustaining communities having flour and grist mills, store, saw mill, blacksmith shop, leather shop, carpenter shop, post office, ice house, stables, dairy barn, slave quarters, kitchen, guest cottage and mansion. Buffalo Forge in about 1842 was a typical community.

As I previously stated in referring to the iron industry in England, these furnace and forge operations required vast quantities of wood to produce the charcoal needed. Consequently, large areas of forest land were a necessity for such an operation. Some 7,200 acres of mountain land were associated with the Buffalo Forge. At the Bath Iron Works, Weaver owned 5,000 acres, and at Etna and Retreat Furnaces on Purgatory Creek in Botetourt County he had another 5,560 acres.

A cord of wood would produce about forty bushels of charcoal. For each ton of pig iron produced it required the burning of about two hundred bushels of charcoal—thus a furnace such as Buena Vista, producing nine hundred tons of pig iron per year, consumed 4,500 cords of wood. That is a wood pile four feet wide, four feet high and 6.8 miles long. A forge would require fifteen to sixteen cords of wood to make a ton of bar iron, or about six hundred bushels of charcoal.

In "siteing" a furnace the four prime factors were: adequate supply of timber for charcoal, availability of limestone for flux, good quality ore, and adequate and dependable water power. Of course, it was most desirable that all of these be in close proximity. In most cases, however, the availability of water power dictated the location of the furnace and the other ingredients had to be hauled by wagon or rail to the site. This was miles in some instances. At Buena Vista the ore mines were some three miles distant, one mile at Glenwood, and two and a half at California. At Etna in Botetourt it was six miles by wagon and ten miles by railroad.

The term "dependable water power" was sometimes a misnomer. In time of drought the streams were frequently reduced to a flow that would not permit operation of the furnace. At Glenwood there was a miller up stream; when he operated his mill there was not enough water to operate the furnace efficiently. In winter frequently the streams and particularly the water wheels would freeze, thus halting operations.

In this area the furnaces generally used a brown hematite ore found on the side or top of a mountain ridge. These outcroppings are usually



*An old picture of
Glenwood furnace.
This stack is
38 feet high and was
erected in 1849.*

narrow veins of a few feet in thickness, the result, geologically, of an upheaval eons ago that left the edge of the strata exposed.

Ore was put into the top of the furnace along with charcoal and limestone flux. A couple of times a day the furnace was tapped, allowing the molten metal to flow into sand molds to form “pig” iron ingots. Once a furnace went into blast, it would operate continuously for eighteen to thirty weeks until the lining had deteriorated to such an extent that it had to be reworked. When the furnace was not in blast the wood cutters and even those who normally worked at the furnace were busy stock-piling wood for charcoal for the next run.

The forge was a very important part of the iron making process, for it was here that the pig iron was processed into merchantable bar iron. Generally a forge had a “finery” fire and a “chafery” fire, and in most instances two of each. The finery fire or hearth, using charcoal as fuel with water powered forced draft, was used to heat the pig iron to remove impurities and through the use of the forge hammer and about three heating operations, it was reduced to a mass, vaguely resembling a square-ended dumbbell. These objects were then reheated, but not melted, in the second forge operation, the chafery, and under the big hammer were reduced to the desired shape, a single bar. Most of the iron marketed was in this form.

Here I think it is appropriate to document what a typical forge installation comprised. Earlier I alluded to William Weaver’s contract with Hull to build the Bath Forge in 1827. This contract called for a forge with four fires . . . “which may be extended to six fires.” It was to have:

Two hammer wheels, 11 ft. each and

One bellows wheel, 18 ft.

The two hammer wheels shafts were to be 26 ft. each

A 1½ story dwelling house 24' x 20' of hewn logs with three fifteen light windows, a partition and the lower floor grooved and jointed and a good wooden chimney (\$80).

A forge house 52' x 26' frame to be weatherboarded and roofed with boards (\$130).

A coal house 50' x 18' and 12' to the square with a shingle roof (\$87).

One pair of patent bellows and frames to blow six fires (\$275).

A dam, ten feet high 180' long, of hewn logs, the whole to be planked (\$443.64).

The contract also included items such as forebay, sluice and gates.

It was a very demanding task for the ironworks manager to operate and produce a profit. Weaver once said that he had followed various occupations during his lifetime but "without hesitation it required more capacity and judgment to conduct an extensive ironwork establishment to advantage than any other business in this section of the country."

There were numerous job classifications for the workers of a furnace and forge complex. Among these were: wood cutters, wagoners, blacksmiths, forgemen, finers, colliers, carpenters, moulders, founders. Just as today they had instances where the "journeyman" earned more pay than supervisors. The collier, for example, was the man who tended the making of charcoal, a very demanding and exacting operation. It required constant attention around the clock for approximately six days, and he usually stayed in a little hut right at the pits. Consequently, his services came rather high, compared to other workers, and his earnings sometimes exceeded those of the manager.

The fact that these furnaces produced items for domestic use is obvious from the records of the Bath Iron Works. Among these were: glue pots, dutch pots and lids, ovens, skillets, andirons, mortar and pestle, firebacks, McCormick moldboards, bellows castings, gudgeons (axle), cog wheels, hollow ware, forge hammers, anvils and many others.

Lynchburg and Richmond were prime market centers for the sale of both pig iron and merchantable iron, with the Tredegar Iron Works and Bellona Foundry being good customers. Delivery of the material was accomplished by bateau on the river and by wagon road.

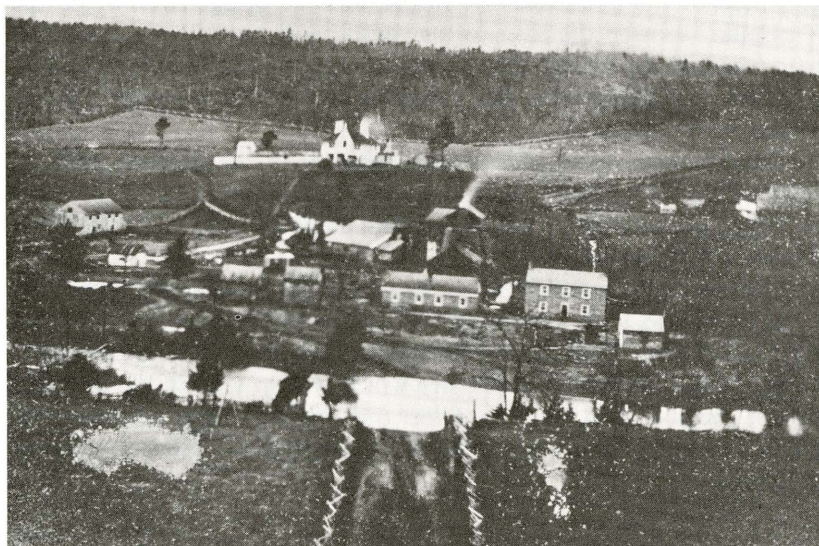
Records for Buffalo Forge indicate quite a bit of business in 1826-27 with John Jordan with shipping destination "canal." Apparently this was the iron needed in the construction of locks on the North River Canal, through Balcony Falls Gorge (1824-28). In the 1860s a man named Alonzo Siebert from Augusta County obtained a patent for a process

to make steel. He and my great-grandfather leased from John W. Jordan, Colonel Jordan's son, the California Furnace to conduct a series of experiments to test the process. I have not determined from my research how successful they were in this venture.

The iron industry played a vital role in the development of the colonies, the state and the nation. More specifically, the industry here in the valley constituted practically the only source of iron for the Confederacy during the Civil War.

There are many factors that brought about the end of the industry in this part of the country. But mainly the use of coal as a fuel, the discovery of higher grade ore deposits elsewhere, and the end of slave labor were those that made these operations unprofitable. It is a fascinating subject and one which I think we as a county and state have done very little toward recognizing in our heritage.

Following the tragedy at Falling Creek in 1622, the next successful blast furnace was constructed at Saugus, Massachusetts in 1644. Today that operation has been restored and is touted by E. N. Hartley in *Iron-works on the Saugus*, as the site of the "first manufacture of iron on an industrial basis within the limits of what is now the United States." Since



Photograph c. 1855 of Samuel Jordan's Gothic Revival home "Buena Vista" and the iron works for which the present town was named. This furnace, a large producer, was a primary target of General Hunter's raid in 1864.

Virginia had a blast furnace in 1619, it appears to me that Virginia has "missed the boat" by not doing more in establishing claim to the first successful blast furnace in English America.

With the development of the Goshen Pass area as a recreation area, would it not be beneficial to establish and identify the historical background of the area as it relates to the Bath Iron Works, Gibraltar and Lebanon Valley Forges and the Cedar Grove shipping point on the Maury River? If some level of restoration is not feasible, then at least historical markers could be erected, perhaps with an artist's rendering to acquaint the viewer with the scene as it must have been.

A recent field-trip to the site of Bath Forge revealed things which the casual passerby would fail to recognize or consider significant. Stone abutments on each side of the river, I think, establish the location of the dam. There are still remnants of foundations which apparently were for the forge house, coal house, and dwellings. Some walls of the waterway are still very much intact. Slag and charcoal specimens are plentiful even on the surface of the ground. An archeological survey of the site would prove very interesting and enlightening.

Downstream at the "Indian Pool" I noticed something I had never seen in my years of travel through the Pass: a bridge abutment on the north side of the river. This no doubt was the bridge over which the "Turnpike" crossed the river to the south bank, to follow the approximate route of the present road to Rockbridge Baths. Sketchy details in my research indicate that this turnpike and bridge required toll for passage by "outsiders."

On the other hand, Glenwood Furnace, in its excellent state of preservation, would be a "natural" from the standpoint of restoration. With its nearness to Natural Bridge, could it not also add to the historical attraction of Rockbridge?

I have merely scratched the surface, but with the help and support of interested people, such as members of this society, proper guidance and financial support, Virginia and Rockbridge could establish their proper places in the history of this industry which was so vital in the development of the state and country. I feel that some of these sites deserve, qualify for, and should receive historic recognition. I think it is worth pursuing. ☆

William Weaver, Ironmonger

D. E. Brady, Jr.

IN THE EARLY 1800s and through the Civil War years Rockbridge County had the reputation of being an agricultural area, but it also had considerable industrial activity. The mining, smelting, and forging of iron was one of the big businesses of that time. Some of the names in this business were Maybury (who had a furnace at Vesuvius), Jordan (of Lexington interest), McCormick (the Cyrus McCormick family), Anderson (who ran Glenwood furnace), Davis and Weaver. The last one of these, William Weaver, kept good records and appears to have filed all the letters that he received. He was also involved in court cases which were duly recorded. His records have been deposited in the libraries of Duke University and the University of Virginia and in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin's McCormick collection. My brother and I have some remnants of his papers and the court records are in the Rockbridge and Augusta Court Houses.

Douglas Ellinpsico Brady, Jr., was mayor of Lexington and the superintendent of buildings and grounds at Washington and Lee University when he delivered this address. He was born at Buffalo Forge, a Rockbridge County community which once had a mill and an iron furnace run by his ancestor William Weaver. Mr. Brady spoke to the Society at the Robert E. Lee Hotel in Lexington on January 26, 1970.



William Weaver of Pennsylvania.

In 1811 one William Wilson built Union Forge on Buffalo Creek near its confluence with North [now Maury] River. Three years later he sold it to a partnership consisting of Thomas Maybury of Botetourt County and William Weaver of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They changed its name to Buffalo Forge and began operations with Maybury at the Forge, where he served as ironmaster and bought slaves for the labor force. Weaver remained in Pennsylvania where he was a member of the Pennsylvania legislature (1818-1820), had a cotton mill business and was settling his father's estate.

Maybury had his problems: the forge was not making a profit; he could not acquire satisfactory slaves; he repeatedly had to ask Weaver for more money. Weaver once wrote to his partner requesting that Maybury not mention slaves in his letters. Apparently it would have been embarrassing for the Philadelphia resident to be known as a slave holder.

In 1823 Weaver came to Virginia and assumed direction of the forge operation. The partnership was dissolved, though not to Maybury's entire satisfaction. Maybury remained in the iron business and became the operator of the Catopaxi furnace at Vesuvius, Virginia. Under Weaver's management Buffalo Forge was a success, and he admitted that it made some money.

Weaver was forty-two years old when he came to Virginia, and seven years later he married a Philadelphia widow, Elizabeth Newkirk Woodson. They had no children, but he seemed to have had considerable feeling for his nieces and nephews. In family correspondence and conversation for three generations he was affectionately, or perhaps respectfully referred to as "Uncle William." How he became interested in Virginia is not known. Klaus Wust, in his little book about the Dunkard pioneers, tells how Alexander Mack helped found settlements near Winchester and in the Claytor Lake area. Alexander Mack was William Weaver's grandfather. One would like to think that young William was entertained with grandfatherly tales about Virginia and the mineral wealth in its mountains, thus instilling an interest that he was able to follow in later life.

As the forge prospered, Weaver acquired more iron properties. He obtained the Aetna and Retreat furnaces in Botetourt County, large acreage in the Buffalo Forge area through the Maybury partnership, and the Bath Iron Works at the upper end of Goshen Pass. In 1819 Thomas Baggs built a stone house near the forge. Weaver purchased this and used it as his residence. He later added to it, more than doubling its size.

The forge industry was as near self-sufficient as possible. To operate the forge large quantities of charcoal were needed, so over the years he purchased most of the western slope of the Blue Ridge from Glasgow to Buena Vista. Horses and mules were needed to haul the charcoal and pig iron, so farm land was acquired to raise feed and large stables were built. There were slaves to be fed, so land was devoted to the raising of food for humans. A sewing room was put into use, and numerous cabins were built for slave quarters. In addition to the usual farm and forge buildings there were two mills, a harness shop, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, icehouse, office building, dairy, carriage house, the company store, a saw mill, and thousands of acres of land.

The Bath Iron Works had a similar development except that in addition it had mines and furnaces. The story of Bath Iron Works is well documented by Dr. Thompkins and others.

Weaver's family life was not without strife. He was one of ten children, so he had many nieces and nephews, several of whom he brought to Virginia. There is a poignant letter from his sister-in-law complaining about his treatment of her sons. William Weaver's brother had died, leaving in William's care his two sons and a sum of money for their upkeep. The mother complained that he had taken them to Virginia and this would not have been their father's wish. They were not being educated properly and they were being "used to drive negros or any other menial task." She also stated that if he had any sense of justice he

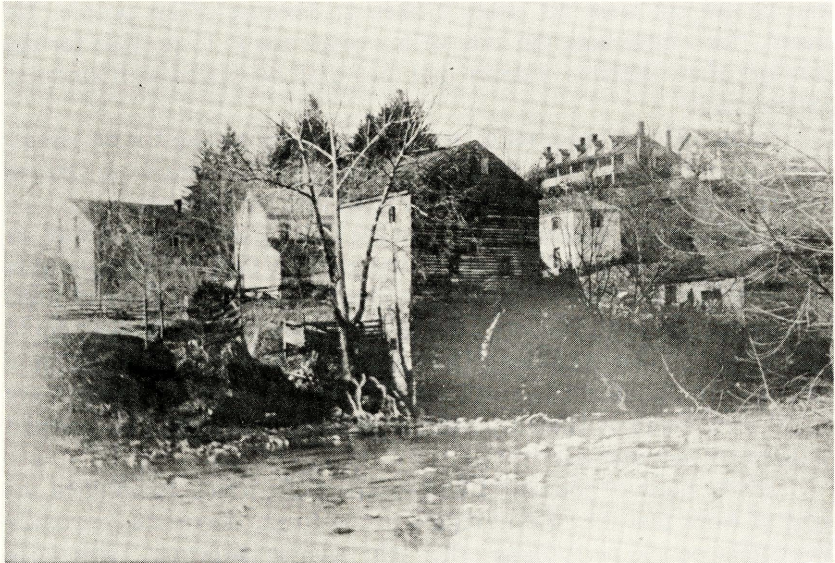
would act toward them as an honorable man should do. I do not know what was done or how the boys turned out, but there is an audit of the trust fund account when they reached their majority and the remainder of the fund plus interest was given to them.

Weaver made an arrangement with Abram Davis (a nephew) and Samuel Jordan to run the Bath Iron Works. The works were not as profitable as Weaver thought they should be, so he tried to regain control of them. There followed a lengthy lawsuit which, fortunately for posterity, has, by way of depositions, furnished a wealth of data regarding the operation of forges and furnaces, but it caused bitterness in the family. When his wife died in 1850, Weaver asked a Davis, either his sister or niece, to come and run the household for him. The lawsuit in which Abram Davis was involved caused so much unpleasantness that the arrangement was untenable.

He then asked Emma Gorgas Brady, a niece, and family to come. They came and this arrangement worked well because they stayed on and eventually inherited a large part of the estate. Will Rex, a great nephew, helped at Buffalo Forge and Aetna and ran the store. Charles Gorgas, a nephew about the same age as Will Rex, came to Virginia and was put in charge of the Aetna furnace. Charles courted and married Anne Sisson, a prominent old-maidish lady of that section, and Weaver gave them the furnace works there as a wedding present. Charles soon contracted



Buffalo Forge; drawn by the author's grandfather in the late 19th century.



Buffalo Forge; photograph from the same period as the drawing. The structures shown are: grist mill (center); blacksmith shop (right); harness shop (the square building, right center); Buffalo Forge store (behind and to the left of the grist mill); flour mill (left of store). Weaver's home and the guest cottage are on the hill overlooking these structures.

pneumonia and died. Will Rex attended the funeral and reported the happenings to his uncle. The old man listened and then commented, "Anne Sisson got my furnace damn slick, didn't she?" Weaver apparently never tried to reclaim that property.

Another nephew, John Weaver Dannenhour, worked for a while at Bath Iron Works, but did not stay in Virginia. A niece married one of the Jordans; she died, and he married another niece. C. W. Newkirk, who was referred to by Weaver as his nephew, also worked at Bath Iron Works, but he was probably Weaver's wife's nephew or son by her first husband. In his old age William Weaver received a letter from Abram Davis, seeking reconciliation on the Bath Iron Works affair. The letter was quite emotional in content and Weaver must have made a favorable response, because an entry in the Buffalo Forge journal on September 5, 1852, notes: "Davis of Mississippi called on Mr. Weaver today."

Weaver had a strong sense of responsibility to his slaves. He once considered selling his iron interests and moving to Mississippi, and one of the reasons for not doing so was that he did not want his people to be sold. His records show very few sales of slaves and these few were usually the result of extreme provocation. In his will he mentioned

that he did not want his estate broken up because of his people. He stated, "as I have kept the bulk of my estate partly to provide for the comfort of my servants, I desire that they shall be treated with kindness and humanity."

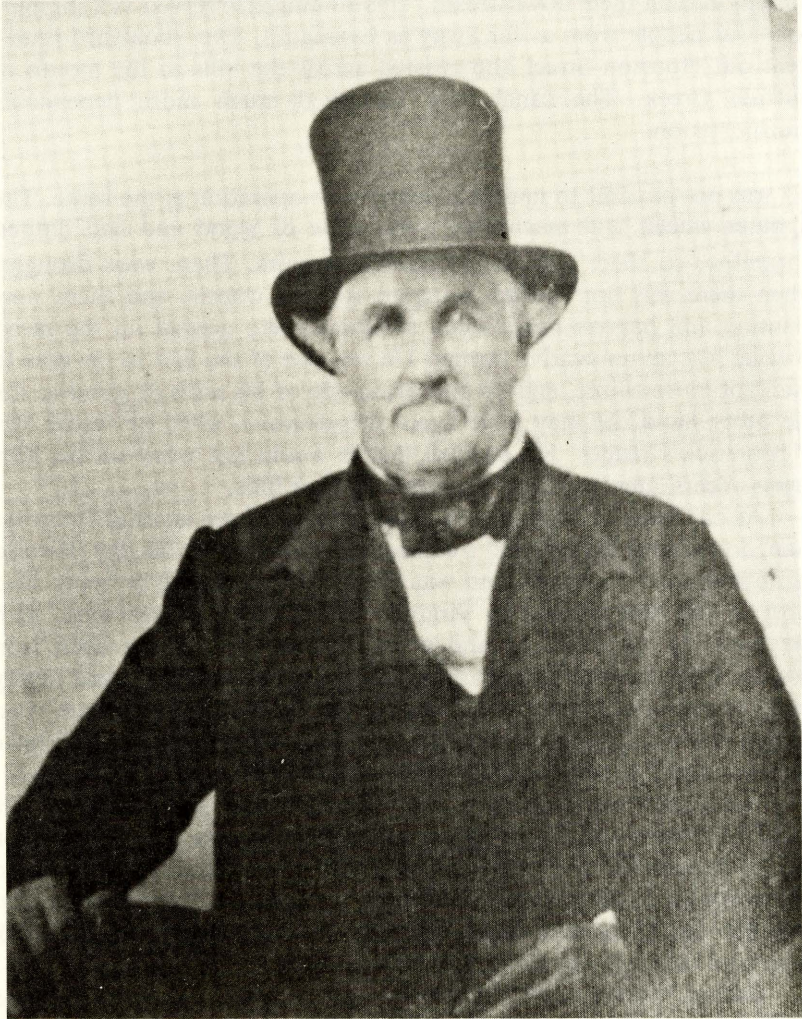
In the 1820s Weaver set up an incentive work system for his slaves. This was not original with him. He probably got the idea from Oxford furnace, for he had purchased slaves from that business when it ceased operations and the system had been in use there. Certain norms were set for the various tasks and the slaves were paid for their accomplishments above the norms. They could use the money as they saw fit, and some purchased vacations. At fifty cents a day a man with ten dollars could have a twenty-day vacation. One man had a savings account in a Lexington bank. There is a story that he had a bet with another slave about the account and had his owner withdraw it temporarily so he could show the money and win the bet.

While many of the slaves had special skills which determined the type of work that they did in regard to the forge, they were frequently two-talent people performing other jobs such as carpentry, farm work and wood-cutting. It seemed that everyone did a stint at wood-cutting. There was one man of the John Henry mold named Garland Thompson. It was said that he would loaf around until Friday and then go out and cut his week's norm of wood by Saturday noon. Once when the "paterollers" broke up a party in the slave quarters, people dived out the windows and back doors, but Garland strode out the front door and none dared to stop him.

Many of the slaves remained at the forge after the Civil War as freedmen, and some of their descendants still live at Buck Hill and Glasgow. This is not to say that there was just one big happy family. There were whippings and slaves did run away. When Northern troops under General David Hunter raided the area in June, 1864, some of the most trusted slaves left, and most of the others were taken to the remote "Mountain Farm" until the raiders were gone.

Weaver's wife, Eliza, was very strict and was feared by the slaves. Two generations later a visiting black asked if old "Miss" still walked in the big house. It was customary for owners of slaves to rent them out to people who had need of laborers. It was also customary for a slave who did not want to go to a certain place to say so to his owner, and he usually would not be sent. There were those who did not want to work for William Weaver.

The forge work was hard and had an element of danger. There were four fires and two hammers. The hammers consisted of iron heads, weighing two to five hundred pounds each, mounted on wooden beams. The hammers were lifted and dropped by the water wheels. The iron



William Weaver (1781-1863); a daguerreotype made in the late 1850s.

heads struck on large anvils set into the floor. Men would heat the pigs of iron with charcoal and then bring the one hundred pound pigs glowing hot to the anvil to be pounded by the hammers. The process produced from the brittle cast iron a form called wrought iron which was strong, tough, and almost rust proof. Some of this was used locally, but most was shipped down river to markets in Lynchburg and Richmond. Until the canal was built, there was a landing at the mouth of Buffalo Creek where boats were loaded and tied up until North River became full

enough to float them downstream. This landing also served as a shipping point for people from as far away as Lexington. The "boatyard road" went out Houston Street and twisted across the hills to the mouth of Buffalo Creek. The canal later furnished much more dependable transportation.

It was not possible to maintain continuous operation at the forge. The water wheels and machinery were made of wood and had limited durability, so there was down time for repairs. There were droughts when there was not enough water to run the wheels, and there were planting and harvest times when all hands were needed on the farm. Weaver was an innovative farmer. He was one of the first in the area to use gypsum fertilizer, and he converted one of his mills to grind it. On the other hand, he may have been over-cautious when he tested Mr. McCormick's reaper. He decided that it would not work on his hilly farms. Years later the reaper was used on those hills.

As one looks at his record he appears to have been an astute business man, and indeed, he amassed a considerable fortune for his day. He also made many bad contracts and was either suing someone or being sued most of the time he was in Virginia. There was a suit to settle with Maybury. In the 1820s he and a man named Doyle built Bath Iron Works. Their contractual relationship changed several times and finally ended in a lawsuit. This was followed by the Davis and Jordan suit. Also he had one over a property line in the Glasgow area which could have been avoided if a clear deed had been written.

His wealth was legendary, but journal entries and records of his estate settlement tell the sad story. His nephew-in-law was his executor and as he handled the estate, he put part of the money into tobacco which was burned in Richmond. The rest was put in Confederate money, and then the slaves were freed. His heir, D. C. E. Brady, was left with large land holdings, the forge, and no capital.

During Weaver's last illness his doctor stayed at his home and was remembered in his patient's will. Weaver died on March 12, 1863, at the age of eighty-two. He does not seem to have been a man with many friends and we have no record of his religious life. Accounts of his funeral, however, tell that a large number of people attended. He was buried in Falling Spring Cemetery one mile from his home. ☆

Benjamin Darst, Sr.
Architect-Builder of Lexington

H. Jackson Darst

EARLY IN 1785 Benjamin Darst, Sr., came to Lexington from Goochland County. He and his son Samuel (1788-1864), who was in partnership with John Jordan (1777-1854) during the "Golden Era" of Classical Revival architecture in Rockbridge County, were to have a substantial impact upon the development of Lexington for the next half century. Their talents are reflected in the buildings which became Lexington landmarks, some of which, such as Washington Hall and the houses on Lee Avenue, still stand. No less important were their contributions to the industrial, commercial, social and educational life of the community.

Benjamin Darst, Sr. was born January 19, 1760, in Shenandoah County. His Swiss father, Abraham Derst, had emigrated from the Canton of Glarus and arrived in Philadelphia in 1743. In the middle of the

The Reverend H. Jackson Darst, a resident of Williamburg and the author of a book on the Darst family of Virginia, serves as supply minister at a number of Christian churches in Virginia. In addition he has acted as assistant to the commandant of the Educational Division at the U. S. Army Transportation Center at Fort Eustis, Virginia. Dr. Darst's address on "The Rockbridge County Darsts and Their Grigsby Connections" was given at the Society's January 28, 1974, meeting at the Keydet-General Restaurant near Lexington.

next decade he moved with his wife and young children into the Valley.¹ Not long after the death of his father in 1772, Benjamin Darst evidently began to work with one of the pioneer German potters of Shenandoah County. These early potters laid the foundation for the very prosperous factories which were operated at Strasburg, which became known as "Pottown," and other points in Shenandoah County in the next century.²

After serving in the Revolutionary militia, about 1780, with a legacy from his brother Isaac and the credentials as a master of the potter's art, Darst set out in the direction of Richmond and Williamsburg, probably with the intention of establishing a pottery in one of these towns. Instead he settled in Goochland County, where about 1781 the young Valley businessman married Lucy Woodward (1758-1794).³

His bride was of English ancestry, the daughter of John and Susannah (Tilman) Woodward. The Woodwards had been residents of Goochland since at least the 1740s, and John's step-grandfather, Captain James Holman, had represented the county in the House of Burgesses.⁴ They were communicants of St. James Northam Parish, of which William Douglass, well known for his *Douglass Register*, was rector. Among the Woodward neighbors were the Jordans and Woodsons. Colonel John Jordan's grandfather witnessed the will of Lucy Woodward Darst's grandmother.⁵ In Goochland Benjamin Darst had business dealings with the Woodsons, one of whom moved to Lexington where he invented a brick press.⁶

Benjamin and Lucy Darst settled on the Red Hill tract "near the Manakin Town Ferry"—probably about the site of the present Manakin Post Office. During these several years he spent in Goochland, Ben-

¹ Date from gravestone, Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery, Lexington, Virginia; Samuel Darst to Maj. James H. Darst, October 20, 1859, in author's possession; H. Jackson Darst, *The Darsts of Virginia* (Williamsburg, Va.: The Author, 1972), pp. 389, 390, 392; Ralph B. Strassburger and W. J. Hinke, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers* (Norristown, Pa.: Pennsylvania German Society, 1934), I, xxiv, 330.

² John W. Wayland, *A Short History of Shenandoah County Virginia* (Strasburg, Va.: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1927), p. 129.

³ Shenandoah County Minute Book, 1774-1780, p. 56; Shenandoah County Will Book A, p. 134; John Woodward Family Bible, Virginia Historical Society; Rockbridge County Deed Book B, pp. 308-09.

⁴ John Woodward Family Bible; Goochland County Deed Book 14, pp. 79-81; Book 3, p. 557; Hugh S. Watson, Jr., "Climbing The Family Tree," Newport News, Virginia, *Daily Press*, October 8, 1972.

⁵ William Douglass, *Douglass Register* (Richmond: J. W. Ferguson & Sons, 1928), pp. 90, 327; Goochland County Will Book G, p. 265; John S. Moore, "John Jordan, Baptist Layman," *Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society*, 6(1960-1964), 64.

⁶ Goochland County Deed Book 14, pp. 79-81; Henry M. Woodson, *Historical Genealogy of the Woodsons and Connections* (Columbia, Mo.: The Author, 1915), p. 156; Commissioner of Patents, *A List of Patents Granted by the United States from April 10, 1790 to December 31, 1836* (Washington: GPO, 1872, p. 390.

jamin, then in his early twenties, projects the image of a prosperous and ambitious young business and family man. He owned land and slaves.⁷ Apparently he operated a pottery. Two of his children were born during this period. He sold his property in Goochland in the fall of 1784 and the following spring bought land in the bustling new hamlet in Rockbridge County.⁸

It can be safely assumed that he set up his pottery factory immediately. One of the most significant surviving documents in the early history of this industry in the Valley was executed three years later in June, 1788, when "Soldier John" Grigsby and David Cloyd, overseers of the poor, bound an orphan boy to Benjamin Darst, Sr. to learn the pottery "Art or Trade."⁹ The conditions of this indenture provide information about both the education required for mastery of the industry and the equipment employed in it.

The factory workshops were equipped with pottery wheels and kilns. Nearby was a clay pit with a mixing paddle turned by a mule or horse. Churns, crocks, pitchers, plates, toys and other items were manufactured.¹⁰ The market obviously was not confined to the local community. Darst's pottery was strategically located in terms of westward migration through the Valley to Southwest Virginia and the new states and territories beyond. Ware broken en route from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and elsewhere in the northeast could be replenished from the Lexington factory.

As his business prospered Darst began to look for other lucrative activities and soon became one of the earliest brick manufacturers and building contractors in the town. To what extent he became interested in architecture and building before the great fire which destroyed Lexington in 1796, it is impossible to determine. Out of the ashes of the log buildings of the frontier settlement came the beginning of a brick town. A New Yorker who visited in 1804 said that "Lexington is a handsome little village with good buildings."¹¹ Undoubtedly, many of these "good

⁷ Goochland County Deed Book 14, pp. 79-81; Helene B. Agee, *Facets of Goochland County's History* (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1962), p. 77; Goochland County Land Books, 1782-1784; Goochland County Personal Property Tax Books, 1782-1784.

⁸ John Woodward Family Bible; Goochland County Deed Book 14, pp. 79-81; Rockbridge County Deed Book A, pp. 517-18; Book B, pp. 308-09.

⁹ Rockbridge County Will Book 1, p. 319.

¹⁰ "Pottery and Porcelain," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1946 ed.), 18: 373, 373A.

¹¹ George W. Diehl, *The Reverend Samuel Houston, D.V.M.* (Verona, Va.: McClure, 1970), p. 70; "The Town of Lexington in 1801," *Lexington Gazette*, August 14, 1941; "Ocotogenarian Writer of Extinct Families," Withrow Scrapbook Ia (Rockbridge), Rockbridge Historical Society Papers, Washington and Lee University Library; "Residential Development of Lee Avenue in Lexington [1922]," *ibid.*, III (Lexington); Oren F. Morton, *History of Rockbridge County* (Staunton, Va.: McClure, 1920), p. 149. See also, Darst, *The Darsts of Virginia*, pp. 399-400.

buildings” were designed and erected by Benjamin Darst, Sr.

The transition to the new business was easy. One authority has said that pottery “in its widest sense includes all objects fashioned from clay and then hardened by fire.”¹² The manufacture of brick was merely an extension of the pottery activities. The raw material was the same and the pugmill and kiln were used in both manufacturing processes. The ability to produce first-rate brick was perhaps more critical to success in this business than the actual construction process.

Benjamin Darst possessed a broad knowledge of the chemistry of soils and of glazes and special purpose uses of clay; he was an experienced operator of kilns. The pottery business also had demanded some competence as a designer and mathematician. He had been exposed to some of the architectural masterpieces of eastern Virginia before coming to Lexington, and after 1794 he appears to have frequently visited Goochland and Louisa, probably passing through Albemarle.¹³ These journeys provided him an opportunity to refresh his memory of the old architectural forms in Piedmont Virginia, and exposed him to the Classical Revival style which Jefferson was popularizing at the new state capitol and at Monticello.

On one of these journeys around the turn of the century Darst may have encountered John Jordan, who probably served an apprenticeship as a bricklayer. One source has suggested that Jordan may have moved to Lexington as a result of Darst’s invitation and encouragement. Perhaps it is significant that the first major construction in Lexington undertaken by Jordan was in association with Darst’s son-in-law John Chandler (1772-1852). This was the imposing Ann Smith Academy building erected in 1808-1809. Chandler was contractor for the “woodwork” and Jordan did the brick work.¹⁴

Chandler also had come from east of the Blue Ridge. In 1802 he married Polly Darst (1782-1846), the eldest daughter of Benjamin, Sr. They lived on a plantation a short distance from the town and were among the founders of Ann Smith Academy, and were active in the Lexington Presbyterian Church. In 1803 he and Daniel Lambert were the woodwork contractors for the new academic buildings of Washington Academy, and Chandler was the contractor for the Steward’s House.¹⁵

¹² “Pottery and Porcelain,” p. 338.

¹³ Darst, *The Darsts of Virginia*, p. 400.

¹⁴ Willard Isley, “John Jordan, Builder,” *Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society*, 7(1966-1969), 94; L. Moody Sims, “John Jordan, Builder and Entrepreneur,” *Virginia Cavalcade*, 23(Summer, 1973), 20; Ann Smith Academy Records, Washington and Lee University Library.

¹⁵ Warren T. Chandler, “Chandler Genealogy,” (1931 typescript in author’s possession); Rockbridge County Marriage Book 1, p. 78; Darst, *The Darsts of Virginia*, p. 406; Minutes of the Board of Trustees, May 4 and October 4, 1803, Washington and Lee University Library.

About 1802, at approximately the same time that Chandler and Jordan arrived in Lexington, Samuel Darst entered the brick manufacturing and construction business, probably with his father, Benjamin. Samuel Darst married Nancy Irvine (1788-1835), whose brother John became Jordan's principal partner in both the Blue Ridge Canal construction and the iron business.¹⁶

During the first decade of the nineteenth century Benjamin Darst, Sr. emerged as the senior member of a group of individuals in Lexington who were financially interested in the construction business and whose roots or connections were east of the Blue Ridge. Ultimately these included John Chandler and his brother Samuel T., John Jordan and his brothers Hezekiah and Samuel, Samuel Darst and his cousin Isaac Woodward, John Woodson and perhaps others.¹⁷

In 1815 two of these men, John Jordan and Samuel Darst, formed a partnership in the brick making and construction business. Benjamin Darst, Sr. appears to have withdrawn from building operations at this time and confined his construction activities to design and capital investment in the projects of the firm of Darst & Jordan. As an experienced builder who had already seen the town grow from a log village to a good-sized community of brick houses, the elder Darst may have been the mentor of the partners and evidently had a large influence upon their achievements.¹⁸

Although the financial records of the firm of Darst & Jordan have been lost, it is not difficult to reconstruct from other sources the division of labor between the partners. Jordan was the agent for the firm and handled contract negotiations, bids and other "customer relations." Darst was the "active partner" and managed the operations. He maintained the books and settled accounts, hired, paid and discharged "hands," purchased supplies, and in general managed both the brick manufacturing and the construction process.

In the only record of the settlement of accounts to survive, which pertains to the construction of a handsome residence for Dr. Henry Ruffner, the partners divided the profits evenly. This arrangement did not prevail in every case. One contemporary under oath stated, "the concern

¹⁶ *Lexington Gazette*, July 17, 1830; Rockbridge County Marriage Book 1, p. 130; Rockbridge County Will Book 5, pp. 412-14; Rockbridge County Chancery File 5, Bundle 19, *Darst vs. Alexander*, affidavit of Samuel Darst, October 15, 1838.

¹⁷ Chandler, "Chandler Genealogy"; "Building of Old Court House Fence Here in 1806," *Withrow Scrapbooks*, Ia (Rockbridge); Isley, "John Jordan, Builder," 94; *Lexington Intelligencer*, July 17, 1830.

¹⁸ *Darst vs. Alexander*; Rockbridge County Chancery File 23, Bundle 97, *Andrew Alexander's Executors vs. Jordan*, William C. Lewis deposition, April 4, 1848, exceptions by plaintiffs and affidavits; Darst, *The Darsts of Virginia*, p. 399; Parke Rouse, Jr., "Samuel Darst and Washington and Lee University," *The Magazine Antiques*, 105(February, 1974), 337.

of Jordan & Darst were in the habit of doing large jobs and sometimes they divided the proceeds, sometimes one of the partners took all . . .”¹⁹

Tradition has attributed certain structures to Darst and others to Jordan. The evidence indicates that all “large jobs” attributed to either man during the period of the partnership were in fact undertaken by the firm. A few of the structures for which Darst & Jordan appear to have been responsible are as follows:

1816 - “Little Stono”²⁰

Neriah Baptist Church Meeting House²¹

1817 - The Lexington Arsenal (now part of Virginia Military Institute)²²

1818 - Residence for Colonel John Jordan (now known as “Stono”)²³

1819 - Residence for Benjamin Darst, Sr. (the old section of the house now known as “The Pines”)²⁴

Central School Association Schoolhouse²⁵

1820 - The Dold Building (old section)²⁶

1821 - Residence for Dr. Henry Ruffner²⁷

1822 - Residence on South Main Street (now old section of building housing the Rockbridge Regional Library)²⁸

1824 - Residence for Samuel Darst (now known as “Beaumont”)²⁹

Residence for Colonel S. McD. Reid

(now known as the “Reid-White House”)³⁰

Residence for General C. P. Dorman

¹⁹ *Andrew Alexander's Executors vs. Jordan; Darst vs. Alexander.*

²⁰ Marshall W. Fishwick, “John Jordan, Man of Iron,” *The Iron Worker*, 21 (Autumn, 1957), 2.

²¹ Moore, “John Jordan, Baptist Layman,” 64.

²² William Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.* (4 vols.; Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1939), I, 7-9, 224-25.

²³ Harrington Waddell, “A Family of Builders,” *Lexington Gazette*, January-February, 1932.

²⁴ “Residential Development of Lee Avenue in Lexington,” Withrow Scrapbooks, III (Lexington); Rockbridge County Deed Book M, p. 27; Rockbridge County Land Books, 1819-1820.

²⁵ “The Central School Association of Lexington [June 11, 1936], Withrow Scrapbooks, III (Lexington).

²⁶ “The Town of Lexington in the Year 1801,” *Lexington Gazette*, August 14, 1941; Rockbridge County Land Books, 1819-1821.

²⁷ *Darst vs. Alexander*, affidavit of Samuel Darst, October 15, 1838; Rockbridge County Land Books, 1819-1821.

²⁸ *Rockbridge County News*, July 13, 1961.

²⁹ J. Everett Fauber, A.I.A., “Research Report Relating to the Barclay House, Lexington, Virginia” (July 13, 1966), p. 2, Rockbridge Historical Society Papers; Rockbridge County Land Books, 1823-25.

³⁰ “The Town of Lexington in the Year 1801,” *Lexington Gazette*, August 14, 1941; interview with Mrs. Ruth Anderson McCullough, May 21, 1969, Lexington; Rockbridge County Land Books, 1823-25.

(now known as "The Rectory")³¹
 Centre Building (now Washington Hall,
 Washington and Lee University)³²

The large resources of the firm and the ambitions of its partners are well illustrated in the effort they made in 1819 to secure the brickwork contract for the University of Virginia. In spite of the distance from Lexington and the magnitude of the job, Samuel Darst and John Jordan were bidders—ostensibly as individuals, but in fact as a firm and as part of a conspiracy to monopolize the work. Judge Archibald Stuart of Staunton accused the partners of this in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, dated March 9, 1819. Evidently, Judge Stuart's letter had the desired effect of barring the partners' participation, as there is no evidence of their being involved in the construction of the University.³³

The best known and most complex project undertaken by Darst & Jordan was the Centre Building (Washington Hall) of Washington College. It has been called their "masterpiece." They began to manufacture the bricks in the fall of 1822 in order that construction could begin early in 1823. The bricks were burned on the college grounds from clay dug at the site, which accounts for the "flattening of the surface and the terracing of certain spaces" on the campus. The firm utilized slave labor extensively. There were problems peculiar to the use of slaves, one of which was that in a town the size of Lexington there were always persons anxious to pay them for chopping wood and doing other odd jobs during their free time. These tasks could become sufficiently time consuming that the regular employment suffered. In May and June, 1823, "Darst & Jordan" warned the residents through the *Lexington Intelligencer* against employing their slaves.³⁴

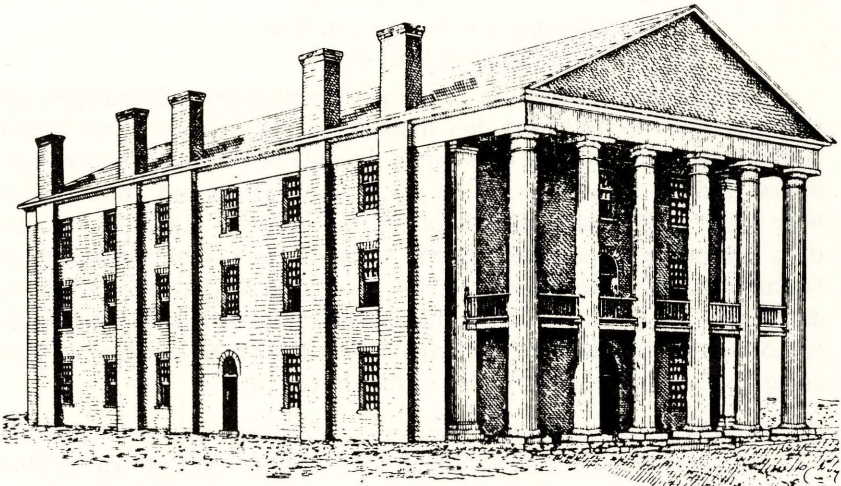
The question of who designed the various buildings which were constructed by Darst & Jordan is intriguing and largely unresolved by documentary and traditional sources. Washington Hall is the foremost illustration. Notwithstanding the legend which has developed since 1950,

³¹ James W. McClung, "Album: Rockbridge Homes and Other Views," p. 43, Rockbridge Historical Society Papers; *Rockbridge County News*, July 13, 1961; Rockbridge County Land Books, 1823-25.

³² William H. Ruffner, ed., *Washington and Lee University Historical Papers* (6 vols.; Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1890-1904), 4: 91-92. Photographs of several of the buildings discussed in this paper may be found in Royster Lyle, Jr. and Pamela Hemenway Simpson, *The Architecture of Historic Lexington* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1977).

³³ Archibald Stuart to Thomas Jefferson, March 19, 1819, Jefferson Papers, University of Virginia Library; P. A. Bruce, *History of the University of Virginia, 1819-1919* (New York: Macmillan, 1920-1922); manuscripts pertaining to the building of the university, University Archives, University of Virginia Library.

³⁴ *Washington and Lee University Historical Papers*, 4: 94; *Lexington Intelligencer*, May 31, 1823.



A conjectural drawing of the original appearance of Washington College's Centre Building.

almost a century after his death, that Jordan designed Washington Hall, there is no creditable tradition or documentation to support attributing it to him or to the Darsts. According to the minutes of the Board of Trustees on July 1, 1822, a committee was appointed to develop a "suitable plan" for the proposed building. Apparently after consulting several contractors, including Darst & Jordan, "several offers" were received from "different workmen." On October 16, 1822, John Jordan's bid submitted for the firm was accepted. There is nothing in the minutes to suggest that the plan was drawn by either of the Darsts or Jordan.³⁵

A corroboration of this fact is found in Dr. W. H. Ruffner's 1893 account of the building of Washington Hall, contained in the *Washington and Lee University Historical Papers*. Ruffner obviously had a very accurate knowledge of the facts and traditions surrounding this event. According to him, the committee of the Board "went to planning and figuring" and finally submitted a design that was adopted. Ruffner refers to the partnership between John Jordan and Samuel Darst in the construction of Washington Hall and praises both men as builders.³⁶ Considering the nature of his comments, had he any knowledge which would have justified attributing the design to the Darsts or Jordan, it is inconceivable that he would not have done so.

³⁵ Minutes of the Board of Trustees, July 1, August 14, September 24 and October 16, 1822, September 24, 1823 and March 21, 1824, Washington and Lee University Library.

³⁶ *Washington and Lee University Historical Papers*, 4: 92.

Calder Loth, in his definitive study of the architecture of Washington and Lee University, concludes that credit for the design of the college buildings belongs to no one individual. Rather, these structures must be attributed to the administrators who were "determined to give a dignified setting to the educational process," and to local builders who, with their knowledge of construction techniques, were able to give "tangible form to the administrators' aspirations." Loth describes the processes by means of which Washington Hall and the other buildings came into being as "common at a time when professional architects were extremely scarce—that of simple builders directly transforming the requirements of their employer into wood, brick and mortar, . . ."³⁷

The only building which the firm of Darst & Jordan erected for which there seems to be an authentic tradition of a set of architectural plans being drawn by one person and the firm then executing them, is The Rectory. The architect was Benjamin Darst, Sr.³⁸ What was true of The Rectory probably also applied to The Pines and Beaumont and perhaps to other structures erected by Darst & Jordan.

The fact that the name of an architect for most of the buildings which Darst & Jordan erected is not known does not diminish the historical stature of the partners. They were not architects in the modern professional sense of the term in that either one prepared plans for others to execute. More accurately, they and Benjamin Darst, Sr. can be described as architect-builders. That is, they were builders who, in the absence of a professional architect, exerted tremendous influence over the design and specifications of everything they constructed.

Upon completion of Washington Hall in the autumn of 1824, the partnership was dissolved. Jordan had formed a partnership with John Irvine to build the Blue Ridge Canal, a project which demanded his entire time, capital and talent. The dissolution of Darst & Jordan ended one of the most remarkable decades in the history of Virginia architecture west of the Blue Ridge. If Benjamin Darst, Sr. had not already done so, Darst & Jordan introduced Classical Revival architecture into Rockbridge County. Certainly the firm popularized it and erected lasting monuments to the style.³⁹

³⁷ Calder C. Loth, "The Ante Bellum Architecture of Washington and Lee University," (unpublished thesis, University of Virginia, School of Architecture, 1967), p. 59.

³⁸ J. Randolph Kean, "The Episcopal Rectory, Lexington, Virginia," (unpublished Fine Arts 20 term paper, Washington and Lee University, January, 1953; in possession of Robert E. Lee Memorial Church; with longhand notes by Miss Ellen Anderson.) See the critique of this source in Darst, *The Darsts of Virginia*, pp. 416-17.

³⁹ *Darst vs. Alexander*; Jerry Donovan, "John Jordan, Virginia Builder," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 9(October 1950), 17-19; Marshall Fishwick, "John Jordan, Virginia Builder," *Commonwealth*, 17(October 1950), 13-29.

From 1824 to 1835, Samuel Darst was one of the principal contractors in Lexington and Rockbridge County. An old resident, writing in 1902, stated that he “built many of the houses now standing.” In 1827 he must have had a large project underway as he advertised for “three or four active boys to bear off brick.” In February, 1833, he was at-



The Pines (today 111 Lee Avenue) was built in 1819 by Benjamin Darst, Sr. It was extensively remodeled in 1885.

tempting to employ four or five journeymen bricklayers, “to whom liberal wages and constant employment will be given throughout the season.”⁴⁰

Among the better known structures which Samuel Darst built during this period was Franklin Hall, constructed for the Franklin Society. A building measuring twenty-five by thirty feet was completed in 1828. Samuel Darst did the stone and brick work, lathing and plastering for \$770.00. The bill of William H. Letcher, a local woodwork contractor and father of Governor John Letcher, for the carpentry work was \$781.97.⁴¹

One of the major projects undertaken by Darst in the county during the period 1826-1830 was a plantation complex for the John H. Hyde family. It provides an excellent insight into the specifications and costs

⁴⁰ W. A. Ruff, “Article Written in 1902 Tells of Lexington 100 Years Ago,” Tompkins scrapbook, vol. 7, p. 22, Rockbridge Historical Society Papers; *Lexington Gazette*, April 9, 1827; *Lexington Union*, February 16, 1833.

⁴¹ Franklin Society Records, November 3, 1826, January 24, 1829, Washington and Lee University Library.

for erecting a substantial plantation house and its principal dependencies in rural Rockbridge during the first third of the nineteenth century. The mansion on the Hyde plantation was approximately seventy-five feet long and twenty feet wide, two stories high with four large pillars—an imposing residence indeed. The construction also included a brick kitchen, Negro dwelling, smokehouse, ashhouse and bake oven. Materials and labor for the brickwork were combined at a price of \$6.50 per thousand with a total cost of \$1,381.08.⁴²

The Dold Building on Lexington's Main Street is a product of both Samuel Darst's partnership with Jordan and his later individual building operations. In 1820 the original house was erected by the firm of Darst & Jordan for John Irvine, and in 1826 Samuel Darst added a section to the north end which increased its size by about one-third.⁴³

While Benjamin, Sr. and Samuel Darst were making architectural



The Dold Building (right, 1 North Main Street) was built by Darst & Jordan as a house for John Irvine. In 1826 Samuel Darst added the section to the right of the doorway. The Alexander-Withrow House (left), across the street, was built about 1789.

⁴² James D. Davidson Papers, Correspondence 1832-1833, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

⁴³ James W. McClung, *Historical Significance of Rockbridge County* (Staunton, Va.: McClure, 1939), p. 77; E. P. Tompkins, *Rockbridge County Virginia* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1952), p. 55; Rockbridge County Land Books, 1815-1832.

and building contributions, they also were involved in other commercial and community activities. The senior Darst possessed a wide range of business interests, which included public improvements in western Virginia such as roads, canals and even railroads. After 1819 almost all of his wealth was invested in securities. Both Darsts had the reputation of being land speculators. The deed books support this in that they bought and sold a great deal of property, seldom keeping any parcel very long.⁴⁴

Both father and son owned inns. Benjamin, Sr., possessed an exceedingly prosperous one on Main Street near the present site of the Methodist Church from 1793 to 1819. The inn was operated by Darst himself some years, and in others it was rented, apparently depending upon how many buildings he had under contract. Samuel left the construction business in 1835 when he obtained Paxton's Tavern at the upper termination of the Canal. He operated this prestigious hostelry as the "Blue Ridge Canal Inn" until 1846, when financial reverses resulting from the depression of the 1840s forced its sale.⁴⁵

In the early 1830s Samuel Darst was involved financially with a "Patent Brick Press" which had been invented and patented in 1829 by John Woodson of Lexington. He and Isaac Woodward formed the firm of Darst & Woodward and purchased the license to market the machine in "that portion of Virginia lying on the South of James River, bounded on the west by the counties of Rockbridge, Botetourt, Montgomery, Wythe and Washington, and embracing said counties."⁴⁶

Beginning with the Lexington fire in 1796, Benjamin Darst, Sr. was concerned with the prevention and fighting of fires. He was one of the petitioners to the General Assembly for the Lexington Lottery which was designed to relieve those who had lost property in the fire. In 1797 Darst was one of the initial subscribers to the Lexington Fire Company, and he was still active in this organization as late as 1829. Samuel Darst was also involved with the fire company and furnished slaves for duty with the hook and ladder unit and the water line.⁴⁷

Benjamin Darst, Sr. was a member of the Lexington Presbyterian Church. His interest in education is reflected in the substantial bequest

⁴⁴ Darst, *The Darsts of Virginia*, pp. 34, 39, 402.

⁴⁵ Rockbridge County Deed Books: B, pp. 481-82; L, p. 421; *Lexington News-Letter*, March 13, 1819; Rockbridge County Personal Property Tax Books, 1793-1820; Aylett Alexander to William Alexander, February 18, 1836, Alexander Papers, Washington and Lee University Library; Morton, *History of Rockbridge County*, p. 463; Rockbridge County Chancery File 17, Bundle 72, *Jordan vs. Darst*.

⁴⁶ Commissioner of Patents, *List of Patents Granted*, p. 390; *Lexington Intelligencer*, July 17, 1830.

⁴⁷ Legislative Petition, Rockbridge County, November 3, 1796, Virginia State Library, Richmond; Rockbridge County Will Book 2, pp. 7-8; List of Members of Lexington Fire Department, November, 1829, copy in the possession of the Lexington Fire Department.

which he made to the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Samuel's generation had its Franklin Society, of which he was a member and director. He and nine other shareholders formed the association in 1819 to operate the Central School of Lexington, which was the principal elementary institution in the community for many years. Samuel Darst served as a trustee of the town of Lexington.⁴⁸

Both Darsts used slaves extensively in their businesses and maintained household staffs. In 1814 Benjamin was the seventh largest slaveholder in his tax district, which included about half of the county taxpayers. Boney, in his biography of John Letcher, cites as evidence of the rising affluence of the future governor, his purchase of Benjamin Darst's exceptional house servant Patrick from the Darst estate in 1850. Another of Benjamin's slaves, Louisa, has gained some fame from the fact of her sale in 1815 by Darst to another slave, Patrick Henry, who was Mr. Jefferson's caretaker at the Natural Bridge. The following year Patrick Henry married Louisa and set her free.⁴⁹

Benjamin Darst, Sr., lived at The Pines on Lee Avenue. Samuel Darst resided next door to his father at Beaumont. In 1830 Samuel traded his residence to John Irvine for what is now known as the Dold Building. A week later he sold this property to Samuel Dold for \$4,500. Subsequently, Samuel Darst lived on Main Street, opposite the courthouse, in a building in which Henry Boley later operated a bookstore.⁵⁰

The elder Darst was a member of the leisurely group of professional and business leaders who spent considerable time on the Main Street sidewalk exchanging stories and news. In that era chairs and benches ranged along both sides of Main Street, "so that the talkers could cross over from the sun to the shade, or *vice versa*, according to the season and the time of day." Benjamin Darst was particularly remembered within this group for his "wit and humor," and has been described as a "jovial citizen" who kept the street "in good humor."

An interesting anecdote which also describes Samuel Darst has been recounted by Dr. W. H. Ruffner. He says that Samuel Darst "bore a striking resemblance to Dr. Henry Ruffner. When dressed in black

⁴⁸ Lexington Presbyterian Church Records, August, 1820; Rockbridge County Will Book 7, p. 370; Franklin Society Minutes, August 12, 1820 and July 14, 1828; "The Central School Association of Lexington," June 11, 1936, Withrow Scrapbooks, III(Lexington); *Lexington Gazette*, August 21, 1835.

⁴⁹ Rockbridge County Personal Property Tax Books, 1790-1845; F. N. Boney, *John Letcher of Virginia* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama, 1966), pp. 41, 253; Rockbridge County Chancery File 35, Bundle 147, *Darst vs. Darst*; E. P. Tompkins and J. Lee Davis, *The Natural Bridge and Its Historical Surroundings* (Natural Bridge, Va.: Natural Bridge of Virginia, 1939), pp. 4-6.

⁵⁰ Rockbridge County Deed Book Q, pp. 590-94; Ruff, "Article Written in 1902"; Interview with Mrs. Ruth Anderson McCulloch, May 20, 1969.

broadcloth and a tall silk hat, as was usually the case when he came to town from his farm on North River, Mr. Darst in his later years was not unfrequently mistaken for the College President . . .” On one occasion the eldest daughter of Dr. Ruffner stopped Samuel Darst on a Lexington street, mistaking him for her father, and “after explaining her wants, asked him for money.”⁵¹

Benjamin Darst, Sr. died October 6, 1835, and was buried in what is now called Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery. Four of his children lived in Rockbridge. Samuel Darst and Polly Chandler were identified primarily with the town of Lexington. Samuel’s oldest daughter was the first wife of Dr. James R. Jordan, with whom the old Jordan house was connected. Polly’s grandsons, Dr. Samuel T. and Norborne Chandler, married daughters of Captain Reuben Grigsby (1780-1863) of Hickory Hill. Benjamin Darst, Sr.’s children, Benjamin, Jr. (1785-1821) and Lucy (1793-1867) married into prominent county families and lived south of Lexington.

Lucy became the wife of Captain Henry Salling, who was related to Captain John Peter Salling, the explorer, Indian captive and author of a classic frontier journal. Captain Henry Salling took his bride to what was described as “one of the most valuable plantations” in Rockbridge, near present Glasgow, which had been a part of the original Stalling grant.⁵²

Benjamin Darst, Jr., is frequently confused with his father in the historical literature. After graduating from Washington Academy and marrying Elizabeth Welch (1790-1835) of Fancy Hill, he farmed with his father-in-law and brothers-in-law. Elizabeth Darst’s father, Thomas Welch II (1753-1821) owned two of the “Seven Hills” plantations and other tracts, and engaged in an extensive agricultural enterprise. Benjamin Darst, Jr., died of illness resulting from War of 1812 service.⁵³

Elizabeth (Welch) Darst was a granddaughter of the renowned Captain “Soldier John” Grigsby (1720-1794) and through him was connected with the Glasgows, McNutts, McCormicks, McCorkles, Paxtons, Davidsons, Greenlees, and other notable Rockbridge families. Morton

⁵¹ *Washington and Lee University Historical Papers*, 4: 80-89, 92.

⁵² *Lexington Gazette*, November 27, 1835; H. H. McCormick, *Genealogies and Reminiscences* (rev. ed.; Chicago: The Author, 1897), pp. 46-47; Rockbridge County Marriage Book 1, p. 160; F. B. Kegley, *Kegley’s Virginia Frontier* (Roanoke, Va.: The Southwest Virginia Historical Society, 1938), pp. 151-53; Samuel Campbell to Lyman Draper, November 15, 1848, Draper Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁵³ Vernon E. Kemp, *Alumni Directory and Service Record of Washington and Lee University* (Lexington, Va.: The Alumni, 1926), p. 47; McCormick, *Genealogies and Reminiscences*, p. 19; Darst, *The Darsts of Virginia*, p. 51; J. Flint Waller, *West of Suez* (Verona, Va.: McClure, 1970), pp. 43-46; Rockbridge County Will Book 5, pp. 121-23; R. A. Brock, ed., *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, Pulaski and Giles Counties, Virginia, (New York, etc.: H. H. Hardesty & Co., 1884), p. 413.

succinctly describes the Grigsbys of Rockbridge as “well-to-do, able, and influential.”⁵⁴ It was in this enlarged Grigsby family that the widow Elizabeth Darst reared her sons, the oldest of whom, John Chandler Darst (1811-1885) was to follow in the steps of his grandfather Darst and uncle Samuel Darst as a third generation brickmaker and builder.

John Chandler Darst was contracting independently of his Uncle Samuel, when in 1831 he did the brick repairs to the buildings of Washington College. In 1835 he married the daughter of Captain Henry Wysor, Jr. (1786-1859), a prominent landowner and justice of the Montgomery County Court, who lived about a mile north of the present town of Dublin, Virginia. Captain Wysor gave the young couple Ash Brook farm which adjoined his property, and Darst opened a brickyard there and went into the construction business. He seems to have influenced the design of the Classical Revival Pulaski County courthouse and furnished brick for this building which was erected during 1840-1841. Darst was the contractor for the handsome brick meeting house of New Dublin Presbyterian Church in 1840.

As in the case of his grandfather and uncle, John C. Darst had a number of other commercial and community interests. He farmed Ash Brook, specializing in raising horses and cattle. He operated a general merchandise business, owned a 1,000 acre timber tract in Bland County, was a stockholder in the Pulaski and Giles Turnpike, served as deputy sheriff and road commissioner, and was a ruling elder of New Dublin.⁵⁵

John C. Darst's eldest son, Major James H. Darst (1838-1906), also was involved for a brief period with the old Ash Brook brickyard. A Dublin merchant, his store burned to the ground in January, 1871. In the summer of that year he moved to Ash Brook and manufactured brick for the substantial two-story Darst Building which he erected in the fall in the center of Dublin. Major Darst engaged in the drug and general merchandise business in this building for the remainder of his life. He was a banker and farmer and served in the Virginia General Assembly. After 1871 he was never again engaged in the construction industry.⁵⁶ Thus, the Darst Building stands today as the final monument to the achievements of four generations of brickmakers and architect-builders in Rockbridge and Pulaski Counties, whose activities spanned almost a century. ☆

⁵⁴ McCormick, *Genealogies and Reminiscences*, pp. 13-18; Morton, *History of Rockbridge County*, p. 256.

⁵⁵ Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Washington College, November, 1831, Washington and Lee University Library; Montgomery County Marriage Book, pp. 248, 394; Montgomery County Order Book 27, p. 88; Nettie Wysor, “The Family of Wysor,” (1938 typescript in author's possession; Darst, *The Darsts of Virginia*, pp. 93, 100, 102, 118.

⁵⁶ John C. Darst to A. G. Darst Babbitt, February 7 and June 4, 1871, Darst-Babbitt Papers, University of Virginia Library; Pulaski County Deed Book 5, p. 136; Darst, *The Darsts of Virginia*, pp. 153, 155, 168, 171.

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A Cyrus McCormick Story

William H. McClure

THE "BIRTHPLACE OF THE AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION," is a rather imposing designation for a 620 acre farm, nestled in the foothills of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in Rockbridge and Augusta Counties, near the villages of Raphine and Steeles Tavern.

To set the stage, let us go back to the spring of 1737, where we see a lone horseman moving southward over a path first stamped out by buffalo, into a wide and beautiful valley guarded by blue brooding mountains. Two medium-sized rivers wind around and lap at the foothills before merging into a larger stream which bursts through the eastern mountain and flows eastward to the sea. He sees virgin forests spotted with pink and white blossoms, beautiful but not so breath-taking as the

William H. McClure, superintendent of the Shenandoah Valley Research Station of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute at Steeles Tavern, Virginia, led the Society's members and their guests on a tour of Walnut Grove, the McCormick family farm, on July 26, 1971. The occasion honored the memory of Robert McCormick and his sons Leander and Cyrus. Mr. McClure afterward spoke on the McCormicks at the Mt. Carmel Presbyterian Church in Steeles Tavern.

Much of the material for this paper is quoted from an article by Dr. Marshall P. Fishwick, printed in the *Iron Worker*, Autumn 1956, by the Lynchburg Foundry Company.

mountain laurel and rhododendron. Sassy chirping insects are everywhere, and screechy birds which have not yet heard the blast of a gun. God never made better country.

The Indians called it Shenandoah—"Daughter of the Stars." Shawnees came all the way from Illinois, Cherokees from Tennessee and Catawbias from North Carolina, just to hunt here, to drink the cool spring water, to commune with the Great Spirit. Indians told many stories about Shenandoah and its unique loveliness. Here, Sachems said, stars gathered on summer nights to sing.

Benjamin Borden, our lonely rider in the year 1737, had not come to see the stars but the land, 100,000 acres of which had been deeded to him by the British authorities at Williamsburg. To obtain it he would have to settle a hundred families there within two years.

Exciting plans and expeditions followed: but this is not to be the story of the Bordens. Before the two years were up, another Scotch-Irish family had landed in Philadelphia to begin life in the new world, and it is their destiny that we shall follow. Thomas McCormick and his wife, Elizabeth Carruth, were members of that band of Scots who fled first to northern Ireland and then to the New World to find religious and political freedom.

Thomas McCormick's father had fought at the 1690 siege of Londonderry, and his father's father had followed the drums of war. A different kind of fighting was required here in the American wilderness. Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, into which the young immigrants moved, had seen red blood flow on the green grass.

They adapted themselves well and eventually owned two hundred acres of soil upon which a home was built and a family dynasty begun. Five sons were born. The fifth, Robert, saw service with General Washington's army. Eventually he came home to marry Martha Sander-son and buy a farm of his own.

Tales of the wonderful valley to the south began to make the rounds; tales of a place where one could work all day with his hands his only company, and go to sleep at night listening to the whipporwills. The idea appealed to Robert McCormick and his wife, Martha, already the parents of five. They sold their farm, packed their wagon, and began the journey southward.

After long days on the road, the travelers found land they liked near Steeles Tavern, about half-way down the valley. Robert inquired and found that (although it was only 1779) the place he had his eye on had already had four owners. The first was Benjamin Borden. The second, Tobias Smith, built two log cabins on it and sold it to William Preston on May 12, 1760. Preston sold it to a Daniel McCormick (no relation to our McCormicks) five years later. Daniel had died and his heirs were willing

to sell four hundred fifty acres.

Robert McCormick bought the land and went to work. The 1792 Personal Property book of Rockbridge County reveals that, in addition to horses and cattle, he also owned one slave. Local documents show that he was one of those who opposed the introduction of hymns into the New Providence Church, and contributed land and labor for the erection of Old Providence Meeting House. While this project was underway his wife bore their first Virginia-born son, Robert, Jr.

Young Robert, who grew up and spent all his life at Walnut Grove, is in some ways the most interesting person in our story. He was not only the father of Cyrus, but the dreamer and inventor who evoked Cyrus' talent and interest. After Robert had married Mary Ann Hall and settled in a log cabin on the McCormick land, he set about to invent things which would ease the farmer's heavy load. As early as 1809—the year Cyrus was born—he had a partially completed model of a reaping machine. Adept in the working of wood and iron, he was confirmed in his mechanical mission. Having inherited his father's land, he purchased three adjoining farms, which brought his holdings up to 1,800 acres. Here he operated sawmills and flour mills, and won a place for himself as a man of affairs.

But, as historian Reuben Gold Thwaites has pointed out, Robert McCormick was more than this. "He developed a fondness for astronomy and other sciences, was given to historical reading, and proved to be an inventor of no mean capacity," Thwaites writes.

As a young man he invented and patented a clover sheller, hemp-break, blacksmith bellows, and hydraulic machine. Indeed, his long standing interest in and work on the reaper was so important that some writers have thought much of the credit given by history to Cyrus belongs to his father, Robert. Recently one scholar, Norbert Lyons, has gone so far as to publish a book entitled *The McCormick Reaper Legend*, and to assert that "Cyrus' claim that he invented and constructed a reaper so basically different from the device on which his father had labored for over twenty years that his own machine constituted a legitimate original invention appears fantastic to anyone familiar with the evidence."

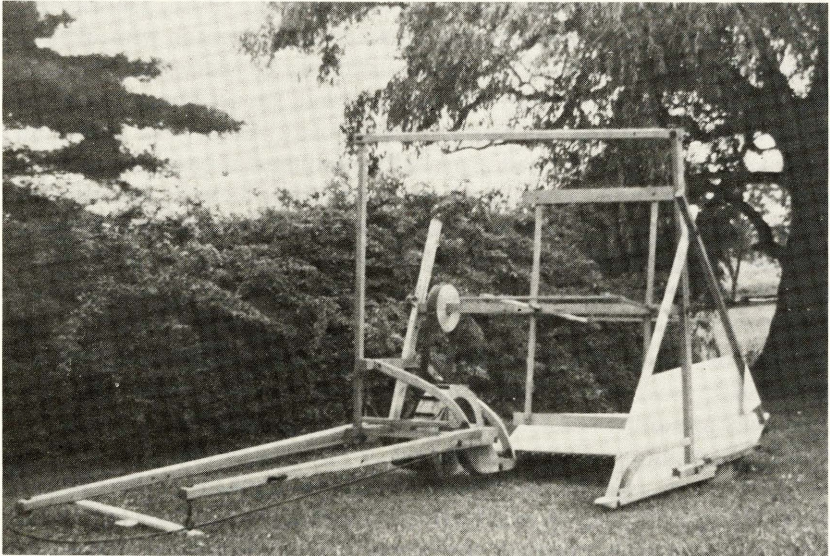
Mr. Lyons has overstated his case. It seems clear that despite the considerable help he got from his father and others, the real inventor of the reaper and the reaper business was Cyrus Hall McCormick, born on February 15, 1809.

The world in which Cyrus grew up was simple, solid and sweaty. Like most farm boys of his generation, he had little formal education, picking up what "book learning" he could at the hearth and the old field

school. He studied Webster's Speller, Adams' Geography, and the Bible. Close to the land, he learned much from nature, too—learned of the mystery, the wonder, the symmetry of things.

On late summer days he watched the ripe grain blow in the wind. He saw his father and the men harvest it by hand. As he watched, he wondered. Robert had always said there should be a machine to do this job. Inside young Cyrus' mind, wheels began to turn.

Cyrus was a lad of thirteen when his father decided to build a new home for his growing family. He got the stone from his own fields, the lumber from his trees, and the lime from his kilns. On top of the founda-



1831 McCormick reaper built by Joseph G. Reder and Howard F. Conn of Uniontown, Pa., July 4, 1976.

tions (which were fifty by sixty-five feet) he erected a red brick house which had a broad hallway and eight rectangular rooms on two floors. There were hand-carved mantels, broad fireplaces, and a porch on which Robert could sit and look out over his land. The house stands today, very much as Robert McCormick built it.

Cyrus, meanwhile, spent much of his time tinkering about the blacksmith's shop. He made a light cradle out of locust wood to ease the work at harvest, and a terrestrial globe on which he put the seas and continents. At nights he liked to play the fiddle. When he went to church on Sundays he noticed the neighborhood girls, like all the other young men in the Valley. On October 31, 1831, he wrote to a friend: "Mr. Hart has

two fine daughters, rite pretty, very smart and as rich as you probably could wish; but alas! I have other business to attend to and can devote but a small proportion of my time to society.”

The “other business” was indeed important. It would carry the name and fame of McCormick to the grainfields of the world. As every school child knows, that business was the perfecting of the reaper. His was the first reaper that included all the basic parts of the modern grain-cutter: the straight reciprocating knife, guards, reel, platform, main wheel, side-moving cutter, and divider at the outer end of the cutter bar.

Cyrus’ machine was first demonstrated on John Steele’s grain field



The reaper undergoes a field test.

in 1831. The importance of his invention can hardly be over-stated. He perfected a device which touches one of man’s basic needs, and took much of the drudgery out of a necessary chore. He opened the door for a new era in agriculture by finding a way to replace muscle power with mechanical power on a job that had to be done.

After spending many years involved with the “Cyrus McCormick Legend,” it is indeed difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction. Robert McCormick was certainly a tremendous motivating factor in the success story of his son, Cyrus, and by today’s standards Cyrus would probably be categorized as a young man who was more prone to dream and promote than to conduct manual labor.

All of his business ventures were not successful. At one point in his early career Cyrus acquired a farm near the village of Vesuvius, and set up an iron furnace. This venture was unsuccessful, and during this period the home farm was probably heavily mortgaged to cover the losses realized in his business enterprise.

An example of the resourceful nature of this young inventor is related, perhaps as fiction, concerning an experience with the local sheriff. The McCormick homestead, probably built about 1822, is located close to the Rockbridge-Augusta County lines, and according to some persons, the county line actually split the house.

According to this particular story, the Rockbridge County sheriff came to the McCormick home late one afternoon to serve a summons to young Cyrus concerning indebtedness on the Vesuvius iron furnace venture. The sheriff was invited, as was the custom in those days, to spend the night, and accepted the invitation. Early the next morning Cyrus rose and went out to sit on the front porch. Presumably, the front porch was in Augusta County and the sheriff could not serve the papers, so he finally thanked the family for the customary hospitality, mounted his horse and rode away, leaving Cyrus some additional time to correct his financial problems.

Perhaps we have pictured the invention of the reaper as a simple process, and this is not true. The greatest single problem involved in the perfection of this grain cutting machine was with the cutting process itself. Legend tells us that the straight reciprocating knife process was indeed perfected by a blacksmith in nearby Buena Vista, although the blacksmith never received proper credit. Indeed, there are to this day two factions in the McCormick family that differ in opinion as far as actual input and expertise in the invention of the grain cutting machine are concerned. One faction contends that father Robert and brother Leander contributed greatly to the perfection of the machine and that Cyrus himself was actually acting in the role of "super salesman." Textbook historians usually picture Cyrus as the sole "inventor and perfecter" of the grain reaper.

Regardless of this family disagreement, Cyrus obviously had the foresight to realize that the future of his grain cutting machine hinged on its use in the vast midwest and northwest areas where small grain would become economically important.

In the mid-1830s reapers were produced at Steeles Tavern and by contract in Ohio, Kentucky and New York; but Cyrus sought a perfect site to establish his permanent factory. The town he decided on was the youngest, ugliest and least prosperous of them all. Exhausted by mud, droughts, debt, and panics, it did not look like the site of a future

metropolis. There was no railroad, gas, sewer, or stockyard, and only one short block had any paved street when Cyrus first saw it. Even the name was unpromising: Chicago.

But Cyrus had the vision to see what Chicago could become. The first of its big manufacturers, he built the largest factory in town and grew with the city. He, as much as any man, established the primary greatness of Chicago as the principal wheat center of the world.

The world accepted the reaper after it was demonstrated at the Lon-



Cyrus Hall McCormick, 1809-1884.

don World Fair of 1851. At first the London *Times* called the machine “a cross between an Astley chariot, a wheelbarrow, and a flying machine.” But when the Englishmen saw what McCormick’s machine could do, they hailed it as the revolutionary invention it was.

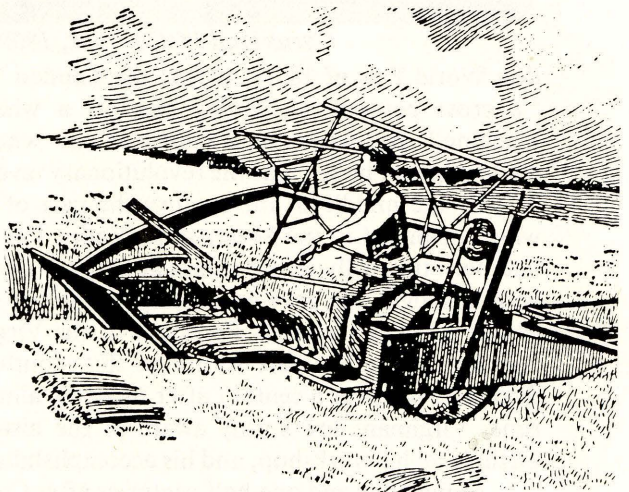
By the middle of the century the part of Cyrus McCormick’s life which belonged to the Shenandoah Valley was over. But the early years had been the really creative ones and Cyrus always looked back on them with nostalgia. He gave generously to various Virginia institutions, and as late as 1880 served as President of the Virginia Society in Chicago. Nor has his native state forgotten this stouthearted breadwinner who died in 1884. Over a century after he left Walnut Grove to make his fortune, Virginians are keenly aware of the historical significance of his birthplace, his workshop, and his accomplishment.

Almost one and one-half centuries after Cyrus McCormick first suc-

cessfully demonstrated his grain reaper, efforts to continue an agricultural revolution go on at Steeles Tavern. Although some 12,000 to 15,000 persons visit the McCormick Memorial Wayside annually to pay homage to this great inventor, of even more interest is the research being conducted on this historically important farm operated by the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, which acquired the farm in 1954 as a gift from the McCormick heirs. Research in three different fields, crossbreeding beef cattle, feeding of solid animal waste to beef cattle and sheep, and integrated pest management control in orchards, has received international interest and acclaim, and served to provide continuity to the service of revolutionizing American agriculture. ☆



Reaping with sickles, c. 1800.



The McCormick reaper of 1847.

*A Judge's School: A Brief
Biography of
John White Brockenbrough*

Matthew W. Paxton, Jr.

HAD JOHN WHITE BROCKENBROUGH left an extensive collection of personal papers, historians would have seized upon them with delight. Educated in law, this man, who played a pivotal role in the history of Washington and Lee University, used the English language eloquently. His eloquence led him into politics and teaching. It stood him in good stead when he was entrusted with the responsibility for inviting General Lee to become president of Washington College. His success in persuading Lee to come to Lexington would alone have assured him a place of honor in the history of the college here. But he also looms large in that history for two other reasons. He was founder of the law school which became the School of Law of Washington and Lee. And he was the first man to hold the office of rector of the college's board of trustees.

Unfortunately, the Brockenbroughs were not a family of paper preservers. Relatively few of Judge Brockenbrough's writings are available to the would-be biographer. The story of his life must be pieced

Matthew White Paxton, Jr., editor of the *Lexington News-Gazette*, told Judge Brockenbrough's story at the Society's meeting at the Collierstown Presbyterian Church on July 27, 1970. The Washington and Lee University Law School published Mr. Paxton's essay in 1971.

together painstakingly from such sources as newspaper files, minute books, legal documents and the correspondence of his contemporaries. A few of his letters and speeches have survived, enough to give us glimpses of a man who was meticulous, self-effacing, courteous, sensitive, fervent—a man also subject to depression and a poor business manager.

John White Brockenbrough was born December 23, 1806, in Hanover County, Virginia. His father, William Brockenbrough, was successively circuit judge, president of the General Court, and Judge of the Court of Appeals. After studying at the College of William and Mary, young Brockenbrough matriculated at the University of Virginia on the first day it was opened for the reception of students in 1826.¹

He studied law at Judge Henry St. George Tucker's private law school in Winchester and returned to Hanover County where he became commonwealth's attorney. His interest in scholarship led to his preparing and publishing a two-volume work known as the Brockenbrough reports on Chief Justice John Marshall's decisions in the U. S. Circuit Court at Richmond.²

About 1834 he moved to Rockbridge County and shortly afterward married Mary Bowyer, daughter of Colonel John Bowyer of the Thorn Hill estate south of Lexington. Colonel Bowyer, himself a lawyer, lived in style and was owner of a coach-and-four, a rarity in the area.³

Brockenbrough established a law practice and became active in the leadership of the Democratic party in which his rival, John Letcher, enjoyed considerably more success. In 1841 he was co-publisher, with Samuel Gillock, of the local Democratic party newspaper, *The Valley Star*, which existed from 1839 to 1862.⁴

He early became a staunch friend of the Virginia Military Institute, and on at least two occasions publicly defended the Institute in its initial struggling years. After the superintendent arranged in 1843 to have the Institute provide the cadets' uniforms, certain local merchants had an indictment brought against him for selling goods without a license. Brockenbrough and General C. P. Dorman, as counsel for the

¹ Judge Brockenbrough's obituary, including resolutions by the Lexington Bar and the Washington and Lee University faculty, is in the *Lexington Gazette and Citizen*, February 23, 1877.

² Ollinger Crenshaw, *General Lee's College; The Rise and Growth of Washington and Lee University* (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 325.

³ Brockenbrough obituary, *Lexington Gazette and Citizen*, February 23, 1877; Otis Bowyer, letter to the *Rockbridge County News*, April 15, 1936. For a description of the wedding and attendant activities see Jessie Benton Fremont, *Souvenirs of My Time* (Boston: D. Lothrop & Co., 1887), pp. 38-52.

⁴ Lester J. Cappon, *Virginia Newspapers, 1821-1935; A Bibliography With Historical Introduction and Notes* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936), p. 115.

superintendent, successfully moved to have the proceedings quashed.

Several years later in 1849 a move was initiated in the Virginia legislature to investigate the possibility of moving VMI to another location, an action prompted in part by evidence of hostility toward the Institute in the town and at Washington College. A meeting was called on June 4 at the Rockbridge County court house to rally public sentiment behind retention of the school. The speakers on that occasion were Judge Brockenbrough and Samuel McDowell Moore. Meanwhile, Brockenbrough had been named, in 1843, to the VMI Board of Visitors and had served on the board until 1846.⁵

After the election of Democrat James K. Polk to the Presidency in 1844, Brockenbrough actively sought the federal judgeship for the Western District of Virginia which became vacant in 1845. In spite of the covert opposition of John Letcher, Brockenbrough won the appointment in 1846. On learning of his nomination for the judgeship, the local Whig party organ, *The Lexington Gazette*, paid an unusual tribute to Brockenbrough on January 8, 1846. It stated, in part:

Opposed as we are, in politics, to Judge Brockenbrough, it has given us real pleasure on various occasions to pay a public tribute to the distinguished ability and unvarying courtesy which have characterized his practice as an advocate at our bar, as well as his upright and gentlemanly demeanor in all relations of private life. Diametrically opposed as we are to Mr. Polk and his party, we are ever willing to acknowledge and commend such good acts as they may perform, and in the small number of these must be mentioned the nomination of our townsman to the judgeship.⁶

Slavery was becoming the dominant issue of the times and it is not surprising that the Hanover County native was a strong pro-slavery man. He took a leading part in the Franklin Society debate on the subject which opened February 6, 1847, with large attendance, and continued at the society's weekly sessions in Lexington until April 24.

The question under debate was, "Should the people of Western Virginia delay any longer in taking steps to bring about a division of the state?" The pro-slavery forces took the affirmative position. Those opposed to slavery took the negative side; their position was that there should be no delay in the west's taking action to separate itself from the slaveholding east.

On February 13 Judge Brockenbrough discussed the affirmative and Captain David E. Moore the negative. At the next meeting, on motion of James D. Davidson, it was resolved that no member be allowed to speak for more than one hour at a time. Nevertheless, Judge Brockenbrough

⁵ William Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, 4 vols. (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1939), I, 204; Virginia Military Institute, *Register of Former Cadets* (Lexington, Va.: VMI, 1957), p. 368.

⁶ Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 325; *Lexington Gazette*, January 8, 1846.

debated on March 6 with J. G. Paxton and John Letcher, and in the society's minute book a note signed by John W. Fuller states: "Judge Brockenbrough's speech in the affirmative this night was two hours and

Judge Brockenbrough's speech in the affirmative this night was two hours and a half in length and I suppose was as able as can be made on that side. J.W.F.

Franklin Hall March 6th 1847

Society convened in ordinary conference,
 Director Echols in the Chair.

Members present, Tarnes, Wade,
 Stevens, D. A. Cummings, P. Cummins, P. Robertson,
 Curry, W. Anderson, D. Moore, Echols,
 J. H. Hall, J. W. Fuller, Willson, Sinsley,
 Leary, Smith, Dabney, Withrow, Brown,
 Ewell, Reid, Rappin, Paxton, Letcher,
 Capt. Williamson & Mr. Hamilton
 appeared in the Hall, also Mr. Samson &
~~Robinson~~. The question was then taken
 up and after discussion in the affirmative
 by Judge Brockenbrough and in the negative
 by Mr. Paxton & Mr. Letcher was postponed
 by a motion of Mr. Hamilton to adjourn.

Mr. J. H. Lewis having been duly elected
 a shareholding member appeared and
 took the pledge. Mr. W. C. Lewis was
 elected an extraordinary member of so-
 ciety. Messrs. Letcher, Davidson, Wilson &
 Wadley appeared in the Hall during
 the absence.

Ordered that society adjourn
 J. W. Echols Secy

C. A. Reed Secy

Minutes of the Franklin Society debate on slavery (March 6, 1847).

a half in length and I suppose was as able as can be made on that side." In spite of the Judge's eloquence, or maybe because of his verbosity, the

question was decided in the negative by a 17 to 7 vote of the society.⁷

The Valley Star on July 26, 1849, carried Judge Brockenbrough's announcement of his plans to open a private law school in Lexington. A hundred years later, John W. Davis, in delivering the inaugural Tucker Law Lecture at Washington and Lee in 1949, observed that Judge Brockenbrough's docket was a far cry from that of the modern-day judge, as is proven by the fact that "he ran his court and still found time for teaching." Equally pertinent is the observation that the judge's salary was far from that paid to federal judges today, and at the time Judge Brockenbrough was planning to open his school his family included six children.⁸

The newspaper announcement in *The Valley Star* stated that the law school would open on October 29 and the session would end March 16. The tuition was to be \$60 per session and classes were to be held in the Franklin Society Hall. Two classes, junior and senior, would be offered and students could enroll in both simultaneously without additional tuition charge. The judge stated that "the hours of the daily lectures to his students will be so arranged . . . as to enable any member of either class to attend the lectures of any of the professors of Washington College." Though many students attended college before beginning the study of law, young men could then enter law school with no more preparation than those starting college. *The Valley Star* reported on November 8 that:

Judge Brockenbrough's Law School has opened well and his class are delighted with him as a gentleman and as an instructor. He now has eight in attendance and there is an absolute certainty that several other students will be in, in a few days. His introductory lecture was listened to, by a large number of our citizens . . . we venture the assertion that the school . . . will be one of the most popular, in the Southern Country.⁹

While expressing admiration for genius, the judge urged on his pupils the necessity for hard work. "But why," he asked, ". . . need I cite examples to illustrate so obvious a truth as that labor is necessary to excellence? It is because, obvious as it may be, nothing is more difficult than to impress a realizing sense of it upon the sanguine mind of youth."

He explained to the students that his plan of instruction would be to "Assign a suitable portion of the text, and then give a thorough and rigid examination on the assigned portion. This catechistical system, he said, would be supplemented by his lectures which would amplify the texts and show where they had been altered by subsequent decisions.¹⁰

⁷ Minutes of The Franklin Society, Washington and Lee University Library.

⁸ *The Valley Star*, July 26, 1849; John W. Davis, "John Randolph Tucker: The Man and His Work," *Washington and Lee Law Review*, 6(1949), 139.

⁹ *The Valley Star*, November 8, 1849.

¹⁰ *The Valley Star*, November 22, 1849.

Five men were graduated from that first session of the Lexington Law School in 1850, and six were awarded degrees in March of 1851. During the 1850's the school's enrollment rose as high as thirty-eight. It suffered a temporary setback in enrollment after a student killed a VMI cadet in April of 1854. The law student, Charles B. Christian, stabbed Cadet Thomas Blackburn in a scuffle over a question of escorting a young lady of the town to church. However, by December of 1857, *The Richmond Dispatch* reported that the Lexington school had twenty-eight students and was "the largest private law school in Virginia at present, or with a single exception, at any former time."¹¹

Describing a trip to Lexington at that time, the *Dispatch* writer observed that:

We had the pleasure, during a recent visit to Lexington, of hearing one of the daily lectures of Judge Brockenbrough, and it struck us that his mode of imparting instruction is one which might be imitated with great advantage in all law schools and seats of learning. . . .

We have never heard a lecturer who unfolded and explained the principles of his subject with greater clearness, precision and vigor than Judge Brockenbrough. Taking up the answer of the student to his question, he proceeds to discuss the particular point or principle which is set forth with an affluence of learning, appositeness of illustration and terseness of style that enchain the admiration of the student, and completely exhaust the subject. We had no conception that the dry subject of law could be made so agreeable. . . .¹²

The father of John W. Davis, who was one of Judge Brockenbrough's students during those days, recalled that the judge would take his students with him when he made his judicial rounds. The students thus saw the law in action in what the younger Davis described as "a primitive but highly practical use of the case system." A likeness of Judge Brockenbrough adorned the wall in the office of the elder Davis during his long career at the bar.¹³

One of the important events of the pre-war period in Lexington was the laying of the cornerstone of the VMI barracks at commencement on July 4, 1850. Judge Brockenbrough gave the address and, according to *The Valley Star* account, "a large audience of both sexes attended." The *Lexington Gazette* gave this description of the occasion: "a large and imposing procession of Sons of Temperance from different Divisions of the country, of Odd Fellows, both orders dressed in full regalia, and of Sunday School Scholars, accompanied by the Armory Band from Richmond, proceeded to the laying of the Corner Stone of the new Institute." After Judge Brockenbrough's address and

¹¹ Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 327; *Lexington Gazette*, April 17, 1854, and December 3, 1857 (reprinted from *The Richmond Dispatch*.)

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Davis, "John Randolph Tucker," 139.

appropriate ceremonies, the procession marched to the Presbyterian Church to attend the VMI commencement exercises. The judge used the occasion "to call attention to the portentous cloud which was gathering in the North."¹⁴

In June of 1851 the local jurist was one of two recipients of Doctor of Laws degrees awarded by Washington College. The other person so honored was Professor John B. Minor of the University of Virginia.¹⁵ A year later, July 1, 1852, Judge Brockenbrough's election to the board of trustees of Washington College began his long connection with that institution.

Toward the end of the decade, as war clouds gathered, Brockenbrough also had his own private difficulties. In March, 1858, he wrote a relative:

Troubles and cares press upon me on all sides but I have no time to be sad. This business of lecturing three hours a day to a large class of educated young men, walking to town and back, and studying six or eight hours in preparation for the next day's recitation and lecture is no child's play, depend on it.

His financial difficulties were compounded by the fact that he had bought several slaves and then had had to buy several others to keep them with their families. He thus appeared to be a victim of the slavery cause he had so stoutly espoused.¹⁶

The taxing walk for the portly judge to and from Thorn Hill, along with his financial burdens, helped bring about an unusual real estate trade. In March, 1861, Judge and Mrs. Brockenbrough traded their share of the Thorn Hill estate, which included about four hundred fifty acres and the classical revival house, to E. F. Paxton for his property on the edge of town and a cash consideration. Paxton had built the house now known as Silverwood, and his property of about fifteen and one-half acres on what is now Main Street extended down to approximately the present location of Sellers Avenue. The Paxton property was terraced and some evidence of the terracing still exists.¹⁷

Though a member of the federal judiciary, Judge Brockenbrough continued to be a part of the state political scene in the 1850s. In 1855 he was suggested as a candidate for governor on the Know-Nothing ticket, but he issued a statement that he cordially detested the leading principles of the new party, including "the secrecy of their organization, their war upon religious freedom, etc.," and he concluded that they would never

¹⁴ *The Valley Star*, July 11, 1850; *Lexington Gazette*, July 11, 1850.

¹⁵ Washington College Trustees' Minutes, June 18, 1851, Washington and Lee University Library.

¹⁶ Brockenbrough to Henry M. Bowyer, March 3, 1859 (copy in author's possession.)

¹⁷ Rockbridge County Deed Book "HH", pp. 435, 437 (March 16, 1861), Rockbridge County Courthouse, Lexington, Virginia.

receive any countenance from him.¹⁸

In 1858 he was supported for the Democratic nomination for governor by the *Richmond Enquirer*, a newspaper dominated by Governor Henry A. Wise, who attempted unsuccessfully to block the nomination of another Lexingtonian, John Letcher. In the political maneuvering that preceded the Democratic convention, Brockenbrough stated that while he was not campaigning, he *was* available for a draft.

Letcher was being assailed for his anti-slavery statements of earlier years, and Brockenbrough, in a letter to a member of his family, commented, "That's a nice fix they have got Letcher into, is it not? . . . For myself I regret it very much. No explanation can be given that will be satisfactory to the people of the East. It will lose him the nomination, mark it!" The Wise forces threw all their support to Brockenbrough in the convention, but Letcher was the overwhelming choice of the delegates.¹⁹

Brockenbrough suffered another political defeat when he, as a secessionist candidate, was defeated in his bid for election to the state constitutional convention of 1861 which decided on the issue of secession. In January, 1861, however, the Virginia General Assembly appointed him as one of five delegates to the abortive "Peace Convention" that met in Washington. The group included ex-President John Tyler, William C. Rives, James A. Seddon and George W. Summers. A writer of that day commented that "the State scarcely had five abler representatives."²⁰

In June, 1861, Brockenbrough was named a member of the Provisional Confederate Congress. The *Lexington Gazette* in September, 1861, in spite of former party differences with the judge, declared that "now patriotism, integrity and ability are to be looked to in the selection of a representative" (to the Confederate States Congress) and that no man possessed those virtues to a higher degree than Judge Brockenbrough. The jurist declined to be considered for this position, however, and in October of that year was appointed Confederate States judge of Western Virginia, an office he held until the end of the war.²¹

With the coming of war a chapter of Judge Brockenbrough's life had closed. He had served as a member of the federal judiciary for sixteen years, and it is reported that during that period not one of his deci-

¹⁸ Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 328; *Lexington Gazette*, March 1, 1855.

¹⁹ Brockenbrough to Bowyer, June 26, 1858 (copy in author's possession); F. N. Boney, *John Letcher of Virginia; The Story of Virginia's Civil War Governor* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama, 1966), p. 81.

²⁰ Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 328; Brockenbrough obituary, *Lexington Gazette and Citizen*, February 23, 1877.

²¹ *Lexington Gazette and Advertiser*, September 26, 1861; Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 328.

sions was ever reversed upon appeal to the United States Supreme Court. His law school was also closed by the war. From 1849 to 1861 the records show that two hundred and seven students attended the school. A number of them later attained prominence in judicial, legislative and other fields.²²

The Civil War was dragging toward its final desperate stage when two old political rivals, Letcher and Brockenbrough, appeared on the same platform in Lexington. The occasion was Letcher's return home at the conclusion of his term of office as governor. The ex-governor spoke at the court house in March, 1864, "in compliance with an invitation" and the place was "filled to its utmost capacity with men from all parts of the county." Letcher spoke of the willingness of the Confederate soldiers to re-enlist and expressed the opinion that the army "had not been in a better condition than at this time." He called on the people to use their utmost exertions to make the army comfortable and to provide for the families of soldiers.

At the conclusion of the Governor's address, loud calls were made for Judge Brockenbrough who came forward and said: "I hardly think it fair, gentlemen, to call to the stand any other gentleman than the distinguished citizen whom it was your special object to honor in assembly here." Nevertheless, the old war horse was prevailed on to speak.

Referring to the wholesale re-enlistments in the army "for the duration," he exclaimed, "such an army can never be conquered while grass grows and rivers run."

"The war on the part of our enemies has degenerated into a miserable system of raids, cloaking felony under the thin guise of military enterprise," he declared. "As well may the burglar, the highwayman, the assassin invoke the application of the rules of war," he said bitterly, then added, "'make no prisoners.' I am convinced this is the most humane in the end." The judge concluded by exhorting the farmers to "make two blades of grass grow where one grew before."²³

As did others throughout the South at war's end, Judge Brockenbrough wasted no time starting to pick up the pieces of the area's ruined economy. Scarcely a month after Appomattox, on May 18, 1865, he published a notice in the *Lexington Gazette* stating, "I propose to reopen my Law School at this place on the first Monday of July next. The place of instruction will be the same as that formerly adopted, with highly encouraging success, the length of the session being extended to

²² Davis, "John Randolph Tucker;" Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 328.

²³ *Lexington Gazette*, March 23 and 30, 1864.

nine months.” After listing the text books to be used, he announced that the fee for the course would be \$100.²⁴

At the same time the judge was much occupied with the problems of reopening Washington College. He was named to a committee of the trustees to “reduce to writing evidence showing the extent and value of the damage done to the buildings, libraries and apparatus by the United States Forces under the command of General Hunter in June, 1864.” He was also appointed August 3, 1865, to a committee named to wait on the commandant of federal forces in Lexington and ask that the college buildings be vacated at once by the troops. At the August meeting the committee reported on the damage at the college and was continued with instructions to memorialize Congress for reimbursement.

At the Board’s June meeting a committee was named to apply to the legislature for an amendment to the college charter to separate the executive and legislative powers of the administration. In plain words the trustees’ minutes stated that the action was being requested so “the President shall not preside over the board or be a member thereof.”

The committee prepared a resolution which was adopted by the board on August 3 and forwarded to the legislature. The board then elected Judge Brockenbrough its first rector. The action of electing a rector, which at another time might have been hailed as an important step forward, was completely overshadowed by another action taken by the Board that August day. On motion of Bolivar Christian, General Robert E. Lee was unanimously elected to the college presidency.²⁵

To the new rector fell the task of calling on General Lee at his temporary place of residence, Derwent, in Cumberland County, and officially extending to him the invitation of the college. It was necessary for him to be the house guest of the famed Southern leader at his rural retreat, and Judge Brockenbrough did not possess a coat suitable for the occasion. According to the account passed down in the Brockenbrough family, Hugh Barclay, another member of the college board, had received some cloth from relatives or friends in the North and he made the material available so that a coat could be made for Judge Brockenbrough.

On his way home from Derwent on August 10, the judge poured out his enthusiasm to General Lee in a letter written on the packet boat *Jefferson*.

The desire I feel for the success of my mission is so absorbing that I trust you will pardon me for appearing somewhat importunate. It would be uncandid to deny that the advancement of the interest of our venerable college was the primary consideration with the Board of Trustees in inducing them to solicit

²⁴ *Ibid.*, May 18, 1865.

²⁵ Trustees’ Minutes, September 21, 1865.

your acceptance of its Presidency, yet it is but an act of simple justice to them to declare that your reputation is very dear to each of them and had they supposed that it could be imperilled by your acceptance of the position tendered to you, the tender never would have been made. But it is precisely because we feel assured that in discharging the comparatively humble functions of President of our College new luster would be added to your fame, and your character would be presented in a new and most attractive light to your admiring countrymen that we presume to urge the acceptance of the office upon you with an importunity that else might seem indelicate. You would thereby evidence a mind superior to despair and by this exhibition of moderation and goodness establish new claims to the admiration and affection of your countrymen. To make yourself useful to the State, to dedicate your fine scientific attainments to the service of its youth, to guide that youth in the paths of virtue, knowledge, and religion, not more by precept than your great example—these my dear General are objects worthy of your ambition, and we desire to present to you the means of their accomplishment. The educational interests of Virginia, as of all her Southern Sisters, have suffered dreadfully by the war. The University, Va. Mil. Institute, Hampden Sidney, and William and Mary Colleges are all crushed and cannot be resuscitated, we fear, for years to come. Washington College alone possesses an independent endowment and you have only to stretch forth your powerful arm and rescue it, too, from impending destruction. You alone can fill its halls, by attracting to them not the youth of Virginia alone, but of all the Southern and some even of the Northern States. That all these desirable results would follow your acceptance of this trust, your friends feel the fullest assurance, though your genuine and unaffected modesty may have suggested doubt of their fulfillment to your own mind. We pray that the reflection you graciously promised to bestow upon the subject may lead you to the same conclusion.²⁶

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 you to the same conclusion.
 In haste
 Yours with profound respect
 John Brockenbrough
 R. E. Lee

The end of Brockenbrough's letter to Lee.

Lee wrote his letter of acceptance on August 24. The board met in special session on August 31 and unanimously agreed to his conditions. Judge Brockenbrough transmitted the board's resolutions to General Lee with a glowing letter. The rector also composed a circular informing the

²⁶ Brockenbrough to Lee, August 10, 1865, Robert E. Lee Papers, Washington and Lee University Archives.

American public of the Southern leader's intention to head the little college in Lexington.²⁷

General Lee arrived in the town on September 18. Two days later the rector introduced him to the trustees. On September 21 the board officially tendered its thanks to the rector "for undertaking and so successfully executing his mission to General Lee," and authorized the treasurer to pay the rector's expenses.²⁸

At the explicit instructions of General Lee his inauguration as college president on October 2 was conducted with the barest simplicity. Judge Brockenbrough, overflowing with pride and emotion, found it impossible to abide by the prohibition on speechmaking, and delivered an eloquent address on the seriousness as well as the joyfulness of the hour, eulogizing General Lee, and congratulating the students and trustees present and to come on the president. General Lee took the oath of office and the rector handed him the keys to the college.²⁹

The trustees met at the conclusion of General Lee's first academic year in June, 1866, and the minutes of the meeting state that "the Board, regarding it desirable that the law school of the Hon. John W. Brockenbrough should be connected with the college," named a committee to confer with the judge. The committee, consisting of Judge McLaughlin, Francis T. Anderson and James D. Davidson, was to report to the trustees such regulations in regard to the proposal as they might regard proper and also to report a course of instruction to be pursued in the law school.³⁰ The minutes do not indicate whether the move initiated with the college or with the law school. Though still rector, Brockenbrough discreetly absented himself from that board meeting.

The initial association of the law school with the college was a rather tenuous one. Judge Brockenbrough was to be a professor of the college, although he was not a member of the academic faculty. Law students were not to be entitled to use the library or the other college buildings. Academic students might attend the law school upon payment of a \$60 fee in addition to the \$40 tuition fee for academic studies. Thus, while Judge Brockenbrough would be receiving \$40 less per student than the fee he had advertised a year earlier, he stood to benefit from having the law school associated with General Lee, through whose agency new life was rapidly being injected into the college.³¹

The first session of the law school conducted under the new arrangement was a successful one. In June, 1867, twenty-two students from

²⁷ Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, pp. 147-48.

²⁸ Trustees' Minutes, June 9, 1866.

²⁹ Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 149.

³⁰ Trustees' Minutes, June 9, 1866.

³¹ Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 329.

Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri were awarded the B. L. (Bachelor of Law) degree. For the law students the year was climaxed by the examinations vividly described in the *Gazette and Banner* of June 19, 1867.

The examinations of Judge Brockenbrough's Law Class took place on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and the members of the bar together with a number of other citizens were in attendance. We need not say more than that all were highly gratified at the readiness and proficiency exhibited by the class under the rigid and severe examination to which they were subjected.

General Lee and others attended some of the examination sessions. When the tests concluded, the students presented their teacher with a gold-headed cane as a token of their appreciation and esteem. "After the ceremonies concluded, J. D. Davidson, Esq. was called out and made them a short, humorous speech, containing much good and wholesome advice," the *Gazette* reported. "We feel no hesitation," the newspaper continued, "in saying that this school, which is now attached to Washington College, will rank with any other in the South . . . It must and will succeed."³²

After its first auspicious year of association with Washington College, the law school failed to share the growth experienced by other departments of the College. In June, 1868, only seven men were listed as BL recipients, and in 1869 the total enrollment of law students was only fourteen, of whom Judge Brockenbrough recommended twelve for degrees.³³

In the closing months of 1867 Brockenbrough was among the local leaders active in the organization of the Conservative Party. At a local organizational meeting in early December he was a member of the resolutions committee, which stated unequivocally that "the only way to avert the ruin of the Radical Party is to organize a white man's party based on the single principal that the white man alone has the right to vote."³⁴

An unfortunate event involving his family cast a shadow over Brockenbrough's life during this period. In what the *Gazette and Banner* described as "a daring outrage," the judge's youngest son, Francis Henry Brockenbrough, was shot in a racial incident which occurred May 8, 1868. Not inhibited by today's ideas of objectivity, the local newspaper gave this report of the incident on May 13, 1868.

As Mrs. Judge Brockenbrough was returning home about 11 o'clock at night from a visit to her brother's family, accompanied by her youngest son, a youth of about 18 years of age, they found the sidewalk occupied by a number of negroes, male and female. Young Brockenbrough requested them politely to let his mother pass, and, after some hesitation, all of them, but

³² *Lexington Gazette and Banner*, June 19, 1867.

³³ *Ibid.*, June 24, 1868; Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 330.

³⁴ *Lexington Gazette and Banner*, December 4 and 18, 1867.

one, made way for her, but that one, a negro man or boy, by the name of Caesar Griffin, swore he would not give way for any d____d rascal, and continued to use various offensive expressions. When Mrs. Brockenbrough entered her house, her son and his older brother returned to the gate, Frank having in his hand a small stick or switch, and jumping over the fence, approached the negro, with the stick raised, who immediately fired a small pistol, sending a ball through the breastbone of young B., into his body, inflicting a very dangerous, if not a fatal wound. The ball has not been found, and the result is very uncertain.³⁵

Griffin was immediately arrested, but while the youth's life hung in the balance, a group of young men, apparently including Frank's older brothers, threatened to lynch his assailant. Hot-headed action on the part of his brothers would not have been surprising, as three of them, John Bowyer Brockenbrough, Willoughby Newton Brockenbrough and Robert Lewis Brockenbrough, had served in the Confederate States Army. Major John Brockenbrough had commanded the Maryland Light Artillery at the Battle of Sharpsburg and was later wounded and crippled for life. Robert Brockenbrough had been a New Market Cadet at VMI, and he and Willoughby were then attending Washington College.³⁶

It was widely reported in newspapers that General Lee had had to dissuade a mob from lynching the Negro, but the *Gazette* stated that "no mob started for the jail" and the only foundation for the story was "the indiscreet utterances of a few excited young men" who were dissuaded from rash action by Captain Harry Estill of the college faculty.

Young Brockenbrough recovered, but the incident fanned bitter feelings in the community. The *Gazette* called it the first fruits of an incendiary address made to the freedmen by General Douglas Frazer, United States military commissioner in Lexington. An indication of the feeling was the fact that local people referred to Frazer as "Mr.," refusing to give him the courtesy of his military title. For a time after the shooting a company of federal soldiers patrolled the town.³⁷

Further misfortune struck the judge in 1869 when an extreme and protracted illness resulted in his largely withdrawing from the practice of his profession and to the devotion of virtually his entire energies to the law class. The illness, he later wrote, had been "brought on by excessive devotion to the interest of my class."

A select committee of the college trustees studied the law school

³⁵ *Ibid.*, May 13, 1868.

³⁴ *Lexington Gazette and Banner*, December 4 and 18, 1867.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, May 13, 1868.

³⁶ VMI, *Register of Former Cadets; Washington and Lee University Alumni Directory, 1749-1970* (Lexington, Va.: W & L Alumni, Inc., 1971; Brockenbrough family tree in author's possession; Otis Bowyer to the *Rockbridge County News*, April 15, 1936.

³⁷ *Lexington Gazette and Banner*, May 27, 1868.

situation, and in June, 1869, submitted a report urging that the law school be "connected into a more thorough union" with the college "as soon as possible." The report called for more chairs of law, a broader curriculum and better integration of law courses with other studies. It pointed out that the entire direction of legal instruction had greatly changed in the past twenty-five years. It had shifted from study in lawyers' offices to attendance at well-equipped law schools. The committee recommended that two professors of law be appointed with salaries sufficient to attract the highest-level talent and to enable the law professors to devote their exclusive time to their teaching duties.

The board accepted the recommendation and voted to invite the distinguished Kentuckian John C. Breckinridge, a former vice-president of the United States, to be one of the professors. In event he declined, the college would continue for another year its arrangement with the law school.³⁸

The sensitive judge was deeply hurt by this action. Nearly two years later he bared his feelings to two associates on the Board, D. E. Moore and J. D. Davidson. He wrote that he had felt that the board's action regarding the law school had placed him in "a position of extreme delicacy."

My first impulse was instantaneously to tender my resignation as a member of the board of trustees. Some of my warmest personal friends in the board very earnestly remonstrated against such a course and assured me that the resolution . . . was not in the slightest degree prompted by a feeling of unkindness toward myself personally or by any distrust of my ability to continue to perform efficiently and well the duties of the law department, but simply and entirely from a conviction that the great enlargement of the course of instruction in other schools of the college rendered a commensurate increase in the department with which I had been associated equally desirable.³⁹

General Breckinridge declined the school's invitation, but the next year the board successfully implemented its plans with the appointment of another distinguished lawyer, John Randolph Tucker, counsel for the B & O Railroad, to the law faculty.⁴⁰ Along with approving the appointment of Mr. Tucker, the board voted to make the law department one of the regular schools of the college with its professors to be regular members of the faculty.

The committee report adopted by the board held out high hopes for the expansion of the law school. The report stated that the "present distinguished professor" was willing to show his faith in the enterprise "by accepting, for the present, at least, one half the tuition fees" of the

³⁸ Trustees' Minutes, June 9 and 24, 1869.

³⁹ Brockenbrough to D. E. Moore and J. D. Davidson, March 15, 1871, Trustees' Papers, Washington and Lee University Library.

⁴⁰ Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 332.

law school as his compensation. Mr. Tucker, on the other hand, was to be guaranteed a salary of \$3,200 for at least three years. Judge Brockenbrough was to teach common and statute law and Mr. Tucker equity and public law.⁴¹

With the new status of the law school in effect, Judge Brockenbrough tendered his resignation as a member of the board on September 10, 1870, pointing out that he was doing so because of the incompatibility between the functions of a trustee and a professor of the college. He wrote the board:

I cannot dissolve the agreeable connection which has so long subsisted between us without the expression of my grateful sense of your uniform kindness and indulgence extended to me, while I imperfectly discharged the duties you assigned to me Let each of us then, in his appropriate sphere, of trustee or professor extend every legitimate effort to make the old college worthy of the august name it bears.⁴²

The board adjourned its meeting until September 29, at which time it planned to fill the vacancy created by Brockenbrough's resignation. But on the evening of the 28th General Lee was stricken with his terminal illness, and the board asked its rector to withhold his resignation until its March meeting.

Following Lee's death on October 12, Judge Brockenbrough had to perform another delicate mission for the board. The board requested him to call on Mrs. Lee and offer her the use of the president's house on campus for life and an annual annuity of \$3,000. The problem quickly became moot, however, when her son, General G. W. Custis Lee, accepted the presidency of the college. Mrs. Lee declined the annuity and continued to make her home in the president's house with her son.

In the difficult period of adjustment after R. E. Lee's death, Brockenbrough continued to offer his resignation, and the board to ask that it be withheld until in June, 1872, the resignation was accepted and the board placed on record "the deep sense of obligation it has felt to Judge Brockenbrough" and especially recognized the "valuable services rendered by him in the many important exigencies of the institution during the past seven years."⁴³

The flowering of the law school under the new arrangement proved disappointingly slow. With only thirty-one law students enrolled in the spring of 1871, Judge Brockenbrough was financially impoverished. Under the arrangement agreed upon his portion of the fees had yielded

⁴¹ Trustees' Minutes, June 22, 1870.

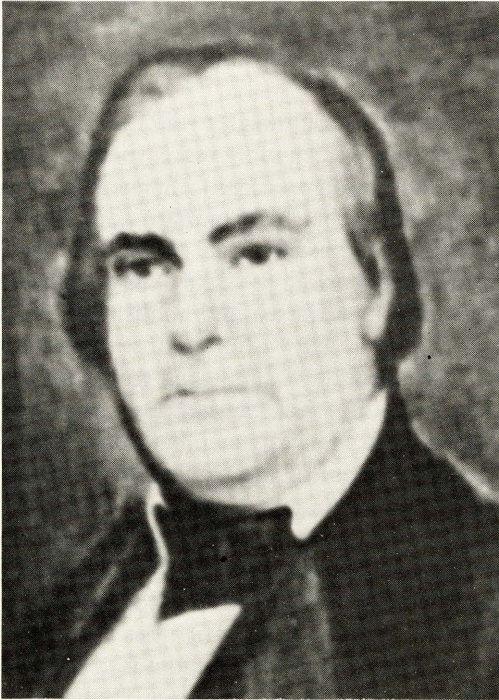
⁴² *Ibid.*, September 10, 1870; Brockenbrough to Washington College Board, September 10, 1870, Trustees' Papers.

⁴³ Trustees' Minutes, September 13 and 19, October 1, 1870; March 14 and 16, 1871; June 27, 1872.

him income amounting to only \$1,212.

He wrote to Messers Moore and Davidson of the board asking that his salary be made in "some degree to approximate" that of the other members of the faculty, adding that he addressed them on the subject with "inexpressible repugnance." At its June meeting the trustees voted to make Brockenbrough's salary equal to that of the academic professors, but it was still considerably below that of Mr. Tucker.⁴⁴

Only seventeen students were enrolled in the year of the financial panic of 1873. At this crisis point the board's three-year agreement with Mr. Tucker expired. Tucker submitted a conditional resignation to the



*John W. Brockenbrough
1806-1877.*

board. Pointing out that the law school had not come up to the expectations in providing sufficient income for the two professors and noting that the salary accorded him created an inequity between himself and his associates, Tucker stated that, nevertheless, his duty to his family made it impossible for him to continue on terms other than those hitherto existing. He continued, "The position is entirely adapted to my tastes . . .

⁴⁴ Brockenbrough to Moore and Davidson, March 15, 1871.

but unless it supports me I must seek other employments." He concluded, "I feel it due to you and to myself, therefore, to place my resignation in your hands, so that you may feel no embarrassment in any respect, from my relation to the subject, in your future action."

The situation was desperate. In the preceding year the revenues from the law students had amounted to only \$1,200, while the salaries of the two law professors had totaled \$5,200. Serving as a committee of the board, W. A. Glasgow and Thomas J. Kirkpatrick called on Judge Brockenbrough to discuss the situation and showed him Mr. Tucker's letter.

Highly incensed by what he considered to be "an insufferable insult to every member of the faculty who had a proper self-respect," the old law teacher later recalled that he had read Tucker's letter with "disgust and loathing."

The next day he wrote the board, "I should regret very much to lose the benefit of Mr. Tucker's services; but I much more regret to know that he is willing to retain his chair on a condition precedent, the performance of which would compel me to resign my chair of Common and Statute Law, as due to my own self-respect." He observed that "it may be that, in the exigency which has so unexpectedly arisen the Board may deem it a measure of good policy to take a step backwards, and abolish the chair of Law and Equity altogether." He continued, "I do not now tender my resignation, either conditionally or absolutely, but I beg to assure the Board that I earnestly desire that it will not feel the slightest embarrassment on my account. At the slightest hint from any member of the Board that it is his wish to abolish this department of the University, I will instantly resign my chair without reservation or condition."

Messers Glasgow and Kirkpatrick dispatched a cryptic reply to Brockenbrough stating, "The Board of Trustees received your letter of today and it comes our duty to inform you, conformably to the intimation of your letter, that the Board find insuperable difficulties in the way of continuing the Law School as at present organized, and it is desired by the Board that you communicate your action in the premises, so that they may take the necessary action on the subject."

Mistakenly assuming that the Board intended to abolish the law school altogether, the Judge wrote Messers Glasgow and Kirkpatrick, "With a view of placing the Board of Trustees of Washington and Lee University . . . out of all embarrassment growing out of recent complications, I tender to the board through you, respectfully and without reservation, my resignation of the professorship in the Department of Common and Statute Law with which I have been heretofore honored by the Board."

He later wrote that he was "astounded to learn" that the Board had elected "the very man who has been most instrumental in the fermentation of this matter and placed him in full possession and control of a school which I had founded and fostered with parental care through the best years of a long life."

In addition to appointing Mr. Tucker, who, meanwhile had lowered his salary request from \$3,200 to \$2,700, the trustees named able, young Charles A. Graves as his assistant in the law school. Judge Brockenbrough aired the whole unfortunate episode in a two-column "card" published July 6, 1873, in the *Richmond Enquirer*.⁴⁵

A number of Trustees felt a reply should be made to Brockenbrough's statement and one was actually drafted by Mr. Kirkpatrick. After much discussion the Board apparently decided it would be best to make no public reply.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, the Kirkpatrick document has not been preserved in the trustees' papers and unless this or some other pertinent material comes to light, it will be difficult to piece together all the facts of the case as they pertain to the board.

The record is silent on the last three and a half years of Judge Brockenbrough's life except for the notation that he tried unsuccessfully to reopen a private law school of his own in the fall of 1873.⁴⁷

At the time of his death on February 20, 1877, a resolution by the Lexington bar stated that "It was largely due to his personal exertions and influence that Gen. R. E. Lee accepted the presidency of the college." The resolution cited his "courteous and dignified manners" and said he was "especially engaging to the young."

A resolution by the Washington and Lee faculty commented on his "strong intellect and great industry," and said that:

his generous courage, wide sympathies and flowing courtesy endeared him to the hearts of all who knew him, and in a very special manner to the many young men who through a long series of years sat under his instruction, partook of his free hospitality, and were followed by him through their after life with unceasing affection and interest.

⁴⁵ A Card From John W. Brockenbrough, *Richmond Enquirer*, July 7, 1873.

⁴⁶ Ollinger Crenshaw, "General Lee's College: Rise and Growth of Washington and Lee," unpublished manuscript, Washington and Lee University Library, 1973, Chapter XXIV, note 34.

⁴⁷ Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, p. 333.

⁴⁸ Brockenbrough obituary, *Lexington Gazette and Citizen*, February 23, 1877.

An indication that time had healed some of the old wounds was the fact that his pallbearers included General G. W. C. Lee and Professor White of the college, as well as General Francis H. Smith, Colonel Blair, Colonel Hardin and Colonel Patton of VMI, J. D. Davidson, J. G. Steele, W. P. Houston and Major J. B. Dorman of the bar, and S. J. Campbell and Colonel J. B. Lady representing the local citizenry.⁴⁸ ☆

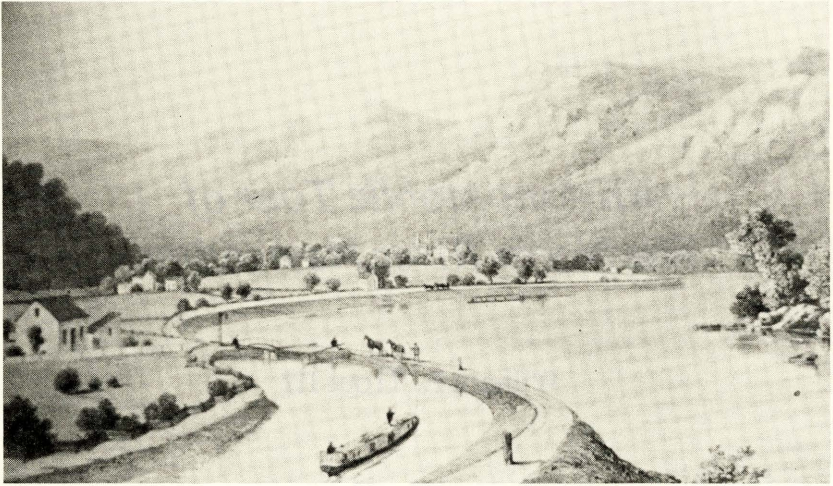
An Automobile Tour of The North River Navigation

William E. Trout III

MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO Virginia built a great inland navigation network over a thousand miles long, offering (not always successfully) the essential link between the landlocked farmer and his coastal market. The most successful and extensive of these navigations was the James River and Kanawha canal, a 200-mile water road for large mule-drawn canal boats, stretching westward from Richmond through a gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and almost reaching the Alleghenys.

The North River Navigation was a 20-mile branch of this canal in Rockbridge County from Lexington to the upstream end of the Blue Ridge water-gap, following the North (now Maury) River. From 1860 in-

Dr. William E. Trout III, a native Virginian and an expert on the state's canal network, has a Ph.D. in genetics and is a researcher in that field at the City of Hope Medical Center near Los Angeles, California. During one of his periodic visits to Virginia, Dr. Trout spoke to the Society on April 27, 1970, at the Robert E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church in Lexington.



to the 1880s this branch made Lexington an inland port of some importance, a terminus for freight boats and passenger packets until the railway carriage finally replaced them. Before its demise in 1969, the Lexington Branch of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway offered passengers an armchair tour of the North River Navigation; but now it is the age of the automobile. Fortunately, of all the old canals in Virginia, the North River Navigation is the one most accessible by car, and provides a display of canal architecture which compares well with any in the country.

A logical place to begin the automobile tour is on *VMI Island*, at the head of the Navigation in Lexington. The island is reached by taking the first right turn after going south across the U. S. 11 bridge over the Maury, and continuing about 0.2 mile to the end of the road where there was once a covered bridge when this was the main road. Looking down off the end of the road one can see the remaining timbers of Lexington Mills Dam. This crib dam was not part of the navigation works but well illustrates a common type of dam in Virginia: timbers spiked and pegged together in log-cabin fashion, filled with stone and planked watertight on the upstream side and the top. Most of the dams on the North River Navigation, however, were of stone. When Reid's Dam and Lock, two miles downstream, was in repair, still water backed up to VMI Island, which was lined with warehouses and wharves.

Presumably, when a boat left the wharf on its way to Lynchburg or Richmond, the mules crossed over the covered bridge, and then, hitched

to the towline, pulled the boats from the towpath on the left bank of the river. After going through the lock in Reid's Dam, the mules were apparently put aboard a ferry which took them across the river once more, and the boats were pulled from a towpath on the right bank to South River Lock and Dam two miles further downstream. Then came a half-mile canal and two more locks, after which the boats again went into the river and were pulled from a towpath on the bank; after a mile came Ben Salem Lock and Dam which is the next stop (Reid's and South River Dams are hard to reach by public road).

Now leave VMI Island, return to Business U. S. 11 (Main Street) and turn south (right) on to it; after 0.9 mile turn east onto U. S. 60, (Nelson Street) toward Buena Vista, then left into Ben Salem Wayside Park after 4.2 more miles. We are now six navigation-miles below Lexington at *Ben Salem Lock*, typical of those of the North River Navigation. Only a line of rubble remains of the dam, but the lock is in very good condition. Between its limestone walls once passed canal boats up to fifteen feet wide and one hundred feet long.

There was no canal at this point; the lock only served to raise or lower boats through the 9½ foot drop created by the dam, after which the boats continued along the river, drawn by mules on the bank. From inside the chamber you can see the two pairs of gate recesses, each about eight feet long, which held the gates when open, and the curved stones at the downstream end of each recess, against which the gate-post rubbed while operating. The top of the gatepost was held by a metal strap



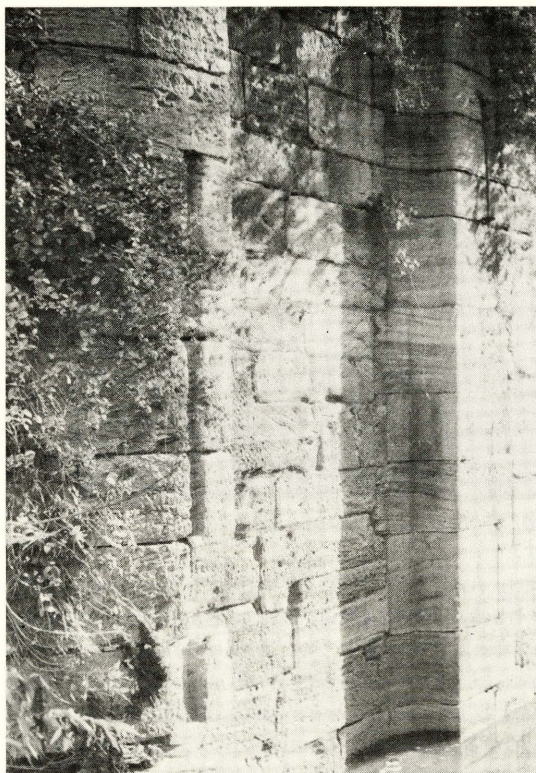
around it, bolted to the top stones of the lock; you can see these bolts, or the holes which once held them, on most locks, and will occasionally find the metal strap.

The gates were of wooden beams and planks. When shut these formed a V pointing downstream so that the water pressure against them would push them together and against the lock, making a watertight seal except for the inevitable few cracks which spurt picturesque waterfalls. Built into each of the gates was a smaller wicket or sluice gate, operated by a lever, which let water in or out of the chamber. If a boat was coming downstream, the lower (downstream) pair of gates would be closed and the lock full of water; the boat would enter the lock and the upper gates closed. Then the sluice gates in the downstream gates would be opened to let the water out, the boat sinking rapidly to the lower level until the lower gates could be opened and the boat sent on its way. The lock was the machine of the canal; its source of power was gravity, and it was easy to use and repair—surely an elegant invention.

Somewhere next to each lock on the landward side was the lockkeeper's house; from here the lockkeeper and his wife would listen for the conch-shell horn or bugle blown by the captain of an approaching boat. The lockkeeper's house was typically a rude frame shack; none in Virginia have survived, except for a stone one near Richmond.

To continue down the canal, turn left onto U. S. 60 toward Buena Vista. Just after crossing the bridge over the river, (1.5 miles) make a very sharp right turn onto county road 608, and drive down under the bridge and upriver. You are driving on the original towpath, beside the pond still formed by *Moomaw's Dam*, which is intact and used by a factory just downstream. In fact, the lock has become part of the factory building and is used as a water intake. The large trees between the towpath and the pond have grown up since the navigation was abandoned in the 1880s.

Park where the road leaves the river about 0.4 mile from Route 60. From here you can walk along the path upstream along the river for about $\frac{1}{3}$ mile to *Zimmerman's Lock and Dam*. The lock and a small part of the stone dam are in very good condition. The bits of concrete on the lock are reminders of the days when a number of dams on the Maury were used for generating electricity and water power. The concrete on the upstream face and on the top probably replaced the original wooden sheeting designed to protect and waterproof the dam. At the upstream end of the lock chamber you will see a pair of narrow vertical slots which were designed to hold stop-planks—boards stretched across the lock, plugging it up so that the lock could be drained for repairs. *Zimmerman's Dam* backed water up to Ben Salem Dam one mile upstream. Somewhere below Ben Salem Dam the towpath again crossed the river,

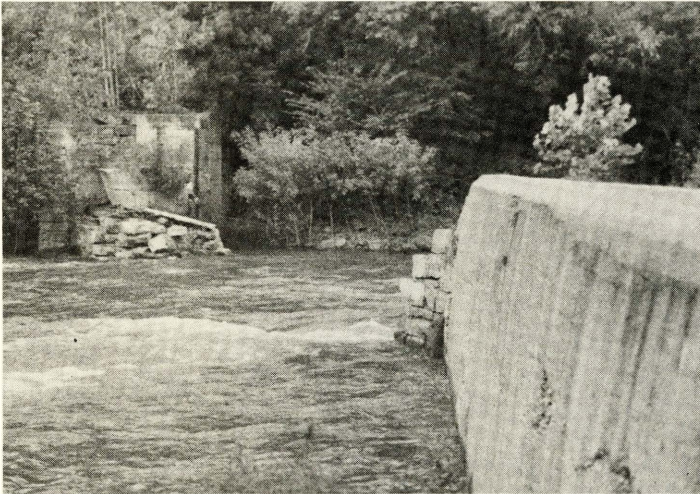


Part of Zimmerman's Lock showing stop-plank slot and gate recess.

the mules probably going across by ferry.

Return to U. S. 60, turning right and continuing into Buena Vista for one-half mile. Where Longhollow Road intersects the highway there are historical markers describing *Moomaw's Landing*. From Moomaw's Lock and Dam, at the factory upstream to your right, a three-mile canal ran through what is now Buena Vista, bypassing rapids in the river. The railway later followed this route and even used the cut-stone foundations of the canal aqueduct, which you can see from the bridge. This aqueduct had a wooden trunk, not a stone arch, to carry the canal across.

The canal, which began at Moomaw's Dam, passed through three stone locks, two of which have been extensively mined for their limestone blocks, and the third, Loch Laird, is quite silted in. The towpath then crossed the river again—presumably there was a ferry below Loch Laird—and the boats entered a short canal just around Savernake's (or Laird's) dam, which was a crib dam. There is little of the canal left in Buena Vista and most of that is inaccessible by car. Continue down U. S. 60 until it crosses U. S. 501 and turn south toward Glasgow for about 3.8



Remains of Goose Neck Dam and Lock.

miles. Turn right onto county road 633, ("River Road") much of which was once railway bed (now tracks on the other side of the river are used). Before entering the first cutting (Gooch's Cut, 0.5 mile), look in and across the river for signs of the stone abutments of *Agner's Dam*. The canal around *Agner's Dam* was on the far bank, was about a mile long, and supplied water for *Agner's Mill*, the remains of which can still be reached from the end of county road 699 across the river.

Continue through the cut. After about one mile, before you re-enter the woods, you may be able to see the outlet lock of *Agner's Canal* across the river. After another 0.2 miles you will come to *Goose Neck Dam*, which is shaped like a U pointing upriver, and is very impressive even though it was partially breached during the 1969 flood, and further damaged during the 1972 flood. You may wish to walk out on the bedrock below the dam to examine the stonework. The lock was across the river, and is presumably still intact although a concrete building, which once no doubt housed a turbine, has been built into it; water still rushes into the hole in the floor, or it did before the dam burst. The canal from the lock was nearly a mile long and has an outlet lock which is hidden from River Road by an island.

A further 1.1 miles down River Road will bring you to *Devil's Step Dam*, named after the bluff used as an abutment across the river. Because the towpath has changed sides again, (for the last time) the lock is on this side of the river, and is worth a short walk along the edge of the meadow to the river. Be sure to take a walk out onto the remaining portion of the old dam, which is similar to that at *Zimmerman's*. As you walk back to the road you may be using an embankment which was part

of the towpath, which the road will now follow. Of course, then the dam below was intact and water was backed up into the lock and to the embankment.

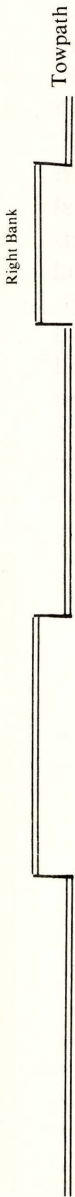
Another 0.4 miles down the road, which was the old towpath, takes you to the last dam on the North River Navigation. This is *Spiller's or Miller's Dam*, with a well-preserved lock (look for the straps which held the gates). This lock was at the head of a long, 4.5 mile canal with five more locks and two small aqueducts which carried the boats almost to the James River.

As you continue south, you cross the canal, so that it is on the left side and the road is on the towpath. After 0.6 miles, just before the canal leaves the road, you will be opposite *Buffalo Creek* across the river. This was an early commercial area of the county, and a warehouse once stood beside the canal here. As you proceed, the canal moves off to the left, following the contour of Brady Hill. Where it begins to turn left around the hill, 2.1 miles from Spiller's Lock and Dam, there are two very well preserved *lift locks*, hidden by trees across the field from the road, worth visiting; but these locks are not as massive as those built into dams which we have seen up to now. About 0.4 miles later the road is again on the towpath, although the canal is nearly obliterated; and after another 0.5



A Map Of The

NORTH RIVER NAVIGATION



Canals

Canal wharves at Lexington, head of canal-boat navigation

Reid Dam = Ross' = the Town Dam and Lock

Towpath crossing

South River Dam = Davidson's (Mill) Dam and Lock

Lock No. 1

Lock No. 2

Ben Salem Dam = Dunlap's Dam and Lock

Towpath crossing

Zimmerman's Dam and Lock = Stratton's

Moomaw's = Moorman's = Green Forest Lock and Dam

Moomaw's Landing

Chalk Run Aqueduct

Lock No. 3

Lock No. 4

Lock No. 5

Lock No. 6 (Laird's)

Towpath crossing

Savernake's = Laird's Dam and Guard Gate (a half-lock.)

The only crib dam.

Lock No. 7

Agner's = Edmondson's Dam and Lock

Lock No. 8 at Thompson's Landing and Warehouse

Goose Neck Dam and Lock

Lock No. 9

Towpath crossing at Garrett's Ferry

Devil's Step or Garrett's Dam and Lock

Spiller's or Miller's Dam and Lock

Warehouse (Miller's Landing, opposite Buffalo Creek)

Lock No. 10

Lock No. 11

Davidson Run Aqueduct

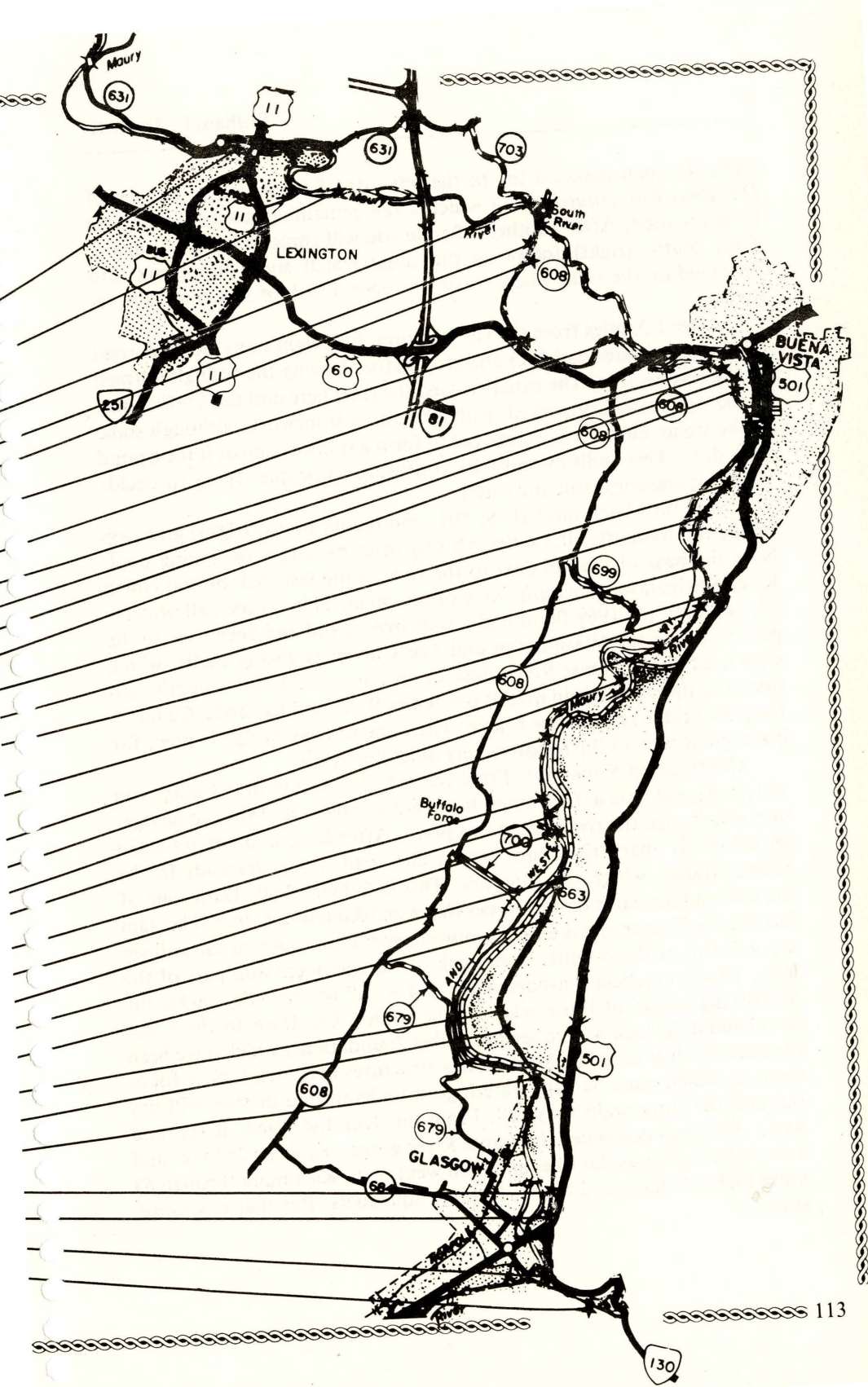
Lock No. 12

Lock No. 13

Lock No. 14 (Outlet Lock) to Blue Ridge Dam Pond

Blue Ridge (Balcony Falls) Dam and Lock

(On the James River and Kanawha Canal)



miles the road makes a jog to the left side of the canal, at the site of *Davidson Run Aqueduct*, of which a few remaining stones can be seen from the road. After another 0.5 mile you will come to U. S. 501 again. Turn south, (right) following the canal which soon disappears into farmland on the right where there was once a lock of which no sign remains.

After 1.3 miles from the last junction, turn right onto the main road to Glasgow (state road 130) and stop before leaving the triangle formed by the intersection. The canal crossed the road here and the *lift lock* just to the right is well preserved, with interesting stonework, although some of the stones have been rearranged to form a spillway across it for a pond now dry. (This spillway must be confusing to people trying to decide what this masonry structure was!)

Now turn back onto U. S. 501, continuing south, (right) and stop beside the road after 0.5 miles, shortly after passing a swimming pool. Near the base of the hill next to the river is the last lock on the North River Navigation—the *outlet lock* of the canal. This is very well preserved, and until the 1969 flood had a roof over it and had been used in the past to house the Washington and Lee University racing shells, which were used on the James River close by. From the lock the towpath continued to the river to join that of the James River and Kanawha Canal. A towpath bridge crossed the Maury where the railway bridge is now, for boats going west to Buchanan twenty miles upstream.

Continue on Route 501. From the scenic overlook in 0.2 miles you will get a good look at the James, but there is little sign of the old navigation which used the river above this point. After another 0.3 miles make an extremely sharp right turn into a dirt road which descends to the railway tracks, where you can park. This is Balcony Falls Dam, one of the tremendous dams on the *James River and Kanawha Canal*. The dam has been built over and is used for power generation, but you can still see a good deal of the original stonework of the abutment and part of the lock. This is excellent masonry work and is full of mason's marks, the identifying marks of those who cut the stones. Go down to the water level behind the lock wall to see the timber foundations, which have been exposed by river erosion. All masonry structures had such timber foundations, which must be kept waterlogged underground or they will dry out and the stone walls may fall. From this lock the James River and Kanawha Canal descended the James River gorge, requiring 25 locks and 8 huge dams such as this one, and then went on to Richmond through 63 more locks, 6 dams and across 10 large aqueducts. But that is another story. ☆

Lexington Civil War Babies: Three National Fraternities

Richard R. Fletcher

EVERY CITIZEN OF Rockbridge County and Lexington is aware of the distinction conferred on the area by the presence and activities of the Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University. But probably few are aware that three great national college fraternities were born in Lexington. The VMI mothered Alpha Tau Omega's first chapter and incubated Sigma Nu, while Washington and Lee gave birth to Kappa Alpha Order. Over a quarter of a million fraternity men throughout the nation and the world are alumni of what could be called "The Lexington Triad."

In this brief space there is room for scarcely more than an overview of the founding and the five years of infancy of the three organizations, but perhaps this quick look will encourage further research into the story of the Lexington fraternities. Far from claiming definitiveness for this work, the writer has relied heavily upon Thomas Paine's definition of the truth: that which is boldly asserted and stoutly maintained.

Richard R. Fletcher served the University of Virginia for 19 years prior to becoming associated with the national office of Sigma Nu. In 1972 he retired as that fraternity's executive secretary after 16 years of service. Mr. Fletcher was instrumental in bringing the Sigma Nu national office to Lexington in 1957. His address was delivered to the Society at its January 22, 1973, meeting at Evans Dining Hall at Washington and Lee University.

The first American society with a Greek letter name, Phi Beta Kappa, was organized in the Raleigh Tavern at Williamsburg, Virginia, on December 5, 1776. Phi Beta Kappa quickly developed most of the characteristics associated with fraternities today: secrecy, a ritual, an oath of fidelity, a badge for external display, a background of high idealism, a membership bound together by strong ties of friendship, and a desire to grow and expand. Its purposes were both social and literary, its appeal contagious.

A second chapter was authorized at Yale in 1780, and the fraternity system as such was initiated. However, it was the establishment in 1817 of a Phi Beta Kappa chapter at Union College in Schenectady, New York, which sparked the development of the college fraternity system as it is today.

In general, new fraternities have been organized either in opposition to or in imitation of an established group. At Union College it was imitation of Phi Beta Kappa—first in 1825 by the Kappa Alpha Society (not to be confused with the Kappa Alpha Order, a member of the Lexington Triad), then in 1827 by Sigma Phi and Delta Chi—which created the first of the so-called fraternity triads: The Union Triad. All three fraternities soon spread to colleges in the North and East.

A comparative newcomer, Alpha Delta Phi, founded at New York's Hamilton College in 1832, planted the first fraternity chapter in the West in 1833 at Miami University at Oxford in southwestern Ohio. Six years later opposition to the chapter led to the founding there of Beta Theta Pi, the sixth fraternity and the first to originate west of the Alleghenies. Phi Delta Theta was organized at Miami in 1848 and Sigma Chi in 1855 to complete the Miami Triad. These three brash young westerners elected to grow by vigorous campaigning among institutions in the West and South. Ultimately each was represented at both VMI and Washington and Lee.

A new fraternity, Phi Kappa Psi, founded in 1852 at Jefferson College in Pennsylvania, was the first to appear in Lexington. The fraternity's principal founder entered the Law School at the University of Virginia in 1853 and established a chapter there. Two years later the organization jumped the Blue Ridge to Washington College.

Phi Kappa Psi beat the Miami Triad's Beta Theta Pi to Washington College by just one year. Beta had been busy throughout the West and South, and its Alpha Rho chapter at Washington College was its sixth in the south and its twenty-fourth overall. Like Phi Psi, Beta used its University of Virginia chapter as a springboard.

The advent of fraternities did not excite enthusiasm among the faculties of many educational institutions, Washington College among them. Perhaps Dr. George Junkin, president of Miami University from 1841 to 1844, brought with him to Washington College some reservations based upon his observations of Alpha Delta Phi and Beta Theta Pi in action at Miami. Perhaps a more important factor was Phi Kappa Psi's 1857 "annual symposium," which was held in the Lexington House and dutifully reported in the *Lexington Gazette*.

The newspaper commented on "the continued popping of champagne corks which came upon the night breeze," hardly a sound

Α	Β	Γ	Δ
ALPHA al-fah	BETA bay-tah	GAMMA gam-ah	DELTA del-tah
Ε	Ζ	Η	Θ
EPSILON ep-sil-ion	ZETA zay-tah	ETA ay-tah	THETA thay-tah
Ι	Κ	Λ	Μ
IOTA eye-o-tah	KAPPA cap-ah	LAMBDA lamb-dah	MU mew
Ν	Ξ	Ο	Π
NU new	XI zzEYE	OMICRON omm-e-cron	PI ple
Ρ	Σ	Τ	Υ
RHO roe	SIGMA sig-mah	TAU tah	UPSILON oop-sil-ion
Φ	Χ	Ψ	Ω
PHI fie	CHI KEYE	PSI sigh	OMEGA o-may-gah

calculated to appeal to the sixty-seven year old Presbyterian clergyman. Coming hard on the heels of Beta Theta Pi's "anniversary supper" at the Exchange Hotel, the "symposium" undoubtedly prompted Dr. Junkin's recommendation to the Board of Trustees that secret societies—or as he termed them, "these excrescences"—be excluded from the college.

The trustees solemnly resolved that "no student of this college shall be permitted to hold a connexion with any Society whose character is not approved by the Faculty," but there is no evidence that the Board's order was obeyed. Indeed, there are indications that other secret societies may have been launched thereafter. The Civil War terminated all fraternity activities at the College, accomplishing effectively what Dr. Junkin and the faculty could not.

It is unlikely that the cadets at VMI were unaware of fraternity developments at Washington College during these pre-war years. However, I have found no evidence to indicate that any real effort, overt or covert, was made to establish a Greek-letter secret society at the Institute before Alpha Tau Omega pioneered in 1865.

This is somewhat surprising, as by 1861 there were ten established fraternities at the University of Virginia and two at the College of William and Mary, in addition to the two at Washington College. However, then as now, the cadets were thoroughly steeped in the idea that the entire corps was in reality one big fraternity, its members distinguished from outsiders by the adversity of the "rat" year and by other unique traditions. Moreover, they were purposely pointed towards the day when their military expertise might be needed.

When the cadets, under the command of Professor T. J. Jackson, marched off to Richmond in 1861 to drill recruits, and then Washington College's Liberty Hall Volunteers set out for Harper's Ferry, a chain of events and experiences was initiated which led to the establishment successively of Alpha Tau Omega, Kappa Alpha Order and Sigma Nu: The Lexington Triad.

Both Institute and College somehow managed to keep their doors open during most of the Civil War, but before the end at Appomattox, VMI had been shelled and put to the torch and Washington College had been ransacked and vandalized. Despite the stunning reality of defeat and occupation, both institutions faced the painful necessity of rebuilding. Both were equal to the challenge. The College called General Robert E. Lee to the presidency. At the Institute General Francis H. Smith set about rebuilding. Idealistic veterans at both schools translated their post-war dreams of peace, unity and brotherhood into purposeful action. In this atmosphere Lexington's three fraternities were born.

Before South Carolina's guns opened fire on Fort Sumter, twenty-six fraternities claimed one hundred forty-two chapters in the South.

But so many of their members enlisted in the Confederate armies that none survived the war. As the South's colleges and universities struggled to reopen, returning veterans founded the system anew. Among the two hundred seventy-nine youths—average age seventeen—who fought in the VMI corps at the Battle of New Market on May 15, 1863, were the three men destined to found Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, as well as thirteen others who would one day wear its insignia.

The vision which was to become ATO was that of Otis Allan Glazebrook, the eldest son of a prosperous Richmond businessman and civic leader. His ambition had been to attend the Military Academy at West Point. He was at Randolph-Macon College when the war began, but his father, seeking to accommodate his son's pronounced military ardor, secured a VMI appointment for him. He remained with the corps throughout the war, participating in the camps of instruction and fifteen marches, skirmishes and battles, including New Market.

The dream which Glazebrook shared with two close boyhood friends was that of a great people, long estranged by intersectional animosities and torn by a devastating fratricidal war, again living together in peace and unity under the healing and transforming power of brotherhood and love. His dream ultimately brought into being the first Greek-letter college fraternity organized after the Civil War.

Glazebrook and his friends, Alfred Marshall and Erskine Mayo Ross, were scions of distinguished Virginia families, reared to revere the South's traditions and to be faithful to its political philosophies. All lived in Richmond. Ross, aged twenty in 1865, had graduated from VMI in the spring. Glazebrook and Marshall, only nineteen, returned to the Institute in October for their final year.

Glazebrook, a lay reader in the Episcopal Church, was profoundly religious and of mystical mind. His dream of restoring peace and unity was hardly original, being a recurring theme in human history; it was an inevitable post-war phenomenon which in other times was expressed on a scale as great as the League of Nations or the United Nations. But Glazebrook recognized that peace is born of the spirit, is an inward grace that manifests itself in outward conduct. He realized that many who participated in the bloody conflict would be slow to forgive and forget, but he believed that younger men could be more easily moved than older ones. He visualized a society which would bind the youth of the land by ties of true friendship.

Glazebrook's "peace society" became a Greek-letter college fraternity by happenstance. General Smith was busily engaged in rebuilding the Institute in the summer of 1865. Glazebrook was courting Smith's daughter, whom he eventually married. Furthermore, Glazebrook's scholastic and military abilities had earned him the post of Cadet-Adjutant, the highest staff position. When schools began reopening in

the autumn of 1865, Northern fraternities began tentative attempts to resurrect their dead Southern chapters. A friend of General Smith's, a ranking official of a Northern fraternity, wrote to ask for the general's help in making a new start in the South. The letter passed routinely through military channels at VMI to Cadet-Adjutant Glazebrook, who immediately saw in the letter the idea for a practical vehicle for advancing his dreams of peace and reunification. He consulted with General Smith.

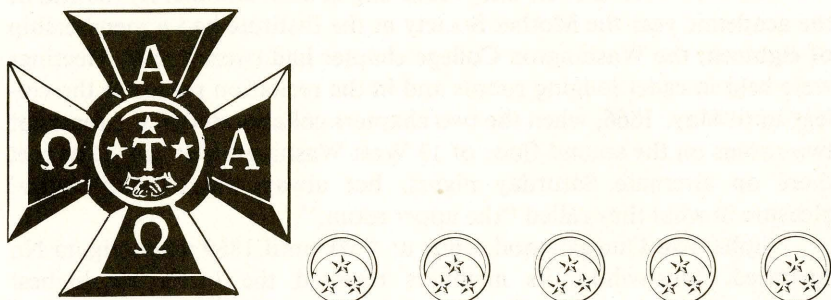
Smith, a West Point graduate, was not a member of any fraternity, but he had observed the operations of Phi Kappa Psi and Beta Theta Pi at Washington College before the war. Moreover, having intimate knowledge of the history and customs of Phi Beta Kappa, he supplied Glazebrook with accurate information concerning Greek-letter societies.

In Richmond Glazebrook consulted with University of Virginia alumni and gleaned further information about fraternities. He concluded that most of them were too social or scholastic for his taste. Being of strong religious inclination, Glazebrook could contemplate fraternity only in terms of Christian love—a Christian fraternity. The result was the concept of a society Greek in name only, the Greek name being merely the visible symbol of a passionate conviction that peace and brotherhood could be achieved under the aegis of Jesus Christ.

As a boy and youth in St. Paul's and St. Mark's Churches in Richmond, Glazebrook had seen the ancient insignia of the Church: the Tau Cross subjoined by Alpha and Omega, signifying that Christ is all in all, the beginning and end of salvation. The society's name, Alpha Tau Omega, was all but inevitable. For the group's emblem Glazebrook chose what he mistakenly thought was a Maltese Cross. To these ideas and their symbols the founder added an organization based upon the American faith in representative government and in the efficacy of growth. ATO was not established in imitation or opposition to any other group, and was intended from the beginning to be a *national* fraternity.

Glazebrook selected Alfred Marshall, a boyhood playmate, a member of his class at VMI, and the most popular cadet at the institute, to join him in his great adventure. Together the two concluded that they needed the counsel and experience of an older man. They chose Erskine Ross, who had graduated the previous year and was then living and working in Richmond. The three young men met at Glazebrook's home in Richmond on September 11, 1865, and signed the charter of Alpha Tau Omega.

Glazebrook and Marshall had little trouble meeting other VMI prospects for their organization, as only eighteen cadets were on hand when the Institute opened on October 16. But by the end of the year the roster had grown to fifty-seven. The cadets were billeted in town pending the



reconstruction of the barracks. Glazebrook, staying at the Compton House, administered the ATO oaths to his roommate; Marshall did the same to the others in his room at the Lexington Hotel. When the group totaled eight, ATO held its first chapter meeting in Marshall's hotel room.

When Washington College opened its doors to twenty-two students on September 15, General Lee had not yet been inaugurated. The magic of his name and reputation drew one hundred twenty-four others from throughout the South to the campus by spring. The ATOs naturally viewed Washington College as a logical target for expansion; but in the face of a long tradition of hostility between the college students and the cadets, such a move appeared rather audacious.

A woman was able to bridge the gap. Lizzie Letcher, pert daughter of Virginia's Civil War Governor, John Letcher of Lexington, was an old friend of Otis Glazebrook's. She had already introduced her brother, Samuel Houston Letcher, who was initiate No. 11, and a family friend, Melville B. Branch, to Alpha Tau Omega. She responded to Glazebrook's appeal for help by pledging a cousin at Washington College, Fred Berlin, and introducing Glazebrook to John Van Meter, an extremely popular Kentucky veteran who had come to Lexington with a letter of introduction to General Letcher. The ATOs crossed the boundaries between the schools and initiated Van Meter, creating the nucleus around which the society's second chapter would form.

Lizzie Letcher, who eventually became the fraternity's only "honorary" female member, gathered together a noteworthy group of "Alpha Tau Girls," as they called themselves, including two named Mildred Lee—one the daughter of the General, the other his niece. The daughter recruited the sons of Generals Breckinridge and Longstreet, and the niece pledged her brother, George T. Lee. This "ladies auxiliary" was a powerful force in the infant years of ATO.

The men were likewise busy recruiting at both schools. By the end of the academic year the Mother Society at the Institute had a membership of eighteen; the Washington College chapter had twenty-four. Meetings were held in cadet lodging rooms and in the recitation rooms at the college until May, 1866, when the two chapters collaborated in the rental of two rooms on the second floor of 13 West Washington Street. They met there on alternate Saturday nights, but always shared their social pleasure in what they called "the upper room."

Alpha Tau Omega stood alone at VMI until 1869 when Sigma Nu appeared. Meanwhile, its members received the Institute's highest honors, academic and military. It also began to expand, installing chapters at Cumberland College, the University of Virginia and Roanoke College, as well as six community chapters.

The uncertain future of many Southern colleges at the conclusion of the war was such that most of the fraternities founded in the North did not immediately undertake to reestablish their chapters. Understandably, new organizations developed in their stead. Alpha Tau Omega was the first, but others followed in the five years after the war. Kappa Alpha Order was founded at Washington College and Sigma Nu at VMI. Pi Kappa Alpha and Kappa Sigma were organized at the University of Virginia. To this quintet of Virginia-founded fraternities a sixth was added in 1901 when Sigma Phi Epsilon was founded at the University of Richmond.

The second of the Lexington Triad, Kappa Alpha Order, was conceived by James Ward Wood of Lost River, West Virginia. It was born as Phi Kappa Chi at Washington College on December 21, 1865, through the instrumentality of William Archibald Walsh of Richmond, and two Lexingtonians, William Nelson Scott and Stanhope McClellan Scott.

These four swore to bind their association together in lasting friendship, but the Greek-letter name they chose did not endure for long. Phi Kappa Psi, first fraternity on campus in 1855, was reorganizing and asked the newcomers to change their name to avoid confusion between the groups. Kappa Alpha was the new designation, chosen apparently in ignorance of the existence of the Union Triad's venerable Kappa Alpha (founded in 1825). The new group, however, designated itself an *Order*, helping to distinguish the Southern organization from Kappa Alpha *Society* in the North.

Originally imitative, it became thoroughly distinctive. The first Kappa Alpha chapter used the ritual of Epsilon Alpha, a local fraternity which died in 1861. James Wood designed the badge: an encircled cross emblazoned beneath the Greek letters Kappa and Alpha.

Kappa Alpha Order as such did not really come into being until Samuel Zenas Ammen was initiated in October, 1866. Ammen, the author of the fraternity's ritual, was considered so important to the Order that his name appears with those of the four founders on the commemorative bronze tablet on the wall of a classroom in Robinson Hall at Washington and Lee University.



ΑΒΓΔΕΖΗΘΙΚΑΜΝΞΟΠΡΣΤΥΦΧΨΩ
αβγδεζηθδικλμνξοπρστυφρχψω

Ammen was no ordinary student. Of Swiss-German lineage, he was the ninth and last child of a Fincastle, Virginia miller and merchant. Earning top grades at the Botetourt Male Academy at Fincastle, he prepared himself to attend Washington College in the autumn of 1861. But when the war commenced that spring, he and his fellow students formed their own Home Guard in which he served as second lieutenant. In August he volunteered for the Confederate Army. At various times during the war he served as a dyestuffs maker, a member of the Confederate Navy, and near the end as a member of a mounted guerrilla command on the West Virginia frontier.

When the war ended Ammen returned to the Academy for another year of intensive preparation prior to enrolling at Washington College. He entered the medical studies program with advanced standing, a member of the Intermediate Class, and even took some senior subjects. Soon, however, he transferred his interest from scientific subjects to languages.

It did not take Kappa Alpha long to discover Samuel Ammen, even among the three hundred ninety-nine students who enrolled at General Lee's college in 1866. The discoverer was Lexington's Will Scott, who

met him in Latin class where Ammen was an outstanding student. Swiftly pledged and initiated, Ammen immediately moved to improve the order's borrowed ritual.

He had become a Mason in March, 1865, and was thoroughly aware of the shortcomings of the ritual used at his own initiation, an inheritance from Epsilon Alpha. Furthermore, he was convinced that an order based on chivalry had limitless possibilities. He addressed himself to what was to be a lifelong task, and ultimately transformed the ritual into that used by Kappa Alpha Order today. As Ammen conceived it, Kappa Alpha was to be an order of Christian knights pledged to the highest ideas of character and achievement, not a mere fraternity. The Order was to embrace only those aspiring to the qualities of a true gentleman, as epitomized by General Robert E. Lee.

Despite Ammen's and the founders' dedication, it was initially difficult for the new group to gain a foothold at Washington College in the face of lack of sympathy, if not open hostility of the older fraternities. The membership was small and inexperienced, but four of them (Wood, Scott, McCorkle and Ammen) were war veterans and not easily discouraged. When the 1866-67 session opened there were but seven initiates on hand, including three of the founders. Of the seven men initiated that session, five were expelled for disloyalty. The Order nearly gave up in the spring of 1867, but the crisis passed. The 1867-68 session was markedly better, and the chapter found a home at the Ann Smith Academy, a school for young ladies where Ammen taught Latin and French. Will Scott's mother and aunts were sympathetic. They helped to decorate a chapter meeting room, sewed the first set of ritual robes, and assisted in arranging the organization's banquets—"convivia" as they were called.

The Order was struggling hard at Washington College to concern itself seriously with expansion, but in January, 1868, a member proposed a cadet friend for membership. Three others followed him later in the session. Thus Beta Chapter was born at VMI. The following year a Washington College transfer planted the Kappa Alpha flag at the University of Georgia; another took KA to Wofford College in South Carolina. The Order's growth had begun.

The installation of Beta Chapter at VMI was fortunate. It was Beta which carried the burden of leadership for three years when Alpha went temporarily inactive in 1870, and it was Beta which assisted in reestablishing Mother Alpha in 1885. The VMI chapter is perpetuated today by the Beta Commission, which since 1915 has elected cadets to the Order for initiation after graduation.

When the year 1869 opened, Alpha Tau Omega was firmly entrenched at both the Virginia Military Institute and Washington

College; Kappa Alpha Order, arriving slightly later, was somewhat less firmly dug in. On January 1, 1869, both acquired a new rival when Sigma Nu fraternity was founded at VMI, completing the Lexington Triad.

Sigma Nu's roots may be traced to the arrival at VMI in the fall of 1866 of twenty-one year old James Frank Hopkins of Little Rock, Arkansas. His father's fortune, before the war based on ownership of 125,000 acres in three states, had declined sharply during the conflict, but there was enough left to send his son to Virginia for his education. Young Hopkins was fifteen when the war broke out. He attempted to enlist repeatedly, but was not successful until 1864, when he evaded Union picket lines around Little Rock and was accepted as a private in Noland's Independent Troop of Cavalry. His expertise as a horseman marked him for hazardous courier duty, and he participated in several of the smaller battles in the closing years of the war.

Then as now there was a difference in the attitude of the Lexington townspeople towards students and cadets. Lexington's Scotch-Irish founders had left a strong imprint on the community. Washington College since its founding had been a stronghold of Presbyterianism. The Institute, with its resolute head, General Smith, while nondenominational by design, had been controlled largely by Episcopalians since its establishment.

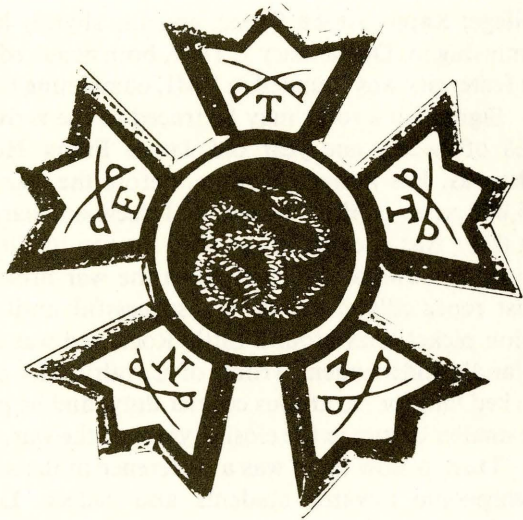
Before the Civil War VMI cadets came largely from the Episcopal dominated eastern part of Virginia, furthering the commonly held local belief that cadets were worldly, even wicked. After the war the Institute's Episcopal cast was somewhat diminished by the infusion of matriculates from other states, but Cadet Hopkins and his close friends were Episcopalians.

The cadets attended the four town churches in turn, although Grace Episcopal was favored because its services were shortest. General Smith, a vestryman at Grace Church, conducted Bible study classes at his home on Sunday afternoons, and it was at these gatherings that he exercised his greatest direct influence over the three cadets destined to found Sigma Nu fraternity.

Sigma Nu grew out of opposition to the post-war version of the ratting or hazing system at VMI. Before the war it had been an organized procedure regarded as compatible with the system of discipline of a military college; it was understood by those who enrolled as a means of qualifying them for admission to the full fellowship of cadet life. But after the war the ratting system lost its orderliness. Some charged that it was being used to further the selfish purposes of the members of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity.

The ATOs on hand in 1866 were not the founders, but their successors. Alpha Tau Omega was an organization set apart. Its membership, recruited largely from Richmond and eastern Virginia, represented

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the old regime. In the fall of 1866 almost all out-of-state cadets were rats, and the hazing was carried out almost entirely by Virginians, headed by members of ATO.

A number of out-of-state rats, many of them already matured by the exacting experience of military service and in no need of disciplinary hazing, became alienated from the rat system. Bitterly resenting the juvenile treatment, they fought back. Their suspicions were aroused by evidences of ATO membership among the young sub-professors, whom they charged with favoritism and persecution. A leader in the resistance movement emerged in the person of James Frank Hopkins.

Hopkins was willing to accept a reasonable amount of hazing as part of the system, but he rebelled in the face of what he perceived as unreasonable demands and unethical designs. In the conflicts which ensued he was so frequently the victor that he soon had a body of fourth classmen known as "Hopkins' Rats" under his protection, and had won the affection of his classmates. At the Finals on July 4, 1867, his leadership was recognized when he was designated as the First Corporal, the highest rank in the third class.

It was as First Corporal that Hopkins had his first—perhaps only—direct confrontation with Alpha Tau Omega. As Corporal of the Guard, he was called upon to investigate a disturbance in one of the rooms (that of Cadet Adjutant Robert E. Nelson, Jr., an 1867 initiate and a veteran of the New Market Battle.) In Hopkins' words:

On a certain occasion I chanced to enter the room of the Battalion adjutant on official business, and, to my astonishment, surprised a number of the Alpha Tau Omegas, hooded and gowned, going through some sort of foot-

washing ceremony. . . . from that incident and instant they were known as "Blackfeet."

Hopkins had witnessed the purification rite, the climax of the initiation ceremony. The black feet were shoes protruding from beneath the white gowns. He had only a glance at the robed knights of ATO before being summarily ejected. At the guard room his incoherent report so emphasized the apparition of "black feet" that the label has persisted to this day.

This encounter was mere coincidence, not related to the conflicts of the previous year, and it did not forecast continued differences. Hopkins had acted on principle, not prejudice. He believed in brotherhood and tried to practice it. During his first two years of adjustment to cadet life, Hopkins stood as an exemplar of principles, rather than as an active leader in cadet controversies. He was not an agitator. His battles were usually fought alone. While companionable by instinct and habit, and rarely alone, he did not seek heterogeneous company. It was not until his third year at VMI that the friendships which he had formed and the principles for which he had stood gave him the concept of a lasting union founded upon his ideas of honor and fellowship.

His initiation into the Lexington Lodge of Masons gave impetus to his dreams and plans. After careful deliberation Hopkins confided his intentions to two other men who had been his close friends since arriving at VMI, Greenfield Quarles of Helena, Arkansas—son of a Virginian and himself a war veteran—and James McIlvaine Riley, son of a St. Louis merchant. One starlit night in October, 1868, these men went out to the saucer-shaped depression behind a professor's home at the end of the parade ground, clasped hands on the Bible, and joined in the vows that bound them together as Brothers in the Legion of Honor. During the next two months others were added, but the existence of the new society was kept secret until its first formal meeting on January 1, 1869, the accepted date of the founding of Sigma Nu. However, it may well be said that the spiritual beginning was in the autumn of 1866 when James Frank Hopkins rebelled against injustices.

Some see in the Alpha Tau Omega-Sigma Nu story a conflict between preference by birth and the broader spirit of democracy. This may have been true at the outset and for a very limited time thereafter. In the fall of 1866 all of the Institute's ATO members were Virginians, but the fraternity soon broadened its scope.

For many years it was believed that Sigma Nu had been organized in order to break up the "Blackfeet," although members of both fraternities denied repeatedly that Sigma Nu was founded with vengeance as its

purpose. There was intense rivalry, but no more than that which characterized interfraternity relationships in general at that time. And there were some close friendships, too, including a small ATO fourth-classman who was called "Hopkins' Mouse" after the Sigma Nu leader befriended him. Had Hopkins wanted revenge, he would not have waited so long to launch his Legion of Honor. His battles had been won, his principles assured. Masonry revealed to him the opportunities for growth in brotherhood.

The conversion of the Legion of Honor into Sigma Nu Fraternity occurred through adaptation rather than transition. Whether founder Hopkins intended originally that the order should follow the course and customs of college Greek-letter fraternities is doubtful. At that time the conduct of such organizations was generally in conflict with the principles they espoused, and their reputation in the larger society was not enviable. Regardless, the Legion of Honor in its first year assumed the outward aspects of a Greek-letter society, maintaining secretly its original name but known publicly as Sigma Nu Fraternity.

At VMI prearranged and announced meetings for fraternities were virtually impossible, as those cadets below the first class had only Saturday afternoons free. Meetings, including initiations, were often held under cover of darkness in the limestone saucer where the founders had met. The business of eluding the guards added a fillip of excitement to the tryst.

Twilight was the hour of fellowship before evening study. Cadets sauntered around the Guard tree or the Entrance Gates, where Lexington belles foregathered to catch a glimpse of their cadet swains. This was the hour chosen to introduce the badge of Sigma Nu. Hopkins himself had designed the badge, modeling it after the Cross of the Legion of Honor of France, a decoration held by several members of the faculty. The field of white enamel surrounding the symbols on the arms of the badge caused it to be known as the "White Badge," in contrast to the Black Cross of Alpha Tau Omega. The White Cross made its initial—and surprise—appearance on the uniforms of members one evening hour in the spring of 1869.

Selection of members the first year did not involve contest or rivalry. Chiefly they were Hopkins' friends and associates, with out-of-state cadets a significant majority, but with a good representation of Virginians for balance. Earned merit was the measure for all, and by the end of the school year in July, 1869, there were fifty-one Sigma Nus.

The following year, 1869-70, marked the beginning of normal fraternity activities for Sigma Nu. Fourteen members were first-classmen, thus they had greater freedom for regular meetings with frequent changes of meeting place. The fraternity flourished. By the time of

the Finals exercises in July, 1870, when Sigma Nu's three founders graduated, the fraternity situation at VMI had been transformed from the domination of a single secret society to the shared rivalry of four: Alpha Tau Omega, Kappa Alpha Order, Beta Theta Pi, and Sigma Nu.

An invitation from Sigma Nu was regarded as an honor; those invited almost inevitably pledged. This new status led to feelings of self-assurance which presaged the inevitable decline which followed. Just three years after the founders graduated, the proud Sigma Nus accepted just one pledge, the next year only two. Fraternities at VMI slowly declined. By 1881 one had but a single member, and the Mother Chapter of Alpha Tau Omega had ceased operations entirely.

Content with local achievements, Sigma Nu's members were not seriously concerned with expansion. In spite of a number of so-called "authorizations" between 1870 and 1874, it was only in the latter year that the fraternity finally established a new chapter at the University of Alabama.

The establishment of Sigma Nu at Washington and Lee University (as it was called after Lee's death in 1870), at very long last in 1882, has frequently been referred to as the Second Foundation. But planting a successful chapter at Washington and Lee was not easy. Twelve fraternities were already in operation there, survivors of a field of fifteen. Moreover, there were strong campus differences between VMI and W & L which inhibited cooperation. The cadets were regarded with some misgivings by many of the staid Presbyterians; on the other hand, the free-wheeling cadets looked with some contempt on their Calvinist neighbors, dubbing them the "sitabouts." There was common ground between the schools in most Lexington homes, but social allies were sometimes so strongly partial that they were known as Washington and Lee girls or VMI girls.

Just outside the gates of VMI, in the no man's land between the two institutions, lived Miss Daisy Madison, a lineal descendant of President Madison and a Sigma Nu girl. The boundary line between the institute and the Madison home was a well-worn path somewhat obscured by the trees and shrubbery lining the avenue to the barracks. This home might properly be called the Sigma Nu house, since it was there that members gathered frequently, often in violation of institute rules.

Daisy Madison, although a Sigma Nu girl, had other friends, including some from the university; among these was Isaac Pointevint Robinson of Louisiana. Through Daisy he met most of the Alpha chapter men, was initiated, and organized Lambda chapter. Ultimately this saved Sigma Nu, as Lambda was one of three chapters destined to provide the superstructure on which was built a great national fraternity.

But that carries our story far beyond the time limits set for this paper, which is concerned only with the period of fraternal birth and early infancy. Suffice it to say that Lexington's three Civil War fraternities managed to survive the intense rivalry which characterized fraternities in their early and middle years, and the distrust and ill will of much of the public stemming from the secret way in which they conducted their activities.

Today all three are proud leaders in a field of fifty-seven national college fraternities. They span the nation with more than four hundred active campus chapters and more than a quarter of a million alumni throughout the world. In their mature years the three are not only compatible and friendly on the national level, but often are close allies on the campus level. Many Alpha Tau Omega and Sigma Nu chapters enjoy an annual combined Whitefoot-Blackfoot party or join Kappa Alpha Order chapters for an Old South Ball.

And all three are proud of their Lexington ties. ☆

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Buena Vista and its Boom, 1889-1891

Royster Lyle, Jr.

FOR MANY YEARS Buena Vista's history and the history of some of its unique and handsome buildings have held a special fascination for me. In many ways Buena Vista is among the most historically interesting of Virginia's towns, at least during the 1889-1891 period. The special types of architecture that have survived there are only beginning to be appreciated by architectural historians—much less the general public.

Since Williamsburg was discovered by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. over sixty years ago, Virginians have convinced themselves that for a building to be good architecture it must look like Raleigh Tavern or the Governor's palace. A Virginia architect's merit has been judged, I believe, by his ability to "colonialize" as quickly as possible every nineteenth century house he could get his hands on. Perhaps one of these days historians will write books on the colonialized architecture in Virginia of

Royster Lyle, Jr., is the Associate Director of the George C. Marshall Research Foundation in Lexington. He is also an architectural historian. In 1969 he received a grant from the American Association for State and Local History to do a photographic survey of the architectural types in the Rockbridge County area. This paper was delivered to the Society's October 25, 1971, meeting at Southern Seminary Junior College in Buena Vista.

the 1930s, '40s, '50s and '60s, and it will become an accepted type in itself.

Fortunately, in the last few years we have seen a reawakening of interest in nineteenth century Victorian forms and a real appreciation of their importance to the total picture of this country's architectural history. A good example perhaps is the Gothic revival period of the 1840s and 50s which for years was thought of as merely grotesque; now it is again in vogue. Architectural historians cannot get books out fast enough on the subject and these Victorian gems are being increasingly sought after in the real estate market.

In the mid-1960s the Virginia Military Institute demolished one of its three original Alexander Jackson Davis villas (the Williamson House, 1852) with hardly a peep from anyone. Were the school to propose a similar action today, I dare say the wrath of thousands of Davis fans from all over the country would descend on VMI with camping on the parade ground which would make the recent marches on Washington seem pale.

Nationwide sentiment has not quite reached this level on the post-Civil War Victorian forms, but it will, I am convinced, and soon. There is still the feeling in many sections, of course, that the only good use for a Victorian building is to turn it into a parking lot. As a result of this attitude, we have been losing many excellent buildings from this period. Fortunately, Buena Vista has many gems still standing, and I will mention some of those that strike me as being particularly important.

Southern Seminary's main building is far and away the best—and the best preserved—of western Virginia's boom hotels of the period of Buena Vista's finest hour. But the whole area has many first-rate architectural landmarks being cared for quite well, and for this we are all most thankful.

No one would dare attempt a talk on Buena Vista's boom or on the 1889-1891 period without first giving due credit to Mr. Stuart Moore and to his excellent talk before this group on January 27, 1959. Fortunately, this important address was published in the Society's *Proceedings* (Vol. V, page 70). Another source of information was an article in the *Rockbridge County News* by Hugh A. White which appeared in the 1930s. More recently two other members of the Historical Society have dealt with the subject in chapters of their books: Professor Ollinger Crenshaw in *General Lee's College* and Professor Allen W. Moger in *From Bourbonism to Byrd*.

For this paper I have drawn heavily on all of these. But in addition, I believe I was fortunate enough to have a new source of information available to me that my predecessors did not: the bound copies of the

weekly publication, the *Buena Vista Advocate* of the 1890 period which has been preserved in the Southern Seminary Library. This proved to be invaluable, and we are all indebted again to Southern Seminary for seeing that this priceless source is being preserved.

Architecturally, as well as socially and economically, the 1889-1891 era brought the most abrupt change to Rockbridge County of any single period in its long history. While a number of other areas in the Valley of Virginia were to experience boom fever, hardly a corner of Rockbridge escaped the fabulous land sale. Promoters were busy. Almost every Valley community—Front Royal, Waynesboro, Salem, Big Lick (Roanoke)—was having its own wild time. The attention was coming because of the newly arrived railroads and the area's natural resources: great expanses of timber, ample streams, and reportedly rich deposits of iron ore. One source called it the "mineral center of the world." At one point it appeared that Rockbridge, then a totally rural area, was on the verge of establishing an industrial and mining center to rival Pittsburgh. Though there were several other smaller land development companies promoting building lots and industrial sites in the county (in such places as Cornwall and Raphine), Buena Vista, Glasgow, Goshen and finally Lexington experienced the greatest activity. The boom, fanned by Yankee money, aggressive local entrepreneurs and extraordinary promotion, reached tremendous proportions before it finally burst. Stuart Moore put it better than anyone: "Since the close of the Civil War the region had been 'a Sleeping Beauty,' but by 1889 it was on the verge of being awakened by 'a Prince Charming' in the form of northern capital."

In December 1889, just as the frenzy of buying and selling was beginning, the *Rockbridge County News* predicted that "the year 1890 is to be the most eventful in Virginia history, in the history of Buena Vista, of Glasgow, [and] of Rockbridge County."

The next week a Buena Vista correspondent reported: "To put it mildly, things are getting wild. . . . It is not unusual for eligible lots to jump \$100 in twenty-four hours." But this was still just the beginning; before the end of the month the same writer exclaimed, "the value of lots [has] jumped about one hundred percent . . . in two weeks." Glasgow reported that its population had "doubled in the last thirty days." The *Rockbridge County News* recorded long lists of weekly land transfers; one lot in Buena Vista changed hands three times before it could be recorded. During this period the *Baltimore Sun* ran a series of articles on the "Boom in the Valley." After noting that Lexington was located in the center of a country rich in minerals, the *Sun* writer commented:



The Arcade, as it is called today, is typical of the commercial architecture during the Buena Vista boom.

“Every town in this section of Virginia just now seems to have a separate and distinct boom of its own, each like Barnum’s Circus—the very greatest boom on earth.”

Indeed, each area did have its own company and its own set of financiers, speculators and promoters. The Buena Vista Company was the first to go into business; it was able to announce as early as February, 1889, that all of its \$600,000 capital stock had been subscribed. The company was headed by A. T. Barclay, a successful Rockbridge farmer and businessman and a trustee of Washington and Lee University. But the big mover behind the Buena Vista scene was Benjamin C. Moomaw. During the first year there was little building, though there were great expectations and many hundreds of residential, villa and industrial building lots changed hands at an extraordinary rate. Actual construction was going slowly—so slowly, in fact, that the *Buena Vista Advocate* addressed a series of strong editorials saying that all these paper transactions were fine, but some real construction was needed to put the boom on a more sound basis.

The first editorial, January 24, 1890, said,
Now let our monied men go to work and build on their lots, stop speculating

and improve your property, you cannot make a better investment. . . . Every new house that goes up in Buena Vista, increases greatly the value not only of the lot upon which it is built, but of all the unimproved property in the town. Go to work.”

The speculators apparently did not heed the editor’s advice, for the next editorial was not quite so circumspect. It began:

Stop this everlasting speculating and go to building Unless some building is done, especially on good business sites, some of the fine fellows who are turning over their money by turning over their lots, will turn over once too often, and roll on a rock. . . . Build! Build! You never saw a town yet that didn’t have some houses in it, and it’s perfectly reckless folly to go on buying and selling, and everybody expect somebody else to improve. It’s a fair warning and I want it to make an impression.

The first year of activity ended with a correspondent reporting that “Buena Vista is enjoying a live boom and one based upon tangible resources and development.”

After the town was laid off into a vast pattern of streets and building sites, one of the first buildings erected was what the paper referred to as a “Queen Ann Hotel” on the plateau overlooking the town. Here the principal social events of the Buena Vista Company took place. The local paper took careful note of each gala affair, hosted by “the hotel’s genial proprietor, John W. Tolley.” So popular was the hotel that in only a few



Buena Vista’s opera house, completed in 1890. The opera hall is located on the third floor; its stage is still intact today.

months there was a need for expansion. Though there seems to be no record of the architect or builder of the original 1889 hotel, the local paper noted that the new addition was contracted by J. P. Pettyjohn of Lynchburg. Work began by late January, 1890, for an "improvement that will add about fifty rooms when completed."

In 1890 construction finally began throughout the town. Another hotel, then called "The Collonade" was built. Also the company office in the high Victorian style (later the town courthouse), and a \$25,000 opera house were built in 1890, and today both are still very much a part of Buena Vista's attractive cityscape.

As for the other buildings going up, the editor of the local paper became concerned with the quality of the architecture and the aesthetics of his booming town. He admonished his readers:

Let us have an eye to the beautiful in architecture. It is not our object or desire to criticize anyone, for up to this time we have accomplished wonders, but we think the time has now come when all parties who build houses should have some well defined ideas as to something pretty in their style of architecture, and most especially would we urge upon our building associations to drop the low flat roof now being used so much and give us something more sightly in its stead. We have no idea that a nice mansard roof, or a pretty Queen Anne style would cost a great deal more than the present one used, and they would be so much more attractive looking. A gentleman from a large northern city remarked to us a few days ago as we stood on the porch of Hotel Buena Vista, that the view from that point was one of the prettiest which his eyes ever beheld, and that it only remained for us to add our part to that which nature has so lavishly bestowed on Buena Vista, to make it one of the prettiest cities in the world. It has been truly said that a thing of beauty is a joy forever. So let all parties who have the future prosperity of our young city at heart, begin from this time to have the good appearance of each house they erect, and we feel assured that in a very short time all will agree as to the wisdom of what we have said on this subject.

Some of the builders did indeed take great care with their construction to which many of the surviving buildings will attest.

The first setback to the Buena Vista Company came in July, 1890, when a fire, which started in the bakery, destroyed the prominent "Queen Ann" hotel on the hill overlooking the town. To avoid any psychological setback to the boom, the company acted immediately. The local paper reported: "Before the flames died away," President Barclay telegraphed Pettyjohn in Lynchburg "to make arrangements at once to contract for rebuilding the [hotel], and at the same time notified the Board of Directors to meet him at the site." The next morning plans for the new hotel were discussed, and "while the details of the building have not been finally determined upon, enough has been made known to justify the statement that a splendid brick structure, of elegant architecture, with all most modern improvements and conveniences will be immediately erected on the old site." The paper noted that "the people of the town took in all of the guests at the hotel."



The second Buena Vista Hotel was designed by Pennsylvania architect S. W. Foulks and completed in 1890. It was, according to the local paper, "one of the most rapidly built, as well as most substantial and beautiful structures of modern times." Today it is the Main Hall for Southern Seminary Junior College.

Before the end of the month construction for the new hotel was ready to begin. The *Buena Vista Advocate* said the company "accepted the plans of Mr. S. W. Foulks, of Pennsylvania. One hundred and fifty hands will be put to work immediately. . . . It will be one of the most rapidly built, as well as most substantial and beautiful structures of modern times." A local citizen wrote of the new hotel:

The Romanesque styles of architecture are blended in that structure to the extent of perfect relief, and [there is] nothing left off that [would] impart grace and elegance in adornment to the exterior, or that could be more happily associated with the faultless interior.

The new hotel had its desired psychological effect on the new city. In the next two years some six hundred handsome dwellings, churches, stores, hotels, and other buildings were completed, many in the popular Victorian styles of the period. By January, 1892, Buena Vista had grown from a totally rural area, called Hart's Bottom and Green Forest, to a city of 5,240, having "22 industrial enterprises and business institutions"—all in less than three years.

My favorite editorial from the sometimes vitriolic pen of the Buena Vista editor came at the peak of the boom and was aimed squarely at the

doubters and detractors of the boom effort. He wrote: "If the mossbacks had been running this company, there would be no electric lights, no hotel, no streets, no houses, no Buena Vista, no Glasgow, no Goshen—nothing but primeval woods."

Glasgow, like Buena Vista, was started by Rockbridge County entrepreneurs with the help of northern money. Three principal companies were involved in the development of this village at the confluence of the James and the North rivers; former Virginia Governor Fitzhugh Lee, nephew of General Robert E. Lee, headed the principal one, the Rockbridge Company; John DeHart Ross was president of the Glasgow Improvement Company; and the West End Glasgow Land Company was under the direction of Greenlee D. Letcher.

Glasgow's plans were more ambitious than Buena Vista's, but the final accomplishments were somewhat less spectacular. An English syndicate pumped millions in cash into the Glasgow project, for which William A. Anderson of Lexington earned considerable praise. Among the purchasers of lots at Glasgow were the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, who were reported to have planned handsome warehouses on their property.

As in the other county boom towns, the Glasgow company's hotel received first construction priority. The Rockbridge Company spared no cost and chose the architectural firm of Edgerton S. Rogers and Walter R. Higham of Richmond to design the elaborate structure called the "Rockbridge Hotel." A November, 1951, article in *Coronet* magazine recounted the short history of the building. Located high on a hill dominating the beautiful river valley, its "tall towers and wide bays, sweeping piazzas and impressive stone cut fronts and pillars, made it the queen of Virginia's hotels. Two hundred rooms and suites were finished in meticulous and expensive detail. A roof garden—a daring architectural innovation in the '90s—reflected the dazzling mood of the creators." The building, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, opened on September 17, 1892, with an enormous affair of champagne and bands and guests from across the country and Europe. The opening night was propitious enough, but its glory was to be all too short.

At the other end of the county the small village of Goshen boomed during this period in much the same fashion as Buena Vista and Glasgow, though the reasons for its beginnings were slightly different. For several generations this area had been popular as a summer spa, with Rockbridge Alum Springs, Cold Sulphur Springs, and a number of other popular watering spots nearby. Further, it was on the mainline of one of the railways to the west, and iron mines on Bratton's Run were supplying the famous Victoria, largest iron furnace in the state. In 1886 this fur-

nace was already producing one hundred twenty-five to one hundred fifty tons a day. So it was not surprising that the boom fever of the next decade caught on quickly here.

The Goshen Land and Development Company purchased the grounds of the Cold Sulphur Springs and most of the area around what is today the community of Goshen. Industrial sites near the Victoria furnace were designated, as were a town park and numerous villa sites along Mill Creek. The lots were laid off and the developers planned what they thought would be the most elaborate hotel yet. The first issue of the local paper, *The Goshen Blade*, started by the company in 1891 to promote the town, gave this description of the new hotel building while it was still under construction:

The Palace City Hotel, a magnificent building on an eminence overlooking the town . . . of brick and granite, four stories high, contains one hundred and sixty rooms and will cost one hundred fifty thousand dollars. It will be lighted with electricity and have all the modern conveniences. It will be one of the finest hotels in all the Southland. The location is commanding and the building imposing. The hill on which it sits will be terraced with broad steps of marble leading down to the depot.



The Goshen Hotel

The company had chosen for its elaborate hotel the architecture firm of Yarnall and Goforth of Philadelphia, who were also to design the very similar Hotel Altemont for the Staunton Development Company. A promotional pamphlet for *The Alleghany*, as it was called, records that “the best White Sulphur water in America” was “on draught” at the

hotel and that "The rotunda, drawing room, dining room are beautifully furnished with natural wood which excites the admiration of all visitors and it can be safely stated that this hotel has no superior in the United States." The massive pile of towers and columned verandas blended a number of the Victorian forms—Queen Anne, stick, shingle, and others—into an impressive chateau overlooking the Goshen valley. It became the show place of the Goshen boom.

In December, 1889, a *Rockbridge County News* editorial complained that "there is growing sentiment in this community that if the same energy displayed and money invested in the development of other towns [in the county] were made use of in our own, a handsome profit would be returned to the investors, and a permanent benefit to Lexington." Editor Matthew Paxton cautiously added: "A boom may not be a desirable thing, but a healthy development, a gradual and steady growth has advantages, that none will deny." Then the editorial concluded, "Shall our county town, Lexington . . . take advantage of the opportunity now afforded her, or shall she remain content?"

A few months after this admonition the Lexington Development Company was formed. Two of its charter members were from Baltimore, but local sponsors were in general those who already were prospering in the Glasgow boom, including John DeHart Ross, A. L. Nelson, Thomas S. White, Henry H. Myers, and J. McD. Adair. The Lexington Company's plans were as elaborate as the other boom companies in the county. The farms surrounding Lexington were laid out into a proposed city that would have dwarfed the old town. On the western side it embraced most of the land extending to Brushy Hills including Sunnyside (the Webster Farm), Honeysuckle Hill, Castle Hill, the old golf course (the Denny property), and Mulberry Hill, extending on to Cave Spring and to the river.

Industrial sites were laid out along Woods Creek and the North River. Across the river northeast of Lexington was marked off another area equally as large, extending over what is today Hunter's Hill and down along the river by Clifton, and to the old railroad "Y". Old Lexington—the part that existed then and still exists today—was to be the business, civic, and educational center of this great new city.

The same editorial writer who was worried about Lexington's future in December of 1889, wrote eleven months later: "It is with a feeling of sincere gratification that we today record Lexington's great awakening. The old town has aroused from her lethargy, she has caught the spirit of the times, and is girding up her loins to march to the front and take her place among the most vigorous and prosperous towns of the land."

On October 23, 1890, at 9 a.m. the sale of Lexington Development Company stock began. Business was brisk; the sale went fast. The *Lexington Gazette* reported that “with all the booms around us, the like has never been seen before. Lexington started last in the race, but she is getting there all the same.”

A special promotion brochure indicated that the company had bought about 1,295 acres of land. The purpose was “to prepare the lands for settlement by laying off and grading streets, dividing the land into suitable lots, providing a supply of pure spring water, building two hotels, and giving sites and money help to such industries of the higher order employing the best class of skilled labor.” The company boasted it was making Lexington the “most beautiful and profitable city in the South to live in.”



The DeHart Hotel, Lexington

Before the end of 1890 the company voted to erect a \$60,000 hotel at Mulberry Hill and to demolish the large brick house there. Fortunately, the plan was abandoned. The next spring, a short distance to the south, construction began on the Hotel DeHart, designed by the same architect who built the Buena Vista Hotel, S. W. Foulks of Pennsylvania. Mr. Stuart Moore described Foulks' DeHart Hotel as a “sprawling, ornate structure [which] embodied almost every conceivable type of architecture, from Moorish domes to Norman tower and battlements, but it was . . . principally ‘boom,’ a nightmarish structure common to that period.” An earlier writer called this same building of stone, brick and wood shingling “a model in convenience and simplicity of style.”

Among the building's innovations were bathrooms on each of the upper floors and an elevator. The elaborate structure never opened as a hotel by the boom company; the bust came before its completion. For nearly two decades it remained empty and boarded up. For a time it was used as a student dormitory and as a summer school for Washington and Lee. It was on the verge of being opened as a boys' prep school when it burned in a spectacular fire in 1922.

The fate of Lexington's DeHart Hotel was almost the same as that of the other proud hotels at Buena Vista, Glasgow and Goshen. The boom which had brought unbelievable prosperity in the two short years after 1889 came abruptly to an end. Almost simultaneously the boom companies in Rockbridge and elsewhere seemed to be in trouble.

The local papers became skeptical at first, then blunt. The *Rockbridge County News* cried, "It's a bust! The boom's busted." Money had begun to get tight—very tight. Hard times were the topic of the day. A nationwide panic was following a nationwide boom. Within three years of its inception, Buena Vista's boom and that of its sister communities across the county were in a state of collapse. A serious condition had befallen the U. S. Treasury in 1892 which developed into the full-fledged Panic of 1893 soon after President Grover Cleveland took office that year.

The most dramatic demise of the boom projects in Rockbridge was probably at Glasgow. The same evening of the gala opening of the fabulous hotel—before the thousands of investors and guests from the North and from Europe had even finished their champagne—the creditors arrived, and the company, including the remarkable hotel, went into the hands of receivers. The company was broke. Panic in the town ensued. The company's stock and land values plummeted.

For fourteen years thereafter, efforts were made to rescue the Rockbridge Company from its creditors, but finally the huge hotel, long since deserted, was sold for a scant \$10,500. Parts of the building were used by nearby farmers to store hay until the 1950s when it was finally torn down.

In Goshen the hotel which was said to have "no superior in the United States" lasted some years after the bust, but after changing hands several times it was finally bought by a group of doctors who planned to open it as a hospital. Before this remodeling could be completed, it burned in the 1920s. The huge Victoria furnace, at one time the largest in the state, also closed, and only the ruins of its twin towers can be seen today in an overgrown field near Goshen.

The Buena Vista Hotel was the only one of the four outstanding

structures to survive. After it was completed in 1891, it was sold by the development company to “foreign investors” who held it through the next difficult years. Finally, it was sold for a fraction of its cost. Ultimately, it was bought by Southern Seminary and today it is known as the college’s Main Building. The purchase by Southern Seminary was fortunate, because this unusual building has been carefully preserved and maintained by the college, and the credit here goes to the Durhams and the Robeys who were able to see the real importance of this building long before the rest of us.

The local tradition that Stanford White built this building has fascinated me from the start. The *Buena Vista Advocate* files in the Southern Seminary Library spell out beyond the shadow of a doubt that S. W. Foulks of Pennsylvania was the architect. I soon discovered that the now destroyed Goshen Hotel and the unusual old bandstand above Rockbridge Alum Springs were also attributed locally to White and that other boom hotels down the Valley—including the one at Waynesboro, now Fairfax Hall—were labeled from time to time as Stanford White designs.

Several years ago I began a correspondence with every source I could think of—the AIA Library in Washington, the McKim, Mead and White descendant firm, Walter O. Cain in New York, the Avery Architecture Library at Columbia University, The University of Virginia, and on and on to try to solve the mystery of the White attribution. In each case I came to a dead end. Finally, I received a helpful letter from the curator of the New York Historical Society where the principal Stanford White collection is housed. Mr. Wilson Duprey wrote:

I have found nothing in our files relating to any of the buildings [you wrote about]. . . . I know there have been enough claims on White as architect right here in New York to make one wonder about his real influence. . . . I really think he could have well done some things on the side but just did not sign his name, or ask credit for his contribution. Like an interviewer saying something, then saying Don’t print that! I know that he and his firm have sometimes been consultant architects, but the job was done by another architect firm. They simply picked up a consultant fee, and one wonders just what they did contribute.

Those who study local history learn early to have proper respect for local traditions. Invariably there is some thread of truth or some reason for the story in the first place. Perhaps one of these days some member of the Rockbridge Historical Society will turn up a letter in some Buena Vista garret that will read:

Dear Mr. Foulks:

Regarding your inquiry about suggestions I might have for a new hotel in Buena Vista, Virginia, why don’t you design them a great romantic pile of

turrets and towers, porches and arches, stone and brick, shingles and clapboard. I'd shoot for nothing less than the finest hotel in all of the South. And if the Boom collapses, I wouldn't worry about it, the hotel would always make an excellent building to house a girls' junior college.

All the best:

Stanford White

P. S. Don't tell anybody it was really my idea. ☆

*William McCutchan Morrison:
Missionary to the Congo*

Sterling M. Heflin

WILLIAM McCUTCHAN MORRISON came from a long line of preachers and teachers. His paternal ancestor, Samuel Morrison, moved early in the eighteenth century from Scotland to Londonderry, Ireland because of his religious beliefs. There were three sons in the family, Robert, William, and Samuel, Jr.; all three immigrated to America and settled in Philadelphia about the year 1750.

Robert, the great-grandfather of William McCutchan Morrison, was a school teacher and pursued his profession in Philadelphia for a number of years. He married Susan Murek, who was reared in Germany and educated at the University of Heidelberg. Her ancestors were teachers, and there were five Presbyterian preachers in her immediate family. Shortly after their marriage the Morrisons moved to Staunton, Virginia, and then later to Lexington where they settled on a farm.

Morrison's youngest son, Robert, Jr., was noted for his piety and became an elder in the Monmouth Presbyterian Church. He was the father of three sons, Luther, Ruffner and Culton. The oldest son,

Colonel Sterling Murray Heflin, until his retirement, was professor of physics and head of the physics department at the Virginia Military Institute. Colonel Heflin stood but a few feet from the Morrison pew in the New Monmouth Church when he addressed the Society's July 24, 1972, meeting.

Luther, inherited the farm near Lexington, and he too became an elder in the Monmouth Church. Luther married Mary Agnes McCutchan of Bath County, Virginia, who also came from a religious family and was a woman of sterling character and sound judgment. They had eight children; their first, William McCutchan Morrison, was born on November 10, 1867.

William was consecrated to the gospel ministry from his birth by his parents, and all of his early training was directed with this end in mind. He grew up in the quiet retreat of his father's farm, learning to use his hands and perform the various chores pertaining to country life. He received his early education in the home and in the common schools in the community. He took part in the debating club and the singing class in the country school, and learned something of the art of public speaking and how to 'raise a tune.'

There is one instance in his early life that Dr. Morrison liked to tell. When a small boy he was one day watching an old black man cutting wood at his father's place. Little Morrison began to amuse himself by throwing chips at the old man's head. He was rebuked again and again in no uncertain terms. The black man's impatience merely added to William's enjoyment of the situation and the bombardment was continued with zeal. But the old fellow's patience was finally exhausted, with the result that the small boy was turned over his knee and given a sound spanking. William was shocked and humiliated and ran to tell his mother. But she had been sitting by the window and witnessed the entire performance, with the result that William was given a strong reprimand and the promise of a more severe punishment if he should be so thoughtless again. "And thus," Dr. Morrison would add with a merry laugh, "Africa made quite a lasting impression on me the first time we came into personal contact."¹

At the age of sixteen he was admitted to Washington and Lee University, and he walked the three miles from his home on Whistle Creek to college and back each day. This kept him out of many college activities, but he always returned on Saturday night to attend the meetings of the Washington Literary Society of which he was a member. During his second year he won the orator's medal in the inter-society contest.

Even though his parents had consecrated him to the gospel ministry, young Morrison had a will of his own. He chose law as his profession and looked forward to this throughout his university career. This could have been the reason he devoted himself to training in public speaking in

¹T. C. Vinson, *William McCutchan Morrison: Twenty Years in Central Africa* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1921), pp. 10-11.

the literary society.

He did not unite with the church until his university days were nearly over. He was about nineteen when his father died, and this death seems to have been the turning point in William's career. When his father was on his death-bed, someone asked him what he was going to do about William, since he was not yet converted. The father replied with that unfaltering faith that had characterized his life, "I consecrated William to God and have never taken him back, and in God's own good time all will be well." It was soon after this that William made his public profession. He had been fighting the call to the ministry throughout his early life, for he said, "for me to preach is for me to be a missionary, and I don't want to be a missionary."²

Immediately after his graduation from Washington and Lee at the age of twenty, young Morrison, for financial reasons, began the life of a school teacher. He followed this profession for six years in Searcy, Arkansas. It seems that he had not yet given up the hope that he might resist the call to the ministry and save his conscience and pursue his chosen profession of law. But this was not to be. Becoming convinced that he was fighting against God, he surrendered and entered the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, where he distinguished himself as a faithful and conscientious student.

During his seminary course he faced the problem of the investment of his life. Just prior to his graduation he read an article in the *Missionary*, written by one of the missionaries at Luebo, Congo Free State, calling the attention of the Church to the needs and opportunities of that great field. This appeal went straight to his heart; he believed it to be a call from God. Immediately after his graduation from the seminary, Morrison applied to the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions and was appointed a missionary to Africa. He was licensed and ordained by the Presbytery of Arkansas, under whose auspices he had pursued his seminary training.

Morrison left his Lexington home on November 5, 1896, for Philadelphia, the port from which he was to sail on the first stage of his voyage to the Congo. We find this remarkably simple and earnest prayer in the opening words of his diary:

This day I leave home and mother, brothers and sisters, and many hallowed memories of home and native land and go far hence to the Gentiles in obedience to the command of my Master. 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.' This desire came to me through the peculiar dispensation of God's providence, about eighteen months ago. I have every reason to believe that it was in answer to the prayers of some little children in Louisville, Ky. As I enter upon this great and trying work my prayer is—O

²*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

God, I beseech thee to give me an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, making my own life an open gospel, an epistle known and read of all men. I pray for thy richest blessing to rest upon the people to whom I shall preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; open their darkened understandings, may Thy truth have free course and may many be brought into the fold of Christ through the gospel that I may be instrumental in preaching. O God, pour out Thy Spirit upon darkest Africa, and may the long night be broken and may the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness soon illuminate that benighted land. Bless the laborers in the field and richly reward their service for Thee.

Give me, O God, health of body, vigor of mind and above all purity of heart. Help me to bear the burdens, keep me ever humble, enable me to love all men, give unto me wisdom and discretion—Thou hast promised that those who ask Thee for wisdom Thou will give liberally—verify this promise unto me.

Keep me during the perils of the voyage, deliver me from dangers seen and unseen, and may I arrive at my destination sound in body and in every way fitted for the preaching of the Gospel. O Lord, help me to overcome the sins of my life³

The mission post to which Morrison was going had been established only a few years earlier. During the 1880's Reverend William Henry Sheppard of Waynesboro and Staunton, Virginia, a black Presbyterian minister, tried for some time to obtain authority and backing to go to Africa and set up a Presbyterian Mission, but he was informed that he must have a white minister to head up the work before the venture could be approved. In June, 1889, the Reverend Samuel Norville Lapsley of Anniston, Alabama, indicated his willingness to join Sheppard in this important effort. Although no choice of site had been made, church officials put the Belgian Congo high on the list because of its location and the expectation that no barriers would be placed in the way of the work there as a result of the efforts of Senator John Tyler Morgan of Alabama and Henry Sanford, the American Minister to Belgium. They had been instrumental in securing Washington's prompt recognition of King Leopold's administration of the Congo, as set forth in the Berlin Treaty of 1885, dealing with the expansion of European nations in Africa. Morgan and Sanford were willing to support the mission project because they thought it would be a real boon to their hopes of influencing many American Negroes to return to Africa.

Lapsley and Sheppard left for Liverpool on February 26, 1890. When they had completed their consultations with missionary leaders in England, they crossed the channel to confer with Sanford. The American minister arranged for Lapsley to be received by King Leopold II. The missionary was greatly impressed by the Catholic monarch whom he described as a good and great man. When the King addressed himself to the question of the mission site, he recommended the Kasai Basin. When

³*Ibid.*, pp. 14-15; Henry Boley, *Lexington In Old Virginia* (Richmond: Garret & Massie, 1936), p. 187.

Lapsley and Sheppard landed there in April, 1891, they selected the site for the American Presbyterian Congo Mission on the north bank of the Lulua River near Luebo. Two years later Sheppard returned to America and married Lucy Gantt, a Birmingham school teacher, and Mrs. Sheppard returned with her husband to Luebo in October, 1894.⁴

When Morrison reached Luebo on May 7, 1897, the mission had been in operation six years. It consisted of one station occupied by eight missionaries, three whites and five blacks, an organized church of forty-eight communicants, a Sunday School of fifty members, a day school with an average attendance of forty-six, and two outposts. Prior to his arrival the mission had secured the temporary right to open an outpost at Ibanche, forty miles north of Luebo, and it had been manned by the Reverend and Mrs. Sheppard and the Reverend Joshua Phipps. Shortly before Morrison reached the Congo, the Sheppards left for America on furlough, and Mr. Phipps returned to Luebo, so Morrison was assigned to this outpost.

The mission had not had a policy of working among tribes of a common language. Moreover, no one had done any systematic work on any particular language, and the only literature Morrison had at his disposal was a small dictionary of a few hundred words. As soon as the mission adopted a plan to direct its work toward the great Bakuba Kingdom, Morrison began an intensive study of that language. Within a few months he was able to preach in the Bakuba language, and was overjoyed when the people began to ask intelligent questions concerning his discourses. He organized classes for those who expressed interest in becoming Christians. Morrison taught the Bakubas the Gospel, and at the same time he studied their language and sought some insight into their characteristics and modes of thought. In beginning this study he found himself faced with almost insurmountable difficulties. In his diary he wrote:

I am almost oppressed with discouragement when I think of Bible translations. Three great monsters arise before me in the darkness; first of all, my work is with the very bottom of humanity, with an unbroken history of perhaps thousands of years of ignorance, superstition, and spiritual darkness; another difficulty is the fact that all customs, manners, pursuits and minds of the people are so different from the people described in the Bible history. These people can form no conception of these strange customs and circumstances. But the greatest obstacle of all, and the most discouraging, is the fact that after I have spent weary years in translation work, not one man can read a word of what I have written.

. . . In view of the difficulties before mentioned, I am thoroughly convinced that our first work should be in the school, then follow this up with

⁴Stanley Shaloff, *Reform in Leopold's Congo* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1970), pp. 15-24, 37.

catechisms for general religious instruction of all people whom it is possible to reach, then paraphrase the Scriptures, and last but not least, the Bible.⁵

Despite his problems and discouragements a strong bond of mutual friendship sprang up between Morrison and the Bakuba people. Consequently, it was a real disappointment to him when, after a few months' residence among them, he received notice from the Congo State that the station at Ibanche must be closed in fifteen days. Morrison appealed to the authorities to have the order rescinded, but to no avail. Dr. Samuel H. Chester, Executive Secretary of the Board of World Missions, wrote in the *Missionary*:

This refusal of the State to grant our American Mission what is being frequently granted Belgian and French Catholic Missions is a clear and open violation of the Constitution of the Free State and the Treaty of Berlin. This unjust and unconstitutional action on the part of the State authorities is felt in England as well as in this country. It looks as if the State authorities were determined to so cramp our prosperous little mission that we should be forced to abandon it.⁶

As time permitted Morrison applied his linguistic gifts to the study and reduction to writing of the Bakuba language, and preparation of a grammar and dictionary. Morrison described the manner in which he accomplished this great linguistic feat.

The key words to any language are the questions, "What is this?," and "What did you say?" Once these are gotten, the way opens up and the language begins to unlock. The phrases are best gotten by taking a seat in a group of people and pulling out a pocket knife, or some other article with which they are not familiar. Now listen with all ears, for someone in the crowd is almost certain to utter the mystic words. "What is that?" When it has been gotten, the names of all familiar objects can be obtained at once. By intense never-tiring listening the more common verbs will begin to come, then other parts of speech, together with phrases and sentences, the meaning of which is known, but the grammatical construction of which is still a mystery.

After a period of six years' effort, Morrison wrote:

It is unnecessary here to go into all of the intricacies of language study, it is a labor of many weary days, months, and years, and yet, this has been for me a work fraught with much pleasure. May I say that we did not give them a language, nor did we teach them ours, but we found their language highly developed, having well defined laws of grammar, rules of syntax and words with which to express all the ideas they have. The Bakuba language is much more regular in its construction and laws than is the English language. To such an extent is that true that though down through the ages they have had no written language, yet it is preserved in wonderful purity and even small children never make mistakes in grammar.

The result is that in writing the Bakuba language we use our own alphabet, with all words spelled phonetically, each letter having only one sound. This certainly gives us a tremendous advantage over the helpless confusion in our English spelling.

⁵Vinson, *William McCutchan Morrison*, pp. 30, 31.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 34.

TSHILUBA - ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

-A, prep., of. This is the general construction for expressing the English Possessive Case.

When followed by the infin. it expresses the idea of purpose and may be translated by to or for. This prepositional word has the construction of an adj. and takes the Secondary Prefixes.

Aba,* vt., to divide.

See Abanya.

Aba, vi., to click (gun).

Abakana, vi., to dread, be anxious, complain.

Abakasha, vt., (with Mesu or Mutshima as object), to be anxious, be fearful, gaze with fright.

Abanya, vt., to distribute or divide up or share among, apportion, part or separate among.

Abanyangana, vt., to distribute or divide into shares among each other.

Abanyina, vt., to distribute or part or apportion to, divide up or separate into shares for.

Abila,* vt., to divide up for.

See Abanyina.

Abo, poss. pro., their, theirs. This refers only to nouns of class I.

muan'abo ne, relative, match, mate, of same kind or sort or quality or character or species or variety, like or similar.

Abula,* vt., to seek, to hunt small game on a burnt plain.

Abula vt., to row across, to ferry.

Abuluka, vi., to separate (as crowd), part, divide, branch into different directions, diverge, radiate.

Abulula, vt., to separate.

Abulusha, vt., to separate, divide, part, apportion, cause to branch into two parts.

Adisha, vt., to spread out (as mats)

Afunya, vt., to tickle.

Aha, adv., here (on), yonder, there, hence, hither, thither, thence.

Ahu, adv., now, now then. Usually introduces a sentence.

Ahuka, vi., to turn aside, to step out of the path.

See Ehuka.

Ahula, vt., to pull off, strip, tear off, turn aside.

Aka, vt., to gather the leaves of the cassava or other plants, also peas; hence to harvest (peas), reap.

Akana, vi., to fit, to agree, match, correspond to, be adapted to, be suitable, be even, to suit, be proper.

Akana, vt., to go to meet, receive guests, welcome.

See Akidila.

Akanangana, v., to agree together, fit or match or conform to each other, correspond to, be enough or adequate or

The first page of Morrison's dictionary; it was originally included with his grammar published in 1906. Morrison used the term "Buluba-Lulua" to describe the language, but this was later changed to "Tshiluba." The dictionary and grammar was published for the use of missionaries and other Europeans rather than for native speakers.

Upon the publication of the grammar and dictionary in 1904, the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on Morrison by his alma mater, Washington and Lee University. The importance of Morrison's accomplishment may be seen in this statement from the mission, "Now that we have our grammar and dictionary and exercise book, and owing to the regularity of the spoken language, and the ease of reading the written language, we have had the case of missionaries who preached to over one thousand people in our Luebo tabernacle within eight months after their arrival on the field."⁷

⁷Ibid., pp. 60-63.

Morrison agreed that ideally missionaries ought not to become involved in political affairs. However, he refused to abide by such a ban when he observed situations in which fundamental human freedoms were being denied and inhumane acts were being regularly practiced. Morrison had seen the slave trade in action and the atrocities associated with it. He had witnessed the forced labor in the ivory and rubber business and the cruel and inhumane treatment of the natives, and he resolved to fight these practices with all his power. Since there were no white settlers in the Congo, and since the representatives of the rubber firms and King Leopold and his Congo Free State profited from the regime, it was left to the Protestant evangelists to denounce the conditions in the Colony. They were the only persons with first-hand knowledge of the situation who were bold enough and willing to act.

The full measure of Morrison's influence in the reform campaign was not felt until his first furlough. One writer states that it was Morrison on his return to the United States by way of Europe in 1903, who was the pioneer of missionary agitation in England. One of his British supporters states:

The gallant Virginian, William Morrison, turned up unexpectedly from the Congo with a tale of continued infamy, with particulars of brutal and odious deeds, with a heart aflame with passion. There was nothing of the fanatic about him; no heroics; no prayerful entreaties. He was merely a capable, honest, strong, fearless man, and he told his story with a moral force which thrilled all who heard it.

His mood when he arrived in London was testimony in part to his resentment at being openly and boldly told by the Secretary of State for the Congo in Brussels that henceforth no concession would be granted to the American Presbyterian Congo Mission. Subsequently, he sketched a verbal portrait of the wretched conditions in the Congo Free State for the benefit of the Aborigines Protection Society. When he was invited to deliver his talk at the Royal United Service Institute there were so many illustrious persons gathered to hear him that it was mistakenly reported in some Presbyterian journals that he had addressed a joint session of the Commons and the Lords.⁸

In America Morrison had to plead his case in very strong and emotional terms since the Spanish-American War had made the American people and the administration wary of colonial involvement. Moreover, there was the general lack of knowledge about Africa and what was going on in the Congo. In an effort to inform the people, Morrison wrote numerous articles in secular and religious journals, and addressed numerous church meetings and congregations, including the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church U.S. at its meeting in the Lex-

⁸Shaloff, *Reform in Leopold's Congo*, pp. 86-87.

ington [Virginia] Presbyterian Church in May, 1903. This body, "recognizing the crisis confronting the work in the Congo," appointed Morrison chairman of a committee of three charged with describing to Secretary of State John Hay the conditions of affairs in the Congo State.⁹ In addition Morrison enumerated the horrors he had witnessed in the Congo in a series of articles which appeared in such journals as the *Independent*, and the *American Monthly Review of Reviews*, as well as in the mission's own journal, the *Kasai Herald*, which Morrison edited.

As a result of these public accusations made to the governmental departments in England and the United States, as well as those made to professional, religious and scientific groups, Leopold and his advisors sought to show that the charges were untrue. A commission of inquiry was established and the members handpicked by Leopold. The commission visited the Congo Free State and much to Leopold's chagrin, documented the manner in which the inhabitants of Sankuru basin were exploited. The state, they asserted, did its part by levying a tax which had to be paid in *croisettes*. Since these could only be secured from Kasai Rubber Company agents in return for India rubber, the Congolese were obliged to toil for the company. To complete the cycle, the state promptly returned all the *croisettes* it had received to the Kasai Company. Although the firm was not authorized to collect imposts, it was able to manipulate the tax system to draft the workers it needed.¹⁰

The growing discontent of the Belgian people and the intensification of the Anglo-American pressure led the Belgian government to consider the possibility of assuming control of the Congo Free state. After much debate and haggling, the transfer was approved by the Belgian Chamber and Senate in the summer of 1908, and Brussels assumed full control of the Congo in November.

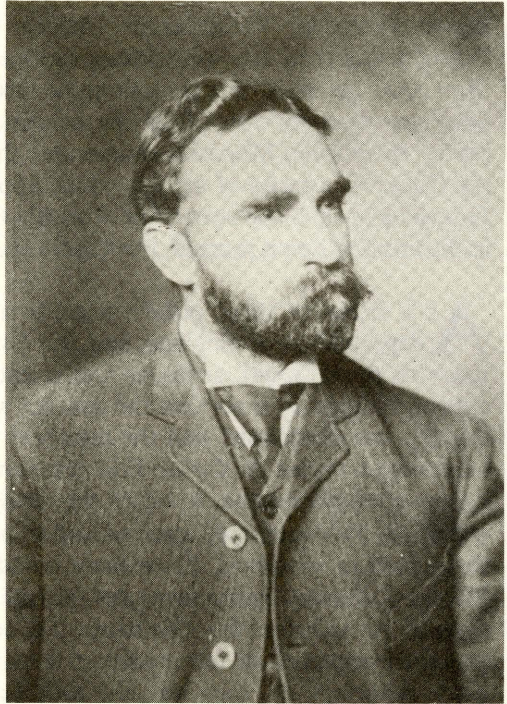
Presbyterians publicly welcomed the transfer from a piratical king to an honorable, responsible, enlightened, liberty-loving nation, but many members of the Presbyterian Congo Mission had religious reservations. The Calvinists were uncertain as to how they might fare under Belgian rule. For that reason Morrison urged Mr. Chester of the Mission Board "to remain alert to see to it that our religious rights are preserved, for you know that Belgium is one of the most bigoted Roman Catholic countries in Europe."¹¹

When the actual terms of the annexation became known, A.P.C.M. members were enraged. The Colonial Charter preserved all existing legislation, upheld the legality of the monopoly concessions, and retain-

⁹George West Diehl, "William McCutchan Morrison.

¹⁰Shaloff, *Reform in Leopold's Congo*, p. 109.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 102-03.



*William
McCutchan
Morrison*

ed the old officials to administer the objectionable laws. Both Washington and London indicated their displeasure by refusing to recognize the change in administration. The evangelists escalated their demands for reforms and redress and focused their fire on the operations of the Kasai Rubber Company, which had been leagued with Leopold in his exploitation of the province and which still held a monopoly in the rubber business.

Nothing aggravated the Presbyterians more than the Company treatment of the Kuba people who obstinately declined to collect rubber. The forty hour per month labor tax was interpreted in such a manner as to compel each village to satisfy a rubber quota or see its residents fined.

This article incensed the Kasai Company and the officers asked Morrison to print a retraction of Sheppard's accusation. Morrison responded that such an apology was out of the question unless Sheppard was proven wrong by an impartial international panel. Then came an exchange of charges, denials and counter-charges, all of which resulted in a visit by the British Consul to the Kasai District to investigate the situation. When his report was made to his government and the established facts made public, the Kasai Company's stock declined on the stock

market. This caused the board of directors to bring suit against Sheppard and Morrison, charging them with libel. In the absence of a retraction they demanded 30,000 francs (\$6,000) damages from Sheppard and 50,000 francs (\$10,000) from Morrison, for he had expanded on Sheppard's thesis in a series of letters to company and state officials which later found their way to print.

After several delays the trial was set for September 24, 1909, at Leopoldville, with the Belgian Socialist leader, Emile Vandervelde, defending the missionaries. The prosecution was chiefly interested in exploiting the trial to silence the consuls and evangelists. Vandervelde's major purpose was to get the court to condemn the policies and practices of the Kasai Company. In the end the case against Morrison was ruled out of court. It was further ruled that the Kasai Company was not justified in its proceedings against Dr. Sheppard and the charges against him were dismissed. Furthermore, the Kasai Company was condemned to pay the expenses and costs of the proceedings to the amount of forty-two francs.¹²

The defendants were high in their praise of their counsel, Mr. Vandervelde. They were pleased, but not overjoyed with the verdict, recognizing that it not threaten the end of the rubber system. It did, however, cause the Belgian government to strip the Kasai Company of its extra-legal monopoly and to order the restoration of competitive trade as part of its broader program of reform. Following these changes the pressure to gather rubber was relaxed, and the lot of the people noticeably improved. Most of the credit for improvement in the Kasai must go to the Presbyterian evangelists. The libel trial was a tempest of more than ordinary significance, and it induced the United States and England to take a more direct hand in the effort to root out the last vestiges of the 'Leopoldian System.'

It should be noted that Dr. Morrison did not devote all of his time to public speeches and Congo reforms while on his furlough in the United States. In the summer of 1905 he was sent to the Young People's Missionary Conference at Asheville, North Carolina, to deliver one of the principal addresses. Here he met Miss Bertha Stebbins, a delegate to the conference from the Presbyterian Church of Natchez, Mississippi. There was a mutual attraction between them from the very beginning of their acquaintance, and this attraction grew to the point that they were married in June 1906.

In July the couple left for Liverpool on their way to Luebo. Mrs. Morrison learned the language quickly and endeared herself to the

¹²Vinson, *William McCutchan Morrison*, pp. 79, 104.



*Bertha
Stebbins
Morrison*

natives. The women spoke of her in the most affectionate terms as 'Mama Mutoto.' After spending just four years in the Congo, she died on November 21, 1910. Some years later a mission site was named Mutoto in her honor.

After Mrs. Morrison's death the various missionaries at Luebo threw open their homes to Dr. Morrison and urged him to come and live with them. But out of consideration for a native custom he declined the invitations and continued to live in his own home. When anyone died in the Congo it was customary for the family to abandon the home through fear of evil spirits. In order that he might further be an example to the local people, he remained in his home at the sacrifice of his own personal feelings.

During the next few months he devoted most of his time to Biblical translations. His first efforts were the translation of the International Sunday School Lessons, covering a period of three years, and the paraphrasing of the sections between these lessons. This gave the natives a general running story of the historical part of the Bible. This work created a demand for more Scriptures, especially for use in the schools and in the training of young men for the ministry. At the unanimous request of his colleagues he undertook the paraphrasing of the New Testament Epistles. He had not finished this work when the time came for his departure on furlough.

It was in 1912, when six new missionaries arrived at Luebo, that the Mission instructed Dr. Morrison to take his furlough. Assembling his incomplete manuscripts, he departed for England, reaching London in September. Morrison took his native assistant, Matabisha, to assist him in completing the paraphrasing and translations. Matabisha spent several weeks in London with him until the translation work was completed, and then returned to Luebo with a party of missionaries. Morrison sailed for America where he placed the manuscripts in the hands of the American Tract Society for publication.

While at home Morrison spent his time in a more leisurely fashion than on the previous trip. He visited many churches where his thrilling messages were received with great interest. But during his furlough his heart was burdened with the sorrow of his mother's death. Shortly after this he returned to his beloved Congo.

Morrison was now recognized widely and his advice was sought by other denominations interested in evangelistic work in the Congo. Upon his advice the Evangelical churches in Belgium established a mission in a district east of the Presbyterian field, and the Mennonite Brethren set up their Congo Inland Mission with the cooperation of the Presbyterian group. Bishop Lambuth of the Southern Methodist Church visited Dr. Morrison. Later the bishop established a Methodist mission center at Wembo Niama with the aid of a native Presbyterian elder who had been a boyhood friend of the tribe chief at Wembo Niama. When Lambuth returned to his duties in the United States, he appointed Morrison to act as counsellor to the new Methodist mission.

It was a real testimony to Morrison's genius as a missionary leader to be twice elected president of the Conference of Protestant Missions in the Congo. This conference was composed of all Protestant missions working in the Congo, and it met every four years to make progress reports and formulate plans. The sessions lasted only a few days, and a Continuation Committee, with the president of the conference as chairman, was elected to carry out the plans formulated at the general meetings.

Dr. Morrison had been elected president in 1914, and the conference was invited to hold its next meeting at Luebo as guests of the Presbyterian Mission. This meeting took place in February, 1918 with Morrison presiding. He thanked the members for the high honor conferred upon him, then took as his text for the opening sermon, John 14:1., "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Afraid of what?" he began. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" His hearers knew that he had God-given courage, and that he was not afraid to undertake any task in His service. He completely won the confidence of the group and

later was unanimously chosen their president for the next four years. He was very busy during the days and nights of the conference, and he got only a few hours of sleep during the ten days it was in session. Nonetheless, he was on the beach on the morning of March 4 to bid the delegates farewell and to lead the parting prayer.

Immediately following the return from the beach, the Annual Meeting of the Presbyterian Mission was convened while the evangelists were assembled at Luebo. This meant an extra tax on Morrison's strength. He seemed tired and worn, but that condition was attributed to his loss of rest and sleep and his extra responsibilities. At noon he summoned Dr. Stixrud and told him of his condition, and after a thorough examination it was discovered that he had a virulent form of tropical dysentery and was ordered to bed immediately. Dr. Stixrud, assisted by Dr. King and two trained nurses, gave their untiring skill and services. But Morrison literally had worn himself out by twenty years of unremitting toil, and he had no reserve strength with which to fight such a disease. He was unconscious when the end came and died without a struggle at one o'clock in the morning, March 14, 1918. At noon his body was placed in the church shed and lay in state during the afternoon.

Thousands of natives passed by in reverent silence to take a parting look at their friend and helper. The funeral was attended by a vast throng, including local state officials in a body, together with all the traders and a representative of the Roman Catholic Mission. Judge Gorlia, the highest state official present, read a paper eulogizing Dr. Morrison and expressing the state's appreciation of the great work he had done in the uplifting of the native people. The funeral services were conducted by the Reverend A. C. McKinnon, assisted by the Reverend T. C. Vinson, and his body was laid to rest beside his beloved wife in the little cemetery in the mission compound.

Around the world tributes were paid to his greatness, many ranking him with Livingston and Carey. His fellow students at Washington and Lee University paid their tribute with a plaque in Lee Chapel. ☆

*Mrs. McCulloch's
Stories of Ole Lexington*

MRS. CHARLES ANDERSON McCULLOCH, known to her legion of friends as "Mrs. Ruth," was one of the principals behind the organization of the Rockbridge Historical Society in 1939. She was born in Lexington on July 20, 1876. With brief sojourns to New York, Richmond and Germany, until her marriage to Dr. Charles McCulloch shortly before World War I, she lived in a house on Letcher Avenue where the Virginia Military Institute's Moody Hall now stands. Of Scotch-Irish ancestry, she was descended from John Blair, the Presbyterian evangelist who had been sent into the Valley of Virginia in 1745-46; he organized congregations at New Providence and Timber Ridge, among other places.

Mrs. McCulloch lived most of her life in Rockbridge County and Lexington, collecting a wonderful store of local oral history. Some of this she contributed to the *Lexington Gazette* and the *Rockbridge County News*, as well as to meetings of the Historical Society.

Dr. Charles W. Turner, a much-published professor of history at Washington and Lee University, has long been interested in Rockbridge and Lexington history, and has made numerous studies of the region. In addition he has served as president as well as librarian of the Historical

Society and has edited two volumes of the Society's *Proceedings*. Mrs. McCulloch was ninety-two years old during the winter of 1970-71, and still endowed with a good memory, humor, and personal charm. Professor Turner was determined not to let this well of oral history remain untapped. Over a six week period she related some thirty-seven stories of important personalities and events of Lexington in her time.

In addition to describing "Life in Lexington in the 1880's" and "The Parade Ground in the 1880's," Mrs. McCulloch provided vignettes of such local personalities as Jeff Shields, Phil Nunn, Bertha Howell, Jenny and Nina Bacon, James Senseney, Julia Shanks, the Waddell sisters, John A. Graham, James Adair, General Francis Smith, William Currell, John Letcher, John Brooke, the Misses Lee, Charles Figgett and H. O. Dold.

On July 7, 1971, only a few months after her stories had been recorded, Mrs. McCulloch died. Professor Turner and several of his Washington and Lee students transcribed the interviews and prepared them for publication. In 1972 the McClure Press of Verona, Virginia, printed the stories in a book entitled *Mrs. McCulloch's Stories of Ole Lexington*. It was a best seller in the Lexington area. The tapes of the interviews are now in the Rockbridge Historical Society's library.

On April 24, 1972, the Society met at the Lexington Presbyterian Church. The members present received a preview of Professor Turner's book when he played some of the recorded interviews. ☆

Some Recollections of Colonel William Couper

John L. Couper

THERE ARE MANY in the audience who knew my father longer than I did, and many can tell me things about him that I do not know. However, I hope to share with you a few things not generally known about him; things he told me while we were traveling or just sitting about at leisure; or things I overheard during discussions when there were visitors in our home on the Parade Ground and later on White Street.

Briefly for the record, and for those who did not know him or remember, my father was born in Norfolk, Virginia on a farm, the family's summer home, in 1884. This farm was located where the Norfolk and Western Railroad's coal piers are now located on Tanner's Creek. He was educated in private classes in Norfolk and later attended and graduated from the Norfolk Academy. He entered the Virginia Military Institute as a third class 'Rat' in 1901 and graduated in 1904 with a certificate. VMI gave no degree then.

He went to Boston Tech, later Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in the old city building and graduated in 1906 with a

Dr. John L. Couper, anesthesiologist at Lexington's Stonewall Jackson Hospital, reviewed his father's career for the Society's meeting at Lejeune Hall at the Virginia Military Institute on October 22, 1973.

Bachelor of Science degree in engineering. While at MIT he took the same courses over that he had had at VMI and acted as a part-time instructor. At once after graduation he began work in New York in the tunnels being built by the Pennsylvania Railroad under the East River to Long Island, and later under the Hudson River to New Jersey. He was actively engaged in the construction, working under compressed air. Upon completion of these tunnels, he was made secretary of the railroad's board of engineers which constructed the old Pennsylvania Station at 32nd street on the West Side.

After the terminal was completed, he was placed in charge of the railroad's entire harbor fleet. This was a vast operation. As you know, most of New York City is on various islands and all goods arriving for delivery by train or ship must be floated in one direction or the other. The entire city was at the mercy of the railroads' floating division; therefore one of the fringe benefits of the job was to work as a strikebreaker. Labor then was in its early organizing days and used this weak link for bargaining. This meant direct dealing with strikers, which in those days was not dictated by federal regulation. As a result there are a few of you who may have noted that my father had one ear that was quite crooked and asymmetrical, the result of a "doctor" in a Hoboken saloon who sewed it back on after a strike-breaking encounter.

When World War I was declared my father volunteered the next day. He was at once made a major in the Construction Corps and sent to Columbia, South Carolina, with orders of direction and a check to pay for the building of an Army post, Camp Jackson. The site selected was a swamp, miles from a railroad and in every way remote. He had a mandate to get the job going, so he at once hired and commissioned a staff, mostly his classmates from VMI, Coxton Gordon and William Mahone. The latter took over a much delayed railroad spur being constructed by the Regular Army engineers which had built three miles in two weeks, and completed the last twelve miles in three days. He used his old force from the Seaboard Railroad. After a crash program of eight months there was a completed camp for 75,000 men. At once my father was sent to New York to organize a construction group to embark for Archangel in northern Russia to build a port. When this program was cancelled by Russia's collapse, he returned to Camp Jackson to double its capacity—the "army way" if ever it existed in the eyes of a civilian. And to his last day he was a civilian at heart.

Prior to World War I my father began his first association with the administration at VMI. General Nichols, the superintendent, requested that he prepare a pamphlet to be used for the purpose of raising \$10,000 from among the alumni and friends of the Institute to establish cavalry

and horse drawn artillery units at VMI. He accepted this on condition that his efforts remain anonymous. The project was quickly over-subscribed, but construction was delayed by the war and not completed until 1919. As a point of fact, the last government horse left VMI in June, 1948.

After the war he was not released until late 1920. During that period he was engaged in the liquidation of the eastern Army camps and depots. His immediate boss was Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was an Assistant Secretary of the Navy. My father's job also entailed long periods of testifying before Congressional investigation committees and the preparation of massive reports.

As soon as he was released by the Army, the VMI Alumni Association and the Board of Visitors requested him to prepare a plan of growth and development for the Institute, and to draw up plans for an endowment at VMI. This he did. He also prepared five informative fundraising booklets which began VMI's endorsement fund.

Upon completion of this task he was employed by the Texas Gulf Sulphur Corporation to prospect for sulphur on the Texas-Louisiana border. He was instrumental in the group effort discovering the huge sulphur domes which have been actively operated there ever since.

From Texas he returned to Norfolk where he engaged briefly in a private business enterprise, which he abandoned to come to VMI at the request of the Board of Visitors to serve as the business executive. He began this work in late 1924. This position entailed being the officer in charge of buildings and grounds, all business relations of the Institute, registrar, admissions officer, supervisor of new construction, budget director, and future planning officer. It is interesting to note that in his first ten years at VMI he was only paid by the state for nine months' work a year, for that was all the state recognized at the school. Teachers' salaries were for but nine months, too. In later years he surrendered some of these duties, but actually only a portion of them. I shall not dwell further on his well-known record at VMI.

My father's interest in history began early. His father and grandfather before him had been prolific letter writers and observers of the passing scene, particularly the early history of Norfolk. At the time of my father's death there was an extensive collection of the early histories of Norfolk in his home, and I placed all of these in the VMI library in his name.

My grandparents also had begun a detailed research of the genealogy of all persons related to the family. This was a study in depth, as anyone who married into or out of the family was researched to the beginning of the written record. My father took over this ongoing project

in the 1920s and continued it actively until his death. As a result there exists some fifty-odd volumes of records of all branches of the family, containing details from deed books, probate records, church records, court proceedings and newspaper articles. When I was young I often went on weekends—clerks' offices were open at court houses on Saturday then—to search some old records for some obscure relative usually quite distant. This was his idea of a great escape from the routines at VMI, so long as it did not interfere with an athletic contest. Nothing did that.

As a driving force in the old Southern Conference, he was an avid football and baseball fan. The other spectator sports he could take or leave. Since he was a long-time member of the VMI Athletic Council, his loyalty was strictly partisan. Only athletics could interfere with the search to complete the family genealogy records. Finally they were published in chart form in the Virginia Historical Society for all to see. I still get questioned about various bits of information that he dug up in the course of his research, and I refer them all to the archives of the State Historical Society where his work is on file and catalogued.

In 1924, on the occasion of his twentieth VMI reunion, he prepared a book of biographical sketches of each of his classmates. This was a financial disaster, but its preparation spurred him on to further investigation of VMI alumni activities.

Colonel Joseph Anderson, a member of the class of 1870 and a long-time president of the Alumni Association (1900-1919), was also VMI's historiographer. Colonel Anderson had been running a one-man operation to collect a biography of everyone who had ever matriculated at the Institute. He had amassed a huge amount of material at his home in Goochland County, where he had a little detached cottage that he used as an office. The records were stored in old letter boxes and cardboard containers of all sorts containing correspondence and answers to questions that he had sent out to all known alumni or their relatives. It was the only such collection that existed. In 1927 he published the first register of former cadets. When he died in 1930 I went to his home with my father in our car, followed by the VMI truck—the school's only truck—driven by Shiloh Carter, who had never crossed the Blue Ridge before. We loaded up all of these records, which were in great disarray, and came back to VMI and literally dumped them in the Superintendent's office.

Upon my father's arrival in 1924 he instituted a master filing system whereby each cadet had a file where everything concerning him was placed. Colonel Anderson's material was included, so that there is something on everyone who ever signed the matriculation book at VMI. This wealth

of information soon became known and there was a constant demand for it, particularly by various federal agencies running security checks on former cadets. In my father's personal records are many letters from all over thanking him and congratulating him on the completeness of these records, which do not stop on graduation but are ongoing and meaningful as these ex-cadets pursue their careers.

These records at the Institute were not collected when he arrived; as a matter of fact, all of the old general and special-order books were missing prior to 1910. When the old military store, treasurer's office and tailor shop were rebuilt about 1932, workmen broke into a sealed-up basement room that contained all the order books plus other material reaching back to the start of the Institute. I personally went into this musty old dark hole, where one got the feeling that one was in a tomb. The records survived, and are available today. My father went through them piece by piece at home in the evenings, extracting them, and from this came most of the background work on his later history.

Colonel Joseph R. Anderson had known and kept in touch with most of the cadets who fought in the battle of New Market. In 1933 my father, using Colonel Anderson's records and his personal research records, published a book on the New Market Corps. This contained a detailed story of the campaign plus a biography of each member.

Following this project he turned his attention to the men who started VMI in the years prior to 1839. Claude Crozet was the driving force. Crozet had been Chief of Engineers in Napoleon's European campaigns. After Waterloo he came to the United States and went to West Point where he became professor of engineering in 1816. Crozet was a doer; he set up the curriculum, supervised the building of the plant and really created what is now West Point. His restless energies then moved him to Virginia where he was employed as State Engineer. At once he set out to promote the state's developing turnpike, railroad and canal system. When the state decided that there should be a college in the western part of the state, Crozet was chosen to head the first Board of Visitors. How he started the school is told in my father's book, published in 1936.

In researching Colonel Crozet, the name General William H. Richardson was ever in the fore. Richardson was Secretary of the Commonwealth and a politician of considerable influence. He enlisted Crozet to start VMI and pushed the idea through the legislature to locate the college at the Lexington Arsenal and not at Washington College. A man so little known with such power fascinated my father, and he put together a descriptive biography of him. I found this in manuscript form in his papers; it has never been published, although he spoke several times to various groups about General Richardson.



Colonel Couper

In 1939 my father took the newly assembled files on former cadets and published, at the Board of Visitors' order, *The Register of Former Cadets*. This entailed a tremendous circularization of all known cadets, their relatives and friends, and briefly records a biography of each cadet who ever matriculated at the Institute. I remember proofreading the galleys of this book, which seemed endless, as my father was a stickler for accuracy. Anything that could not be proven was out!

The work that gave my father the most satisfaction and pleasure was his *One Hundred Years at VMI*. This was the final repository of all the

facts and figures he had assembled over his long connection with VMI. He used to write in brown composition books any little detail that he came across, such as when he extracted the old order books and letter files that we found hidden away. There was a tremendous amount of folklore that various alumni had written, but this was carefully sifted for facts—proven facts—not the figment of some nostalgic imagination. This stepped on some toes, but it set the record straight. The book was written on weekends and at night in his room with the door shut and the typewriter pounded two-finger style. It was not a noiseless process and the completion of this book was viewed with great relief by all concerned, as it had to be finished in time for the Centennial. His letters to me tell of his frantic search for some elusive fact and the onrush of time.

Following the publication of the VMI history, he spent the next five years researching and writing *The History of the Shenandoah Valley*. Actually, the two overlapped and were interrelated, but the inevitable brown composition books began to pile up with facts collected in his almost illegible handwriting. I believe he kept at least five interrelated research projects going at all times, and one always led to another. He never accepted a fact until it was proved at least two ways. The result was numerous footnotes. The family used to ride him unmercifully about this and tell him that we would not have a footnote engraved on his tombstone. This was my father's last formal publication, although he did many small articles and pamphlets.

My father had an unending interest in Stonewall Jackson. Through the years he amassed a huge volume of material about Jackson's local life and his war years after he left the Institute. My father's particular effort was to record what Jackson did each hour and every day after he left the Institute and joined the Confederate Army. This entailed prolonged searches through all the written records of the Confederate Army that are collected in Washington, personal interviews with survivors, any news accounts available, and any memoirs and diaries that came to hand. He worked more than twenty-five years on this collection which was never published. He gave it, with no strings attached, to Frank Van Diver, who wrote from it *The Mighty Stonewall*, published in 1957. My father maintained that it was the only factual book ever written about Jackson. Van Diver gave full credit to my father's research (a matter of tremendous satisfaction to him) along with that of Douglas Southall Freeman as the two authentic sources of his material.

Father's last years were his busiest, and this was after he retired from VMI in 1955. He then had time to do anything he wished, undisturbed by the bother of making a living. He was the perfect retired man; his multiple interests kept him busy. He never sat and did nothing.

He had a working and intellectually stimulating hobby in historical research that made him get out and see things and people. I personally cannot conceive of anyone so near dead as one who faces retirement without an occupying interest. The house on White Street was a place where people came to see him, ask questions or just chat about days gone by. He had his books at arm's length to back up anything he said. If he was not there, my mother was, and *she* is another story. As a historian she shaped history to conform to her own ideas of how it should have happened, and no doubt invented tales that sounded better than the actual events. They may not have been correct factually, but they were livelier and made better listening, all to my father's disgust.

One asks how he managed to do all of these things. He had a very small staff, but they all performed. They had to. His office enlarged constantly as the records grew, and as the business of running the Institute became more sophisticated. But from the room in the back of the right wing of the Superintendent's house, to the large office in the new section of the Barracks, he had but two secretaries. The first was Mrs. Beatrice Locke, and then for the last twenty-five years, Mrs. Johnny Mann, both very pretty, very efficient and very smart. He used to say that it was never necessary to dictate more than the idea of a letter, as they could write it themselves.

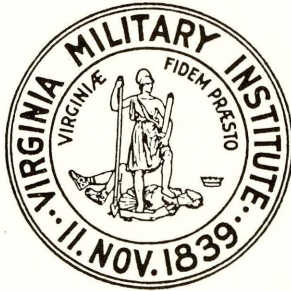
In his last few years the Civil War Centennial was the big event of his life. He was constantly engaged by Civil War buffs to conduct tour groups, history clubs and others over the sites of the various Virginia campaigns. This entailed lectures, visits to the sites, and bus travel from battlefield to battlefield. He thoroughly enjoyed this, as it was a big moving party for all concerned—a different place each night, dinner, and conversation. Often I would get a card stating that he was resting after a hard day's fight at Chancellorsville or some similar place.

In his last year he took on projects close to home, to map the entire Lexington Cemetery—something never done before—and to research the building of houses on White Street. The former he finished, due in part to the efforts of Frank Gilliam, who engaged several Robert E. Lee scholars at Washington and Lee University. The latter was interrupted by his death in February, 1964.

I was asked what had happened to my father's vast collection of notes, books, and pictures. For the record, I was given them all at my mother's death in 1968, and this is where they are located:

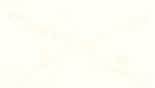
All family papers, beginning in 1801, correspondence, diaries, photo albums and genealogical research are now in the archives of the Virginia Historical Society. My father kept a daily journal, as did my mother, from the time he was ten years old. My father's library is at VMI. This contains his collection of history, all of which is extensively annotated, corrected and commented upon, sometimes rather harshly. All research papers, notes, etc., concerning VMI or the Valley area are at VMI. All of this work is available for anyone interested to use, except the diaries; they are too personal and at times too outspoken.

In summary, what was he like as a father? I can only quote from the resolution of the Board of Visitors presented at the time of his retirement in 1955: "He had the gift of his good humor, pleasant conversation, wise judgment and impartial justice." This, I think, sums him up. I can only add that he enjoyed life to the fullest and was a lot of fun to know. ☆



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John A. Graham

G. Francis Drake

JOHN A. GRAHAM was one of the most remarkably talented men I have ever had the privilege to know and claim as a friend. He was known to many members of the Rockbridge Historical Society for far longer than the brief span of seven years that were granted me. For this and other reasons, I would not have the temerity to attempt anything like a scholarly biographical sketch to provide an exhaustive description of his many accomplishments. The best I can hope to do is suggest to those who may not have known John something of the spirit of this gifted man—a genius, to my way of thinking—and to evoke a host of other memories in the minds and hearts of his friends. Indeed, part of the tribute to this unique man lies in the legend-like character of the stories that have circulated around Lexington concerning John. After all, legends grow up only around strong and extraordinary personalities; as long as they convey the *spirit* of the originator, a certain leniency in the meticulous accuracy of the details may be allowed.

Dr. G. Francis Drake, chairman of the Department of Romance Languages at Washington and Lee University, spoke of John Alexander Graham (1895-1947) to the Society at the Keydet-General Motel on January 25, 1971. Also on the program were tape recordings of Graham's musical compositions "Pavane on the Death of a Beautiful Friendship" and "Fight, Fight, Blue and White."

A number of years ago a Washington and Lee University student, Donald J. Lineback, made excellent use of a university grant to prepare a pamphlet entitled "The Life of John A. Graham" (Lexington, 1966). It is a well written account and one I shall call upon, along with my personal recollections and the help of a few of his friends, in an attempt to give a partial idea of what he was like, and to explain why twenty-three years after his death at the age of only fifty-two he is still remembered so vividly and affectionately by those who knew him.

John's mind, like his wit, was keen and quick. He had the attributes of the true scholar in that he never settled for anything short of complete accuracy. Whatever he undertook was done thoroughly, with proper documentation and impeccable form. Yet he could see the possibility of dullness, futility or even stupidity in certain kinds of scholarship, as may be illustrated by one of the first anecdotes I remember his telling me.

I had just arrived to teach at Washington and Lee from the graduate college at Princeton, where he had also formerly studied for a time. He knew that I would appreciate the amusing side of this story as I was acquainted with the man involved. This was a prominent professor of the department of Romance Languages, a product of the old German University positivistic school of scholarship that set infinite store in the exhaustive accumulation of facts. The seminar room in which we met our classes was testimony to his kind of research in that it was lined with huge heavy wooden files of literally tens of thousands of three-by-five cards.

John was planning a trip to Spain one summer, and in conjunction with his journey he proposed to undertake some research. The professor in question suggested that he make a search of the principal libraries of the country for any manuscript or material bearing on an old piece of Spanish literature. When John returned after a glorious trip from his personal point of view, he was, however, reluctant to admit to his teacher that he had met with defeat on the research. The professor's face lit up as he encouraged John zealously. "You have made a big step forward in that you now know for a fact that not in one single library in all of Spain is there any manuscript or document pertaining to this subject."

Perhaps this negative approach explains why, though he had the ability to make a great scholar, John preferred to channel his energies to areas involving more creativity. The story also brings to mind John's Moliere-like perception of the ridiculousness of human behavior when it ceases to act with reason. He was not condemning scholarship, but was simply amused by an exaggerated form of it, just as Moliere did not intend to destroy precosity itself, but to poke fun at its unnatural manifestations in the persons of *The Precious Damsels*.

John's splendid academic record of training in the Lexington public schools, at Washington and Lee, at Grenoble and subsequently in

graduate school at Johns Hopkins and Princeton, gave him good cause to be a fine teacher. Yet it takes more than that to produce the truly great professor that we know he was. Partly because he was genuinely fond of people, especially sharp young intellects; partly because his avid reading of a wide range of topics kept him in constant touch with the times; partly because he commanded the respect of his students through the demands he made on himself and consequently could expect of them; partly because he had so much more than merely his subject to impart to his students; and partly because he had the penetrating wit both in the concept itself and in the actual wording of this concept that added an extra zest to his classes—perhaps it is the unusual combination of *all* of these that make alumni, such as the one I once encountered in Williamsburg, remark that he was the only professor at Washington and Lee whose eight o'clock class he would never dream of missing, it was such a treat.

It would be interesting if John were alive today to see what he might do in response to the let-down in conventional dress and, worse still, to some degree in manners. Students in his classes soon learned to keep their feet on the floor and not on the chair in front of them after having them whacked off by his cane—as he also used to do every time he had occasion to pass through the reading room in McCormick Library and found feet propped up on tables. I dare say today's students would quickly respond, too. Furthermore, I am confident that if he had been confronted in the frequently irrational moments of the excitement on campus at Washington and Lee last May, he would have found words ready to reduce any vocal but unthinking young man to proper silence. He had a particular gift for “the perfect squelch.”

I often think, especially in recent years when there has been considerable controversy over the true origin of Thanksgiving Day, whether in Plymouth or Williamsburg, about the story of John and an anonymous but patronizing New Englander who kept harking back with insistent and boastful native pride to the Pilgrim Fathers. John took about all he could stand before turning to the person to say: “Sir, my ancestors had been legislating in the House of Burgesses for years before that wayfaring band of wanderers set out from England for Virginia and lost their way, only to land by mistake on an isolated rock in Massachusetts.”

John was also known to use this quick thinking mind of his to advantage, enabling him to come to the rescue of any loyal friend who seemed to be up for unjust criticism. At one time an anonymous staunch friend had been accused by a clever young man newly arrived in town of mispronouncing the name of an important city in Scotland. John knew



John Alexander Graham

that his friend had lived and studied there and was sure of how the name was pronounced, but for some unexplained reason it came out *Edinburg* instead of *Edinburgh*. The young man, obviously trying to pounce upon an error, made vocal his criticism to John, going on to remark that

one should always pronounce the name of foreign cities just as they did in their own country. John, without hesitation, asked him to pronounce P-A-R-I-S, to which the young man replied with a French "Paris;" then, B-E-R-L-I-N, to which the man answered with a German "Berlin;" next, M-A-D-R-I-D, to which he was supplied with a Spanish "Madrid;" and finally, M-U-N-I-C-H, at which he heard "Munich." Then John exclaimed victoriously: "Ah! I have you there! It's "München." His adversary was silenced.

I have the awful feeling that if John were here now, he would point out that I had left out an essential part of the story. Such is my fate. He would explain what it was and it would be perfectly obvious and, of course, absolutely right!

John's wit came to the fore on countless occasions. He always managed to say the thing each of us would have wished to say at the time. In other words, he was the reverse of the man the French depict as having *l'esprit d'escalier*, the staircase wit that allows you to come out with exactly what you ought to have said but didn't think of until you were coming down the staircase on your way home. There must be hundreds of stories to illustrate this special gift of his. I will suggest two.

At a dinner party a gentleman was accused of being rude in answering his wife (an awkward moment at best). John jumped to the occasion as he rared back to query that if a man couldn't be rude to his wife, to whom could he be?

On another occasion John again came through with flying colors. At a faculty meeting Washington and Lee University President Gaines was doing his utmost to be absolutely diplomatic in announcing a limited number of faculty appointments to positions of honor, having demonstrated unusual service as teachers, and of financial reward. He had hesitated and begun again and then started again so that no one would feel he was being overlooked, when John rose to his feet at the most tense point to remark that the situation reminded him of the critical moment in "Alice In Wonderland" when she and several of her animal friends had fallen into the water. At the suggestion of the Dodo it was decided that the best thing to get them dry would be a Caucus-race. He reminded the faculty that all the party were placed along the circular course here and there, that they began running when they liked and left off the same way. After half an hour or so they were dry again and the Dodo called out, "The race is over!" All crowded around to learn who had won. After considerable reflection the Dodo said, "Everybody has won, and *all* must have prizes." The tension was completely broken.

Many of us remember going to John's house to his daffodil and narcissus shows—at least to me the first of their kind. He was not just a fond

gardener, he was a horticulturist and a proud displayer of his handiwork. On the appointed day we would assemble to view the beautiful specimens carefully labeled and displayed in a coke bottle. This was a good excuse to get us together and we would tarry longer than the minimum time necessary to admire the exquisite blossoms. His garden in the back yard was relatively small but very attractive. His tulips, jonquils, iris, wysteria vines and trees and particularly his lilacs were handsome. He enjoyed them to the full—forking the ground, planning and planting the whole effort—and especially appreciated having the opportunity of sharing his efforts with others. It was apt that his last request was for some of the spring lilac blooms he had not yet seen.

In order not to leave a complete gap in the broad spectrum of activities and achievements of John's life, I must not fail to mention his work with the War College. I can remember only one or two references to this part of his life by him personally, but his address to "That Club" on September 24, 1945, will supply a glimpse into this fascinating assignment he engaged in, although treating it with the light touch. (I had the honor of being a charter member of "That Club" along with John and was present with him at its founding at the home of Dr. Robert S. Munger on February 24, 1944). The title of his address was: "Mildly Military Memories of a Refugee, Intelligence Officer, and Civil Affairs Administrator in World War I." At one point he said:

In November at the invitation of a certain Col. Fabyan at Geneva, Ill., I was sent by the War College with three other 2nd Lt. to study the methods used at what he called his cipher laboratory. The "Fabulous" Fabyan (our nickname for him), was a millionaire cotton-broker who had on his living-room table a large book entitled *What I Know About the Cotton Market*. When one opened the book it proved to contain one hundred blank pages. He was that kind of man. Among his many enthusiasms which I wish I could stop to describe was cryptography. He maintained a corps of experts who, for his amusement and for the benefit frequently of the Secret Service and the State Department, broke criminal and diplomatic codes and ciphers. For instance while I was there, as a sort of setting-up exercise each morning, we deciphered and wired to the State Department all of the Mexican diplomatic correspondence for the preceding 24 hours.

The rest of the paper I was privileged to hear read by him in 1945 is just as fascinating. I have a copy of it.

It was always a wonderful treat to be in John's presence at gatherings he so dearly loved to hold. He was always the perfect host because he genuinely loved his friends as they did him, and because he made them feel his enthusiastic welcome whenever they came to his house. It happened that a considerable number of us had birthdays in or around the middle of January, so that this season always called for a celebration. Even after a period of confinement when he no doubt had been ordered

not to exert himself, he prepared a birthday celebration, inviting the guests as follows:

Up, ye January offspring
 Somersault with a one-and-a-half spring;
 Crack your heels and slap your thighs;
 Snap your fingers and roll your eyes;
 Come for your and John A.'s birthday;
 Come for a celebrate-all-your-worth day.
 (Not a wine-and-liquor-dearth day);
 Come each C P I T W*
 Leave behind all frets that trouble you;
 Hie to Lee Street, One One Four,
 Same old joint you've seen before,
 Come the fifteenth day at five-ish,
 Find John kicking like a live fish,
 Tapped by Munger, bled by Leeches,
 Once more wearing hose and breeches;
 Come ye jokers, come ye japers,
 For the once, be war-escapers;
 Let's renew our ancient rites--
 Wassail, January-ites!

(*Cutest Person In The World)

On the other hand, if there was no special event or holiday, he was never stumped for an excuse. I remember being invited to an "un-birthday" party. The conversation was always sparkling and lively. He could regale his guests with a seemingly endless supply of stories, most of which centered around people and not a few of which centered around himself. His art as a raconteur was renowned. One story I particularly enjoyed was about him and his devoted aunt, Miss Lizzy Graham. It seems that John was at his aunt's house for tea with some guests. He was helping entertain the others with a story about a trip he had made to Mary Baldwin College to give a talk. He was about to say that when he came out of the building to go home, the ice and snow had made the walks on the steep hill impossible to walk over, so he was left with no alternative but to sit down on his At this point Miss Lizzy, being quite Victorian, hastily interrupted to ask John to give Miss X more tea. John obeyed and then resumed his story, only to be stopped a second time at the same juncture by his aunt who asked him to pass the sandwiches. Finally he got his opportunity when he made his third attempt and said: "I had no alternative but to sit down on my *briefcase* and slide down the hill."

Before giving you a few samples of some of John's humorous verse, I feel impelled to make one or two comments. First of all, I hope you will take them strictly in the spirit of the introductory words which John has chosen to set the mood. For those who do not know his poems, you certainly must not take the ideas seriously, or heaven forbid, morally, or

you will most surely lose the entire point, be utterly disgusted and far from amused. They must be accepted as a convention, not to be examined too closely for reasonableness, but for the unanticipated and, yes, malicious twist out of the usual context of the meaning of the words. It is this deliberate distortion, combined with a startling play on words that contrive to "set up" each poem. Secondly, the titles are always important to the humor of the poem itself and should be considered an integral part of each one. Nearly everything John wrote, including musical compositions, was prefaced by a title that involved some play on words, alliteration, or humorous admonition to the reader.

SADISTIC SONGS

For

ARRANT EGOISTS

By

John Alexander Graham

(Otherwise Known As)

POEMS OF IMPERTURBABILITY

Being a Volume of Vicious Verse

For

Unfeeling Fathers, Morbid Mothers

And

Inhuman Infants

Rhymes of Rugged Individualism

For

The Really Unregenerate

All Beautifully Brutal and Carefully Calculated to

Shock the Sensitive

Faze the Fastidious

Torture the Tender

And

Horrify the Humane

(A musical accompaniment arranged for ambulance sirens, muffled drums and a quartet of death-rattles may be had upon application to the publishers.)

CUISINE FRANCAISE

In the Café Royal kitchen

Gaston fell into the stew;

Paul and Alphonse went to help him,

Fell in and were boiled, too.

See the chef 'most lose his reasoning,

As he shouts, exceeding wroth,

“Moderate your zeal for seasoning;
Too many cooks will spoil the broth!”

A DASH OF SCOTCH

When swimming at the beach one day
Young Robert strayed too far from land,
We chased the hungry sharks away
And salvaged half an arm and hand.
How well his mother then behaved
Though pain and sorrow seethed beneath!
“To think,” she moaned, “we might have saved
The money spent on Bobbie’s teeth!”

A FLAT LIE BUT A TRUE *LA*

Stoskanini’s infant daughter
Paddled in a pool of water
When a passing auto caught her,
Threw her screaming madly in a ditch.
Charmed, her father, as she lay
Struck his tuning-fork to say:
“Hear her sound 440 A!
Why! The child has really perfect pitch!”

ITALIAN OFFSPRING

When our darling sister Lisa
Sprang from off the Tower of Pisa
Mother said, “Come dry your eyes.
Lisa’s end is no surprise;
Cheer up, let’s have no delusions,
She loved jumping to conclusions.”

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

In the Rockies Dr. Dreer
Heard one son say to another,
“Run tell Father that we fear
Buffaloes have trampled Mother!”
“Gracious Heavens! What a blow!”
Cries the scientist in woe;

“Just to think that one of *my* sons
Can’t tell buffaloes from bisons!”

A SLAY BELLE

William took Olga out sleighing one day.
Olga heard wolves on their track,
So she caught William when quite off his guard,
Shoved him outside to the pack.

“Brave little Olga!” the villagers cried,
“How did you keep them at bay?”
Olga blushed modestly, then she replied,
“Where there’s a Will, there’s a way.”

CHACUN A SON GOUT

(No accent on the “A”, if you please.)

When treading wine from grapes, they tell
How once in nineteen twenty-four
Pierre and Roger slipped and fell
And no one saw them any more.
And so in France it now occurs
When tipplers drink their evening toddy,
“Bring ’24,” cry connoisseurs,
“That vintage seems to have more *body!*”

Among John’s many artistic talents was his remarkable good judgment and taste. In the matter of the Washington and Lee plates by Wedgwood, we have an example in point. John wrote the account that I heard from him personally, but I was saved from faulty memory with exact reference by Dean Frank Gilliam who referred me to John’s account in the July, 1939, issue of the *Alumni Magazine*. The idea had been suggested to him by a friend and former graduate of Washington and Lee who had seen some plates made for Yale and postulated the equivalent Washington and Lee plate. Apparently the idea began to take on real impetus when the Virginia Military Institute determined to celebrate its centennial with a commemorative plate of real beauty.

After he talked to some alumni in an attempt to stir up interest in the project, John was appointed, along with the president of the Alumni, Mr. Lykes, and Cy Young, to a committee to meet with representatives of the Wedgwood Company to investigate the possibility. Subsequently,



John, Cy Young and Stuart Moore were put in charge of making the actual arrangements. They set to work and with what I assume was the acute direction of John's guiding voice, selected the series of eight center views to accompany the border, which though John gives credit for its submission from the Wedgwood company, I attribute largely to his own suggestion of design. Concerning the eight views chosen for the center of the plates, he has the best way of expressing it: "Some one is going to say: 'Why didn't they include a picture of Washington and Lee?' Well, we decided that there are things more appetizing than eating off other people's faces and that it wouldn't contribute to the success of a dinner party to have Old George peering out at you from a mound of mashed potatoes, or to see a wisp of spaghetti festooned over General Lee's moustache and beard."

John and his committee chose eight familiar campus scenes to portray in the center, all encircled with a carefully contrived border especially designed to depict the history, landscape, architecture and flora of the campus. He was particularly proud that every bit of decorative material

was directly inspired by the school's tradition in some way. If one examines the border beginning at the ninth hour position and continues clockwise around the rim, he observes that the eye is carefully guided by the campus dogwood flower entwined between the alternating square and round columns, serving as dividers for the vignettes, successively from the first of the Liberty Hall Ruins, to the predominant position of Washington college and thence around to the Lee Chapel, in historical sequence until the six o'clock medallion in which appears the coat-of-arms of the University set against the background so familiar to Lexingtonians. For those not acquainted with them, the eight scenes in the center are: Washington College, Lee Chapel, Lee-Jackson House, Campus Walk, Carnegie Library, Doremus Gymnasium, Tucker Hall and Washington College, 1857.

The plates were not only approved by the Wedgwood Company, but after they had been made ready for sale were so highly thought of that John was personally congratulated on having helped design what they considered the loveliest university plate in their manufacture. I cannot help but think that John's personal thoughtfulness, devotion to Washington and Lee, and artistic sensitivity helped in producing this handsome result. If today they cost the modest sum of \$1.50 that they did when they were anticipated to be ready for delivery in early 1940, I wonder how many orders might now be on hand!

John's contributions to the musical life of Lexington and Washington and Lee are among his finest. A number of occasions have been devoted to him: for example, the presentation in the Presbyterian Church by some of Virginia's finest musicians of the Fauré "Requiem" on a Saturday evening in the spring of 1948, following an earlier performance that same day in the Lee Chapel of some of John's compositions (his "Sonata in A Major" for violin and piano, "Sing With Mirth" and the "Pavane pour une belle amiti  d funte.") One decade later another memorial concert was given in his honor at duPont Hall and much appreciated by the audience who were privileged to hear a variety of his compositions performed. George Irvin, John's good friend, spoke briefly of John, and James Graham Leyburn played as he had at the first program, to mention but two of the participants in this program.

His great devotion to the musical activity of the university included service as director of the Glee Club, as well as composer of some of its songs and of "Fight, Fight, Blue and White." During the 1920's he wrote musical comedies entitled, "Oh, Professor!" (formerly called "Let's Dance"), "Mlle Gaby" and "The Lady in Green." On the other hand, he ardently supported the Mandolin Club and had a tremendous impact on the countless students he inspired in his classes (the first at the

home-talk. 'Yes, isn't it?' he said. 'It was our regimental marching tune at training camp. A fellow in my company composed it just for us.' 'The H..., you say,' I replied, 'well I hope he doesn't try to copyright it.'"

This reminder of home and the campus during the war had the effect of inspiring him to seek out a piano on which to create his own Washington and Lee song that has unfortunately been overlooked for too long, considering its zippy spirit and good musical qualities that some find even better than the Swing.

In October, 1938, John Graham wrote his "Pavane on the death of a beautiful friendship." At this period of his work as a composer he was much interested in French composers, and the Pavane is a kind of imitation of and amusing comment upon Ravel's "Pavane for a dead Princess." John followed Ravel in his French title: where Ravel had written a "Pavane pour une infante d'efunte," the Graham title is "Pavane pour une belle amitie d'efunte." With his usual wit he directs the pianist to play the piece with his tongue at least slightly in his cheek—"colla lingua un poco nella guancia." ☆

Photography as Social History

CERTAIN PHRASES—like “a picture is worth a thousand words”—have become clichés through overwork because of their essential truthfulness. In that case, Dr. William D. Hoyt’s display in Dupont Gallery at Washington and Lee University represented a large history book.

Dr. Hoyt, a historian, archivist, author, editor and lifelong photographer with degrees from Washington and Lee and Johns Hopkins, now lives in Rockport, Massachusetts, where he is a leader in local, county and state historical organizations. He returned to Lexington, the scene of his youth, for the Society’s October 24, 1974, meeting.

Dr. Hoyt’s purpose was to demonstrate that pictorial materials are important sources for an historical view of the past, especially in dealing with the social history of years gone by. He projected numerous slides made from old stereoptican views, old photographs, old postcards, old pamphlets and travel brochures, and illustrations in magazines of the late 19th century. Near the end he showed glimpses of the resort springs of Virginia, including the Rockbridge Alum, and he concluded with old

scenes in Lexington. He urged the collection and preservation of materials of this kind so that future generations might know about the way people lived in earlier times.

In the gallery adjoining the auditorium were displayed old black-and-white photographs taken by Dr. Hoyt in Lexington and Rockbridge County during the 1920s and 1930s. One series showed the old-time method of making sorghum molasses, and among those present were a dozen members of the Hostetter family which was featured in the pictures of sorghum making. ☆

*“By Much Slothfulness the Building Decayeth:”
Historic Preservation in Virginia¹*

I. Taylor Sanders

A STORY IS TOLD about the late, great Louis Armstrong. A lifelong friend who had served Satch as a combination flunkie and confidant passed away. Another pal asked Mr. Armstrong what had been wrong with him. The musician answered, “Man, when you are dead, everything is wrong.”

About a decade ago the historic preservation movement in Virginia reached its one-hundredth birthday. Looking back to those days, there was a good deal to be pessimistic about. It appeared to many observers that like Louis’ departed friend, “everything was wrong.” In this paper I will concentrate on those first one hundred years. I hope to show that despite lingering problems, the movement appears to be entering a period of new life.

As we consider the period after 1965 we shall see that for the first time there is cause for guarded optimism. The General Assembly, pro-

Dr. Irwin Taylor Sanders II, who joined the history faculty of Washington and Lee University in 1969, spoke to the Society on October 23, 1972, at Lejeune Hall, Virginia Military Institute.

¹Portions of this report have appeared in I. Taylor Sanders II and Tucker H. Hill, “The Changing Face of Historic Preservation in Virginia,” *The University of Virginia Newsletter*, 48(March 15, 1972), 25-28.

mpted perhaps by crucial Federal legislation, has afforded preservationists important safeguards. But most importantly there is a growing awareness by the public of the need for a balanced state-wide preservation program, and concurrently there has been a slow erosion of the public apathy which marked Virginia in the past.

It is one of the great ironies of the preservation movement that Virginia, with all her heroic associations with the American past, has been characterized by this apathy among the bulk of her citizens.² Traditionally, Virginians have displayed a basic indifference toward preserving the public records, documents and buildings of her great men. The great jurist St. George Tucker, one of Virginia's most farsighted and brilliant sons, noted that "Socrates himself would pass unnoticed and forgotten in Virginia."³ Time and time again the momentum for preservation had to come from outside the Commonwealth. Much of what is valuable had to be preserved by interested "outsiders." Small numbers of Virginians were willing to exert themselves, but the majority appeared unwilling or unable to shoulder the burden.

How can one explain this? Perhaps Virginia had such a plethora of old structures, many of them decaying targets of vandalism and neglect, that more Virginians either took them for granted or for eye-sores. Maybe the poverty and depravation of the Civil War or the economic dislocation caused by depressions explain this attitude. Individual families were unable to keep up the old home place and their strapped resources were siphoned off to more urgent channels. Yet times of prosperity were more damaging than times of depression.

Inflated property prices increased pressures on old structures. As prosperous suburbanites built their neo-Colonial palaces, the search for elegant old mantles, stair rails, columns and brick intensified. Building strippers had a field day. Churches and other organizations expanded. They needed more room for parking lots (that always starving monster which devours old buildings with such rapacious zeal). In these processes adjacent structures, often quite outstanding if unappreciated examples of earlier styles, were demolished.

Increased profits enabled businesses to renovate. A search for a "new look" led them to remodel, add new wings or tear down old ones. In the process the original facade was either lost or completely altered. In rural areas new subdivisions, golf courses and resort areas wreaked havoc with the old country homes. In all this the predominant mentality

²There was concern expressed in the first half of the nineteenth century for Virginia's already dwindling heritage in Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Virginia* (Charleston, S. C.: W. R. Babcock, 1849), pp. iii-iv.

³Quoted in Bernard Mayo, *Myths and Men: Patrick Henry, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson* (New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1963), p. 16.

was summed up by one local government official presiding over the destruction of the proud old Crawford House hotel. As the demolition crew began work he said, "Portsmouth can quit looking back and look forward to progress."⁴

It should quickly be noted that these problems are due in part to the preservationist himself. He has not tended to be a persuasive salesman of the cause. Regionalism, jealousy and differing tastes have weakened his program and he has rarely been willing to broaden his base of support to include more than a small elite. In our own community we have seen the Universities, which should treasure tradition, being landmarks in their own right, wantonly destroy important properties. If wars, fires, depression and progress have done their bit, it is also clear that problems have been caused by a flawed measure of appreciation.

Ironically the love of the Colonial tradition has hindered the development of a balanced preservation program in Virginia. We go to great lengths to save a colonial courthouse or an impressive manor on the James River. At the same time we allow a nineteenth century row house or iron front to be supplanted by a Williamsburg style service station or a flashy new bank building. We stand idle while a fine Victorian structure is torn down by the congregation of a neo-colonial church and replaced by a parking lot which is filled one day in seven.

The role of Federal, state and local government was often destructive and more often passive. Some local governing bodies passed historic zoning ordinances. But more often they stood behind urban renewal or highway projects which wrecked serviceable structures as well as blighted ones. This "way to progress" was particularly damaging in Norfolk, where virtually nothing remains of the late eighteenth century port city.⁵

A few communities were willing to allocate funds for architectural surveys or to administer historic properties. Yet only a handful enforced historic zoning, worked for preservation within urban renewal target areas or gave tax relief to owners of historic or architecturally important structures. Virginia's leaders long realized that our landmarks were valuable adjuncts to a lucrative tourist trade. Thousands of Virginians are employed by a travel industry in the state which nets millions of dollars each year.

⁴Norfolk, *Ledger-Star*, July 13, 1970.

⁵Since urban renewal projects are "based on local plans locally determined, the fault lies with local officials, "unaware of or indifferent to the fine old buildings in project areas. . ." See Carl Feirs, "Our Lost Inheritance," in *With Heritage So Rich: A Report of a Special Committee on Historic Preservation under the Auspices of the U. S. Conference of Mayors With a grant from the Ford Foundation* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 133 and pp. 130-134 for an excellent description of modern pressures exerted on old structures. This report became the basis for much important Federal legislation during the 1960s.

Prior to the mid-1960s, however, the Commonwealth refused to take an active preservation stance and did little to preserve Virginia's patrimony. By 1965 more than \$650,000 was being spent by state government to attract visitors, yet much smaller, even parsimonious amounts were parcelled to preserve the treasures that the visitors were coming to see.⁶ Demands for balanced state budgets and economy in government and a long policy of maintaining an atmosphere conducive to business investment traditionally outweighed any large scale governmental concern for the environment—social, physical, educational or cultural.⁷ Indeed, ten years ago many preservationists who had struggled so long and hard to stem the tide of cultural erosion, believed that the much vaunted love of history and tradition which supposedly characterized Virginia was largely a myth, at least when the question came down to the hard facts of economic priorities.

Historic preservation has run a mottled course in Virginia. Yet, in the past one hundred years important things have been accomplished. It is impossible to look at all but a fraction of the projects, but a number of important trends can be seen and some inkling can be gained of the wide variety of approaches that successful preservationists have used. In the beginning Americans (and in this Virginians were no different) concentrated on creating museums from the homes of great men in an attempt to preserve the values exemplified by her heroes. From there they moved to salvage aesthetically pleasing structures of marked architectural significance. Finally, beginning with Williamsburg during the 1920s, large areas began to be singled out in attempts to create living environments; slices of life from the past. The so-called "new preservation" movement grew from the Williamsburg experiment. Attempts are being made to preserve historic districts, groupings of buildings which visually describe how past generations of Virginians lived and worked. Added emphasis is being placed on maintaining these areas as living communities in a twentieth century world. Church Hill in Richmond and Green Springs in Louisa County are such districts. One is an architecturally united assemblage of middle class merchants' residences that may effectively be contrasted with modern suburban neighborhoods. The latter is a contiguous community of rural farm houses spanning one hundred years from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries.

⁶Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, *Report to the Virginia Outdoor Recreation Study Commission (April, 1965)*, pp. 1, 25. In 1972 the State Travel Service estimated that tourists spent some \$997 million in Virginia, representing an increase of \$525 million over 1962 levels. "Travel dollars accounted for 9.1 per cent of the state's total retail business." *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 1, 1973.

⁷See Allen W. Moger, *Virginia: Bourbonism to Byrd 1870-1925* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1968), especially his excellent concluding chapter "Retrospect and Legacy," pp. 345-370.

Visitors can trace the development of Virginia rural architecture and gain visual relief from the often harsh urban vistas of our own day.

Despite weaknesses which marked the preservation movement in Virginia, the Commonwealth was the focus of the first successful nationwide effort at preservation. Characteristically, the fight to save Mount Vernon was led by individuals from outside Virginia. During the 1850's George Washington's home was imperilled by plans to erect a hotel on its site. During a decade when sectional strife threatened to dismantle the nation, the home of Washington, who was venerated by the American people as no other founding father, became a catalyst in an interesting but futile attempt to patch up the national spirit.

Prime mover behind the project was Miss Ann Pamela Cunningham, a sprightly South Carolinian with a genius for organization. In one anonymous appeal she wrote:

Can you be still with closed souls and purses, while the world cries 'Shame upon America,' and suffer Mount Vernon, with all its sacred associations to become, as is spoken of and probable, the seat of manufacturers and manufactories? . . . Never! Forbid it shades of the dead.⁸

Even at that early date unbridled progress and entrepreneurial greed (real or imagined) were the bane of preservationists.

During the 1850s Miss Cunningham organized the Mount Vernon Ladies Association for the Union with a network of interested women in thirty states and a well-concerted public relations and fundraising campaign. It was to become the model for similar organizations in Virginia, Tennessee and other states.

Sadly (but typically) she was able to get little support from a lukewarm Virginia General Assembly, which gave the movement a charter but refused to appropriate funds. It was only her personal charm that overcame the objections of the estate's owner, John Washington, who appeared to be unwilling to part with the home for a fair price. In time the association with its grass-roots organization was able to raise the \$200,000 demanded by Washington.

Additional help came from an unexpected quarter. Edward Everett, a former U. S. Senator from Massachusetts, was among the foremost orators of his day. He appears to have seen in the Association an opportunity to salve the divided nation's wounds. Taking to the stump he delivered numerous speeches throughout the land on Washington's

⁸For Mount Vernon's story see the authoritative work by Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), pp. 41-62, 44 (quote).

character. By 1859 he had raised nearly \$70,000 for the ladies who were able to purchase the estate.

The Civil War years were difficult for the caretakers who managed the estate for the Association. But somehow the home escaped devastation. After the war Miss Cunningham continued to oversee the estate, manage the accounts and direct the accurate restoration of the home. She even managed to secure a \$7,000 grant from the Federal government.

Her work continued to be carried on by the Association after her death. The Association, which has proven to be a very healthy organization, secured measured drawings for the house, refurbished the interiors, reconstructed the outbuildings and filled adjacent swamps. For one hundred years the spirit of Miss Cunningham, who was the first effective figure in the national as well as in the Virginia preservation movement, was evident at Mount Vernon.

Her spirit was evident during the 1950s and 1960s when the ladies, aided by congressional allies such as Representatives Frances Bolton of Ohio and John Saylor of Pennsylvania, were able to protect the view from Mount Vernon which was threatened by proposed oil tanks and a sewage plant. By the late 1960s, thanks to large scale public pressure and a willingness of local landowners to cooperate, an extensive park was established across the river and the view was apparently secured. A bill currently before Congress would round out the park with the purchase of five hundred fifty more acres. Mount Vernon is a perfect example of how the preservation movement has shifted its focus from individual structures to the protection of the total environment of an important site from incompatible encroachments.⁹

If growing public support was crucial in saving Mount Vernon, there was little public pressure exerted to preserve Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, that spot loved by Jefferson above all others. If Washington was revered, Jefferson was the object of more mixed feelings. As Professor Bernard Mayo has pointed out, there was no Parson Weems to elevate Jefferson to Olympus. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries his influence was subdued, his ideas and philosophy were in eclipse in the Commonwealth. His enemies had slandered him as a dangerous radical, a cowardly demagogue, a tyrant, an atheist, a skulking intriguer, a hypocrite and the spawner of a host of mulatto children. In some quarters the Declaration of Independence was regarded as a subversive document. Mayo noted that for a century following July 4, 1826, when the heavily indebted Jefferson died, his home was "neglected" and his tombstone was "mutilated."¹⁰

⁹William H. Whyte, *The Last Landscape* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1968), pp. 97-98.

¹⁰Mayo, *Myths and Men*, pp. 63-66, 74 (quote).

If we can thank a South Carolinian and a native of Massachusetts for the present state of Mount Vernon, we can give credit to people from New York that Monticello is not rubble. From 1836 to 1923 the estate was in the hands of the Levy family of New York. Uriah Levy, who venerated Jefferson's memory, had purchased the home as a summer residence and had assembled a collection of Jeffersonian memorabilia. When he died in 1862 he left Monticello to the "People of the United States."

Once again the Civil War intervened. Since Levy had held a commission in the U. S. Navy, the Richmond government moved against the alien's home. It was confiscated, its slaves and trappings were sold, and apparently his collection of mementos were scattered to the wind. Meanwhile, in Washington, the Federal Congress voted to accept the legacy. The "People" never received title, however.

After the war the matter ended up in the courts. For fifteen years the estate decayed until it finally fell into the hands of Levy's nephew, appropriately named Jefferson Levy. It appears that he preserved the home as best he could for the next three decades. But squabbling continued between Levy, who believed the home should remain in private custodianship, and his detractors, who maintained that only government could maintain the home properly. This sad but characteristic conflict between private and public efforts is an example of a basic preservation woe that continues to hinder the preservation movement in Virginia.

It was only after World War I that the Monticello deadlock broke. During the "Patriotic '90s" Jefferson's contributions slowly began to be appreciated. By the 1920s the revision of his image was well underway. And Levy, who was in financial straits, was anxious to sell. Yet neither State nor Federal government was willing to take over responsibility at Monticello, and attempts at private preservation had failed due to a lack of funding. In 1921 Levy announced that the estate would be sold at public auction.

This threat was enough to rally support. In 1923 a group of prominent New Yorkers and some native Virginians organized the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation. Their goal was to unite the various groups interested in saving Monticello. They had a difficult time raising the \$500,000 demanded by Levy and the similar sum that would be used to endow the estate. A public subscription flopped and some of the New Yorkers, who had signed notes on the loan, were called upon to pay their share of the debt. They did this with grace.

It was only in 1940 that the final mortgage payment was made. The Association did, however, prove ingenious with its pilgrimages to Monticello, essay contests and Jefferson birthday celebrations (for example, the school children of New York collected some \$35,000 on one occa-

sion.)¹¹ The Association has been more than a preservation group. It has been very successful in educating the public to appreciate Jefferson's contributions as scholar, inventor, artist, musician, patriot and architect.

With the scholarly restoration of Monticello the movement took a new turn. Not only was the home to be revered as the seat of a patriot genius, but also it was to be viewed as an important example of American architecture. Monticello's preservation illustrates the two early thrusts of the preservation movement: the creation of museums in the homes of famous men, and the preservation of specific architectural gems that display for all time America's creative genius.

During the dismal days when there was little active support for preservation in the state, there was one small dedicated group which took positive action during those difficult days following the Civil War. The activities of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities are well known to this group. For more than eighty years it has been in the forefront, acquiring and preserving (as its charter notes) "the ancient, historic buildings, monuments and tombs of the Commonwealth."

The Association, the first large private preservation group to appear in the South after the Civil War, was founded in Williamsburg in 1889. Prime movers were two Tidewater ladies, Mrs. Cynthia Beverly Tucker Coleman and Miss Mary Jeffery Galt. Miss Galt summed up her despair at the crumbling state of our heritage: "...all of our Virginia landmarks are passing away: nothing is being done to save them; before long all will be gone."¹² The organization now has more than twenty branches throughout the State and numerous holdings acquired through gift or purchase.

Among the most significant early projects was the work of the Norfolk branch of APVA at Jamestown Island. The old church tower and foundations, the ancient cemetery and the western portion of the island were early acquisitions. Statewide membership joined forces to save the western part of the island which had been washing away for generations. With the aid of Federal funds the group constructed a sea wall and sponsored archaeological digs which uncovered a number of important sites.

The organization's holdings are numerous, ranging from the Debtor's Prison at Accomack and the Old Cape Henry Lighthouse on the coast, to the John Marshall House in Richmond; Scotchtown, Patrick Henry's home in Hanover to graveyards in Loudoun and Gloucester

¹¹For the full story see Hosmer, *Presence of the Past*, pp. 153-192.

¹²Quoted by J. Paul Hudson, "The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities: Pioneer in Saving Virginia's Past," manuscript in writer's possession, p. 3. See Hosmer, *Presence of the Past*, pp. 65-69, for a full account of the Association's varied activities.

Counties. It has been a vital partner in a number of projects sponsored with diverse groups, including garden clubs, the Virginia Historical Society and patriotic organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution. Members have long recognized, however, that the structure of the APVA, based on local chapters, has been a weakness as well as a strength. They have performed valuable services in many areas, but have had to be content to concentrate their limited resources on the restoration, upkeep and administration of their many holdings. Because of limitations in the group's constitution, local branches have been unable to purchase, restore and then sell local landmarks.

Several factors auger well for the future of the organization. In recent years it has assembled an excellent professional staff, and plans appear to be in the works that would restructure the constitution. Recent acquisitions, including the Wishart House in Virginia Beach, one of the oldest brick structures in America which was threatened by deterioration, indicates that the APVA is entering a period of renewed vigor.

One of the early projects of APVA had to do with Williamsburg. In 1896 local chapters purchased property (the old powder magazine and capitol site) and restored and marked others. It cooperated with the initial restoration of Bruton Parish Church, completed in 1907, an undertaking that was to be the seed that would grow into the expert recreation of a colonial capital.

The lynchpin of the project was a man of far-sighted vision, the Reverend W. A. R. Goodwin, who saw the possibility of taking the eighty-eight eighteenth and early nineteenth century structures in his dilapidated and stagnating community and restoring the entire colonial site. His singleminded enthusiasm did not wane for more than twenty years after he spearheaded the successful Bruton Parish restoration.

In 1926 the preservation movement received another crucial boost from outside. John D. Rockefeller visited Williamsburg and made a nostalgic walk down Duke of Gloucester Street with the clergyman. He caught the parson's infectious zeal. the following year he decided to help implement Goodwin's comprehensive plan. Working with the tycoon's financial backing, the rector purchased two hundred pieces of property, always carefully keeping secret the source of his funds in a successful effort to avoid real estate speculation. During the summer of 1928 the project was made public. A new era dawned in the fields of historic and architectural preservation.¹³

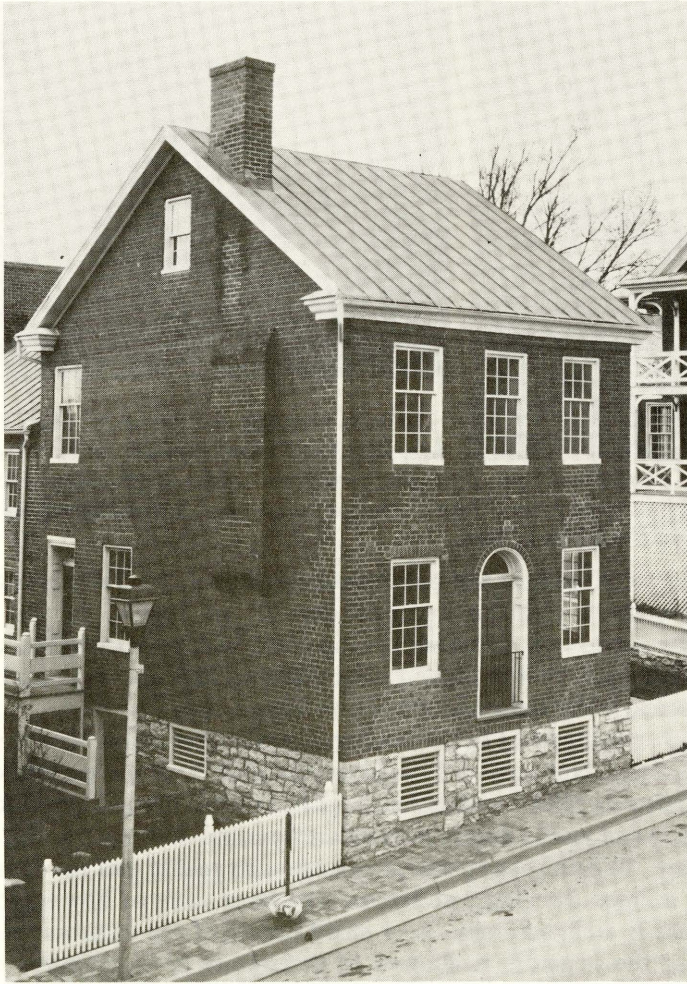
Immediate work was begun along the Duke of Gloucester Street, expanding from the College grounds to include the market and Capital

¹³*Ibid.* p. 298 for the "revolutionary" nature of the Williamsburg project.



The Jacob M. Ruff House (built c. 1829; 21 North Main Street) in the 1920s; it is one of the best examples of a Valley Federal town house in Lexington.

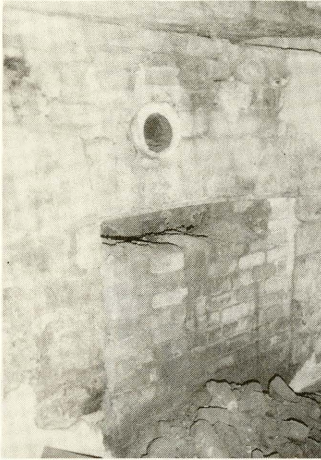
squares, the palace and court house greens. Buffer zones were established to provide areas for future restoration and rebuilding. Lost buildings were constructed with careful attention to accuracy and detail. Original building methods and materials were used whenever possible. The Williamsburg program has been marked by careful archaeological research, thorough archival investigation and a penetrating understand-



The Jacob M. Ruff House was purchased by the Historic Lexington Foundation in 1972 and the exterior restored. In 1974 it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. G. Otis Mead III to house the firm of Mead Associates, Realtors.

ing of the past. And the program continues. For example, current restoration projects include establishing a working plantation at Carter's Grove.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Williamsburg experience. Its legacy is seen in the many attempts, not all of them successful, throughout the country to duplicate its achievements. For the



After purchasing the Jacob M. Ruff House, Mr. and Mrs. Mead had an architect design an office complex to fit into the structure without adversely affecting the building's character. These photos show the restoration of the stone fireplace on the ground floor.

first time an entire area was preserved in an attempt to create a large living museum; a total environment (bereft, of course, of the more gruesome aspects of eighteenth century life such as cockfights, duels, public hangings, cholera, typhus, barnyard aromas and eighteenth century medical malpractice and sanitation techniques).

A growing interest in the scholarship of preservation also began at Williamsburg. Not only did its programs train a whole generation of preservation architects and archaeologists, but also it was a laboratory to develop techniques to insure accurate restoration and repairs. But most important, Williamsburg made preservationists realize that the conservation of isolated dwellings, no matter who lived there or how important the house is architecturally, is of small benefit if the environment surrounding the structure is allowed to deteriorate or is subjected to incompatible development.

Even if the Williamsburg and Monticello preservation efforts had not gotten off the ground during the 1920s, the decade would have been significant for conservation activities in Virginia. Patriotic and genealogical interests boomed. Prosperity made money available. Better roads opened up the state to tourism, and the relatively leisurely level of business and government expenditure saved old buildings from undue pressures. In some respects the decade was the golden age of privately sponsored preservation in the Commonwealth.

The list of important projects is too long to enumerate completely. But it would include the moving of Wilton to West End Richmond by the

National Society of Colonial Dames of Virginia. Its old site had been in an area ripe for industrial and commercial development. The mansion's elegant parlor paneling was being sought by a western museum to grace its exhibition hall. The new tenor of the times is indicated by the fact that less than a decade before the Metropolitan Museum had moved the paneled drawing room from Marmion, near Fredricksburg, without so much as a whimper from Virginia's citizenry.

Homes connected with the Lee family were restored. Arlington, which had been acquired with a vengeful spirit by the Federal government during the Civil War period, was restored during the late twenties with federal funds.¹⁴ In 1928 the Robert E. Lee Memorial Foundation was formed. Including many non-Virginians, the foundation began the restoration of Lee's birthplace, Stratford Hall. Fiske Kimball, a famous architectural scholar who had headed the restoration committee at Monticello, was in charge of the program, underscoring the high level of expertise that became available during that fruitful decade.

Of the other projects, Kenmore's restoration by the Kenmore Association was perhaps the most significant. Modeled on the Mount Vernon group, it began a well organized national fundraising effort that cleared the title of the Georgian mansion within three years (by 1925). The Fredricksburg home and its grounds, which were threatened by commercialization, were carefully restored.

A significant spin-off from Kenmore was Historic Garden Week. The Garden Club of Virginia adopted the Kenmore gardens as its first project. Over the next five decades the club undertook a wide variety of landscaping and restoration projects, including the Lee Chapel, Wilton, Monticello, Scotchtown, and the Adam Thoroughgood House in Norfolk. Each year Historic Garden Week raises funds for continuing restoration efforts. The tours focus attention on Virginia's horticultural and architectural heritage.

Then came the Depression and the Second World War. Individual structures were occasionally saved during those years and important strides were made in architectural scholarship. But in general the period was marked by a slow erosion of many of Virginia's fine country homes and increased dilapidation within our cities.

One of the few positive things to come out of the Depression was the Historic American Building Survey. Unemployed architects were given the task of making measured drawings and a photographic record of significant structures, many in Virginia. The New Deal program ended in

¹⁴*Ibid.* pp. 63-65 for Arlington; p. 64 Hosmer terms its "'preservation'...an act of revenge."

1941, but was reinstated in 1957. Among the homes recorded under the more recent Park Service program is Lexington's Alexander-Withrow House.

Emphasis was placed on endangered structures. Indeed, the program has been called a "death mask for American architecture." And in fact, more than half of the twelve thousand structures described in the survey have already been destroyed. Many Virginians were shocked to learn in the mid-1960s that twenty percent of the homes listed for historic Alexandria as standing during the 1930s had been bulldozed out of existence.¹⁵

Wars have been particularly damaging to Virginia architecture. The Second World War was no different as military installations expanded during the war years. For example, in 1941 nearly thirteen hundred Virginians were relocated to make room for Camp A. P. Hill in Caroline County. Contemporary newspaper accounts reported that "four communities, eight churches, and ten schools," along with two-hundred ninety-nine homes were destroyed.¹⁶ Other bases had a similar if not so dramatic impact.

Post-war prosperity created dual pressures on urban architecture. Urban renewal and expansion of business and industry took down many fine old structures. Stagnation in our core cities led to that most corrosive problem, destruction by neglect. The late 1940s and 1950s were years, however, when a variety of organizations were formed to insure that at least a portion of our pleasing old urban neighborhoods would be saved. A new emphasis was placed on revitalizing the middle class environments that illustrate Virginia's commercial growth during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The new professionalism in city planning was crucial in pointing local government toward historic district zoning. Several towns and cities fashioned these ordinances. When enforced, historic district zoning preserves important neighborhoods and provides a measure of protection for buildings threatened by structural alterations which would damage their architectural integrity. Alexandria, Williamsburg and Richmond forged ordinances which stand as early examples of the total environment approach. In 1966 the authoritative report of the Special Committee on Historic Preservation of the U. S. Conference of Mayors paid special tribute to the Richmonders who worked to conserve the

¹⁵Helen Duprey Bullock, "Death Mask or Living Image," *With Heritage So Rich*, pp. 139-146.

¹⁶Cited in *Notes on Virginia: A Publication of the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission*, Numbers 3-4 (Winter 1971-72), p. 9. Also see the interesting feature by Wilford Kale, "Village of Magruder was Swallowed by Camp Peary," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 17, 1972.

residential atmosphere around St. John's Church: "Church Hill, a slum in 1960 is one of the nation's prime examples of selective urban conservation, in which sound old structures have been restored to constructive utilization through the help of private funds."¹⁷

In 1954 the Supreme Court ruled that citizens have a right to beautiful "as well as healthy" cities "spacious as well as clean" and "well balanced as well as carefully patrolled" ones. The case (*Berman vs. Parker*) made architectural control a legitimate function of government and upheld the validity of historic zoning. Courts continue to be an important ally of preservationists.¹⁸

By 1965 we had reached the one-hundredth anniversary of historic preservation in the Commonwealth. Yet many individuals who had been active in the preservation field expressed a lack of optimism for the future. The fact that the burden had been left on the shoulders of private groups may reflect some native distrust which Virginians have always had for government intervention in their affairs. But lack of government help had seriously hindered the preservation movement. Preservationists echoed the pessimism of the Biblical poet (Ecclesiastes, 10:18): "By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of hands the house droppeth through."

The Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation of the Virginia Outdoor Recreation Study Commission assessed the situation as it stood in the mid-1960s. In April, 1965, the advisory group urged an increased role by the State and its locales:

New and complex problems brought about by urban expansion and decay, massive superhighway and dam construction programs, accelerated population growth and mobility, and industrial and commercial expansion threaten the preservation and integrity of our historic buildings and sites unless the Commonwealth itself takes steps to conserve and safeguard these dwindling resources which so far it has sought only to publicize.¹⁹

During the late 1960s the increased concern for the physical environment spilled over to the historic preservation field. Federal legislation was crucial. Since 1934 the federal government (the National Historic Sites Act) had recognized its preservation role. Active federal intervention took place at a number of Virginia sites including Jamestown,

¹⁷George Fabriskie, "Window to the Past," *With Heritage So Rich*, p. 62.

¹⁸Constance M. Greiff, ed. *Lost America* (Princeton: The Pyne Press, 1971), p. 12.

¹⁹*Report to the Virginia Outdoor Recreation Commission*, p. 25.

Yorktown, Arlington and other target areas. Under Lyndon Johnson a variety of measures were passed, particularly the Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The act provided that when Federal undertakings affect properties recorded on the National Register of Historic Places (a listing provided for in the act), the concerned agency must refer the matter to an advisory council on historic preservation. Although the council cannot stop projects, its recommendations are often heeded. Under the act Federal matching funds are available for surveys, plans and "brick and mortar" projects. Funds for open space preservation, historic preservation and surveys are also available from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Spurred on by the Federal example, the Virginia General Assembly acted on many of the recommendations of its own advisory committee on historic preservation. In 1966 the General Assembly created the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission and gave it the mandate to "recognize and protect all structures within the Commonwealth that are of significance." The same year the Virginia Open Space Act was promulgated to allow owners of historic or architecturally important properties to grant open space easements to the Commission.

For the first time the State had a central agency to coordinate Federal, State and local programs, to act as an "ombudsman" for preservation groups, to conduct archeological, architectural and historic surveys, to press for state-wide planning for preservation, to publicize the need for a well-balanced conservation program in the Commonwealth and to help local groups educate the public in an appreciation of once neglected styles. Since 1967 the small professional commission staff has visited every area of the Commonwealth, cataloging, describing and photographing landmarks, and helping preservationists at the grass-roots level.

The Commission is also responsible for the State Register, an impressive listing which represents "the richness and diversity of Virginia's cultural heritage."²⁰ With Indian sites dating back to 9,000 B.C. and buildings erected just prior to World War II, the register reaches far back into Virginia's pre-literate history and touches the threshold of the Atomic Age. Since 1967 well over eight thousand buildings have been surveyed. In the last several years more than two hundred projects have been investigated involving highway construction, utility lines and other programs, which were carefully scrutinized for their potential impact on sites. More than five hundred structures have been entered on the Virginia Register. Of these the vast majority have been selected for the National Register as well.

²⁰Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, *The Virginia Register* (1970), p. 4.

As the Commission oversees Federal grants to local preservation groups, it stresses the need to plan for preservation on a state-wide level. It has worked closely with a variety of state agencies, particularly the Division of State Planning and Community Affairs, the bureau most deeply involved with comprehensive planning at the State level. In 1972 an act of the General Assembly directed the division to study land-use problems and to develop criteria for future uses and environmental protection to insure "the planning of critical environmental areas and land use in the development of controls in such areas." The commission has taken an active role in this survey.

As we have seen, the preservation movement has had a long and checkered career in Virginia. In the past it has been difficult to convince political and business leaders that immediate economic demands can be balanced with the much broader and admittedly undefined right of future generations to enjoy an unspoiled vista or historic neighborhood. But recent recognition of the problems of air, water and noise pollution has been joined by an awakened concern for visual pollution and cultural disintegration, leading to significant legislation by State, local and Federal government. For the first time beleaguered local groups now have support from sympathetic government agencies. It is clear, however, that the burden will still be carried by private groups operating in their own communities.

The value of supportive legislation will have a hollow ring without increased grass-roots support from private citizens. It does appear, however, that more people are coming to realize the difficulty of placing a price tag on a pleasing example of the architect's craft. The new spirit is clearly evidenced in Lexington. The recently adopted historic zoning ordinance would have been impossible without the support of preservation-minded citizens. Of crucial importance has been the Historic Lexington Foundation. Since its establishment in 1966 its continued work in the field of selective urban preservation has been one of the brightest spots on the state-wide scene. Recent actions by the Rockbridge Historical Society in the restoration of its holdings is another example of the potential vigor of the local movement.

For those of us who have followed the ups and downs of preservation in Virginia, it is not surprising that when the APVA asked the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission to suggest which preservation group should be awarded the first Mary Mason Anderson Williams Award, the Commission immediately thought of Historic Lexington Foundation. The Foundation's continuing program in downtown Lexington serves as a model for other preservation groups in Virginia.

Despite gains in Lexington and other areas (Danville, for example, recently implemented a historic zoning ordinance) declining, but widespread apathy still characterizes the Commonwealth. Large chunks of Alexandria, even within the historic zone, continue to be demolished. Maplewood, one of Northern Virginia's few domestic monuments built shortly after the Civil War, was destroyed in 1970. The site of Conrad House, one of the finest late Georgian homes in the Valley, has been a parking lot for two years. The Wharf area in Staunton is in imminent danger. Richmond was the focus of a good deal of bad national publicity after preservationists lost the fight to keep a bank from pillaging historic iron fronts on East Main Street.

There have been victories. For example, there will be no prison in Louisa County's Green Springs District. The Green Springs fight underscores one fact. The future of the movement in Virginia rests in the hands of local preservationists. How the next century turns out will depend on their vigilance, their expertise and their tenacity. As Miss Cunningham pleaded so eloquently one hundred years ago, it will rest with their willingness to open their "souls and their purses." ☆

Another Perspective On Lexington Architecture

Pamela H. Simpson

THE "OTHER PERSPECTIVE" mentioned in the title of this paper, refers to that of the architectural historian. In order to explain that different viewpoint, it is first necessary to understand something of the evolution of the profession in the United States. Its history is tied to that of historic preservation.

Historic preservation really began in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the emergence of the revival styles. For example, the Gothic Revival style of the nineteenth century encouraged interest in the Gothic architecture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. At first it was an interest in understanding the older style in order to reproduce it, but scholarly research soon led to an interest in preserving and restoring the original Gothic monuments. The French cathedrals that symbolize to all of us the great Gothic period were all restored in the nineteenth century, many by Violet-le-Duc's reconstructions.

The earliest emergence of the preservation movement in Europe then, involved the architect. The architect whose interest in present

Pamela Hemenway Simpson, a specialist in American art and architecture, was an instructor in art history in the art department at Washington and Lee University when she spoke to the Society's July 22, 1974, meeting at Lejeune Hall, Virginia Military Institute.

revival styles led him to scholarly research on the past and to preservation and restoration.

In the United States, however, the problem was somewhat different. American architects used the work of their European counterparts, but this did not lead to an interest in American buildings. We did not have the centuries of past styles to choose from; instead, our "old" buildings dated from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and seemed hopelessly old-fashioned to modern revival architects. At best, our architecture was quaint; at worst, it was useless.

The first major effort at preservation in the United States took place in 1850 when the Mount Vernon Ladies Association was formed to manage and preserve Mount Vernon. They did this to preserve the home of Washington as a national historic shrine. The motives were, in short, patriotic, not aesthetic. The architecture was incidental to their purposes.

This continued to be the American attitude towards preservation until the turn of the century. For example, in 1877 a group organized to preserve the Old South Meeting House in Boston. At a meeting to plot action, James Russell Lowell was the keynote speaker. He talked of Old South's rich history, the important events that had happened there. As for the building itself, he said it was not a model of architecture aesthetically, but "the best our fathers could do." Again, the building was being preserved for its social history, not its aesthetic quality.

This attitude began to change, however, at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1884 Richard Grant White, writing about the same church, called attention to its significance as a "Yankee development out of the English Meeting House form." White was talking about the stylistic character of the building! This is a reversal of attitude that continues during the last years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. People were finally far enough away from the eighteenth century to appreciate its style.

The significance of the change for the profession of the architectural historian is that before this, when only social and patriotic considerations were important, all one needed was an historian. Now one had to consider the architecture as well.

The early twentieth century brought a proliferation of preservation efforts. The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, the prototype for many state organizations, was formed in 1910. They concerned themselves with preserving buildings like the Whipple House in Ipswich, Massachusetts, and the Eleazer Arnold House in Lincoln, Rhode Island— not because of any great historical

events that took place in either, but because they were unique examples of late seventeenth century architectural forms.

In the 1910s and 1920s we find the first emergence of the American architectural historian with a whole series of scholarly publications on early American buildings like the Whipple and Arnold Houses. Some of these books were written by men like Norman Isham, an art historian who had a special interest in architecture. Others were done by men like Sidney Fisk Kimball, who was trained as an architect, but became interested in architectural history. His book, *The Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic* (1922), was one of the earliest serious books on American building.

One of the most influential factors in the development of the architectural historians' profession was the project to restore Williamsburg, begun in 1927 at the instigation of Mr. W. A. R. Goodwin, and with the munificent support of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. During this eighteen year project countless architects and historians worked together to accurately recreate the early Georgian capitol. Especially during the Depression, when there was little employment elsewhere, Williamsburg represented the great training ground for architectural historians.

There were basically three types of architectural historian to emerge from the Williamsburg project. One was the architect who was interested in the technical aspects of the building, with its structure, techniques of construction, even its safeness. Some architects specialized in restoration and developed sophisticated laboratory techniques for determining such things as the original paint color or floor surface, etc.

Secondly, there was the historian who was interested in the social aspects of the building. Who lived there? What events took place there? How did it reflect the cultural period in which it was built? Finally there was the art historian whose training included the history of painting, sculpture and the decorative arts as well as architecture. The art historian was primarily concerned with the building's style. What were its characteristics? Where did it come from, where else does it appear?

We still have all three types of architectural historian. Few people fully combine all three. For example, the National Trust For Historic Preservation has to use teams to do architectural site work: the architect, the historian and the art historian. These three training fields point to the three main considerations that comprise a building's architectural history and the "different perspective" we originally mentioned, i. e., the social, physical and stylistic history of a building.

A few local examples will serve to illustrate this point. The Alexander-Withrow House is one of Lexington's most impressive buildings. The architectural historian would first consider its social history by tracing its deeds, finding out who owned it and when. The local tax and insurance records may also indicate when it was built and even how expensive it was. A search of local papers may reveal its changing uses and historical significance in the community.

Secondly, its physical history must be investigated. The architectural historian will make a site survey, thoroughly describing the building, making floor plans and elevation drawings. He will particularly note changes and alterations in the structure such as the bricked up doorway on the Washington Street facade. He will also seek other evidence of its original appearance such as old photographs, nineteenth century drawings of the town, insurance plats, even the reminiscences of older residents.

Finally, the stylistic history will be considered. What is the date of the building? Who built it? Where did the style come from? Here he will be concerned with the high quality brick work with its diamond patterns and the curious corner chimney arrangement. Where else can these features be seen? Where did they come from?

This three-sided investigation is what my students in Art 107 are currently concerned with and they have found Lexington an excellent place to work. The courthouse records are extraordinarily complete in spite of fires and Northern raids. Insurance records and newspaper files are also complete and readily available. Moreover, the quality of the architecture in this community is indeed impressive. In fact, one can trace nearly every major stylistic development from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries in fine examples in Lexington. The Greek Revival, for instance, can be seen in buildings like the Lexington Presbyterian Church, done by Thomas U. Walter, a nationally prominent Philadelphia architect in the 1840s. The Gothic Cottage style of the mid-nineteenth century can be seen in examples like the Presbyterian Manse or the Pendleton-Coles House. Great Italian villas are represented at Blandome and Silverwood.

The architectural historian is also interested in less grand buildings, things like the "Castle" that represent vernacular building traditions, or even buildings that until recently were considered ugly, like the great Victorian houses of the late nineteenth century such as the Paxton House across from the Post Office. The architectural historian looking at Lexington is also struck with the period unity of sections of the town—not



The Jordan House, demolished in 1940, stood between the Troubadour Theatre (right) and the Willson-Walker House (left) on Main Street. It was the only house still standing in Lexington which had been built on the Great Road before the town existed. On July 4, 1939, Mrs. Ruth McCulloch called about twenty people together to try to prevent the structure's demolition. Although this effort failed, from the attempt sprang the Rockbridge Historical Society.

only the historic area from Washington down Main street, but also the row of mansard roofs on Nelson between Main and Jefferson.

The point is that all of these buildings are worthy of consideration. Even the most humble farm house can reveal interesting cultural, historical and stylistic facts. Furthermore, there is no need for a professional to undertake all of this. Research can be carried out on many levels and amateurs can make significant contributions. It is important, moreover, that materials and information be gathered and preserved now while they are available and before it is too late.

Lexington has a unique and rich architectural heritage. It is filled with opportunities for both the amateur and the professional architectural historian. It is indeed a most exciting place to live and work! ☆



Virginia's Bicentennial Objectives

Lewis A. McMurrin, Jr.

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission, I appreciate this opportunity to meet with you and discuss plans for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of our nation's birth in the years 1774, when the First Continental Congress assembled, to 1783, when the Treaty of Paris finally granted our Independence.

All of us recognize this as a major milestone in America's history. It goes without saying that it should be observed with inspiring ceremonies, arranged both by the United States government, the Thirteen Original States, and by counties, towns and organizations such as the Rockbridge Historical Society, which treasure and preserve the legacy of our past.

Certainly no state should do a finer job in this respect than Virginia, which played so great a part in winning the Revolution and in supplying the foundations for this republic. For what other state could provide a Peyton Randolph to preside over the First Continental Congress, a

Lewis A. McMurrin, Jr., is a graduate of Washington and Lee University. When he spoke to the Society on July 23, 1973, at the Keydet-General Motel, he was a delegate to the Virginia State House of Delegates from Newport News and chairman of the Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission.

Thomas Jefferson to draft the Declaration of Independence, a George Washington to lead our troops to victory and become our first President, and a George Mason to propose and draft the Declaration of Rights?

Our plans in Virginia are an effort to develop a celebration which will be meaningful to people of all ages and educational levels. We plan also to appeal to the great number of travelers to Virginia, who make up such an important element in our economy.

1. We plan first to develop three fitting and inviting centers for the celebration of the Bicentennial in three different geographic sections of Virginia. The Western Virginia Center will be placed near Charlottesville at the entrance to Monticello, the Northern Virginia Center in the



Western Virginia Bicentennial Information Center

restored Lyceum at Alexandria, and the Yorktown Victory Center at Yorktown.

2. We plan a series of visits by heads of state and of commemorative events, some centering in our Bicentennial centers and others elsewhere in the state.

3. We plan an appropriate program of publications, including a collection of Virginia's documentary records of the Revolutionary Period, never before assembled; a series of well-researched booklets by historians on individuals and events of the Revolution in Virginia; and a continuation of the Colonial Records Project in Great Britain and in Europe, whereby documents relating to Colonial Virginia history are copied and preserved on microfilm in the Virginia State Library and other repositories in Virginia accessible to historians and other researchers. We are planning to develop an index of this series.

Besides these, we believe that our Virginia observance should mark the chief events of the Revolution in our bounds. These would include most of the following:

May 27, 1774: The House of Burgesses in Williamsburg denounced the Boston port's seizure by the British and instructed the Virginia Committee of Correspondence to write the other colonies and propose a Continental Congress.

March 23, 1775: Patrick Henry gave his great "Give Me Liberty" speech at St. John's Church in Richmond.

June 15, 1775: George Washington was elected Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces of the Thirteen Colonies.

August 16, 1775: The Virginia Convention, meeting in Williamsburg, named a Committee of Public Safety to defend Williamsburg against any attack which Governor Lord Dunmore might make.

December 9, 1775: The first Revolutionary engagement in Virginia was the Battle of Great Bridge, near Norfolk.

May 15, 1776: The Virginia Convention instructs delegates to the Continental Congress to propose a resolution "to declare the United Colonies free and independent states." (As you know, this was to lead shortly to the Declaration of Independence, which was adopted in Philadelphia on July 4).

June 12, 1776: Virginia adopts Mason's Bill of Rights.

June 29, 1776: The same convention in Williamsburg adopted the Virginia Constitution, largely the work of George Mason, and chose Patrick Henry as the first Governor of Independent Virginia, and he moved into the Governor's Palace which Lord Dunmore had vacated.

July 8-9, 1776: Governor Dunmore's British Fleet was repelled by Virginia forces in the Battle of Gwynn's Island, and the Royal Governor eventually returned to England.

July 4, 1778: General George Rogers Clark of Albemarle County captured Kaskaskia in the Northwest Territory, enabling Virginia to create Illinois County (with a county seat at the present Fincastle, Virginia), and to provide American control over the strategic Northwest Territory.

February 25, 1779: George Rogers Clark captured Vincennes from the British and secured the Northwest Territory for the Colonies.

April, 1780: The Capital of Virginia was moved from Williamsburg to Richmond to avoid possible bombardment by British ships.

August 30, 1781: The French Fleet under Admiral de Grasse sailed through the Virginia Capes to bottle up British land forces under Cornwallis at Yorktown.

September 5, 1781: de Grasse's fleet defeated the British fleet in the Battle of the Virginia Capes and prevented Cornwallis' escape from Yorktown.

October 19, 1781: Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown—the major British defeat in the Revolution.

We realize that there were many other Revolutionary events—like Jack Jouett's famous ride from the tavern at Cuckoo in Louisa County

to warn Governor Jefferson and the General Assembly at Monticello and Charlottesville that the British were coming. We also plan to commemorate the subsequent session of the General Assembly in Staunton and the election of Thomas Nelson as third Governor of Independent Virginia. But we count on the pride and interest of localities to celebrate such local events.

A very important consideration in any historical observance is accuracy. The Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission is anxious that whatever it does is factually correct. It is also anxious to extend many areas of our knowledge of Virginia's wartime history which remained confused or incomplete. For that reason the commission, as one of its first moves, appointed a committee of distinguished Virginia historians and bibliographers to undertake an extensive preliminary program of research and publication.

We named former State Archivist William J. van Schreeven as Director of Research and Publication, and he and a committee of distinguished historians have planned some twenty-five research and writing projects. Two publications have already appeared: A facsimile of the Farmer's and Monitor's Letters, as published by William Rind in Williamsburg in 1769, and an index to letters and papers of General Cornwallis, which have been microfilmed in England and abstracted for the Virginia Colonial Records Project—an ambitious effort begun during the Jamestown Festival to copy the most essential British records dealing with Virginia which can be found in the British Isles. We are also planning an eight volume documentary history, *The Road To Independence*, covering the period from the flight of Dunmore to the establishment of the Virginia Constitution under Patrick Henry. We have helped organize the Bicentennial Council of the Thirteen Original States.

These in brief are some of the possibilities we foresee for the Bicentennial. We know that anything of such proportions must be started well in advance to get all of Virginia's 4,700,000 people working together. We intend that the celebration will attract many people to our exhibits and events, culminating in the celebration in 1981 of the 200th Anniversary of The Battle of the Virginia Capes and the victory of American and French forces at Yorktown.

It is important that not only the Commonwealth of Virginia, but also its counties and towns, like Rockbridge and Lexington, should join in and make the Bicentennial of the American Revolution a success in terms of inspiration and public benefit. We will depend on groups such as this Historical Society for the grass-roots assistance which we need. With such help we know that the Bicentennial will bring lasting rewards to our nation and its people. ☆

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Activities of the Society

1970

The Society's four general meetings during the year featured the following speakers and topics:

JANUARY 26, ROBERT E. LEE HOTEL, LEXINGTON
D. E. Brady, Jr., "The Manufacture of Iron by William Weaver"

APRIL 27, R. E. LEE MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH, LEXINGTON
W. E. Trout, III, "The North River Navigation"

JULY 27, COLLIERSTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
M. W. Paxton, Jr., "A Judge's School"

OCTOBER 26, LEJEUNE HALL, VMI
R. Lyle, Jr., "Folk Architecture in Rockbridge County"

Volume VII of the Society's *Proceedings*, edited by Anne Brandon Heiner, sold very well during the year; slightly over half the total printing of 1000 were sold by the end of the year. The volume was ready for distribution by June.

At Washington and Lee University President Robert E. R. Huntley's invitation, the Society sent official representatives to the university's October 10 convocation commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the death of General Robert E. Lee.

The safety and preservation of the expanding collection of papers and records stored in the Society's headquarters in The Castle was of growing concern to librarian Charles W. Turner. Washington and Lee librarian Maurice D. Leach offered space in the university library for the files. In October, the Society's Board voted to move the files to the McCormick Library on temporary loan.

At the end of the year the Rockbridge Historical Society had 234 members and one life member.

1971

The Society's four general meetings during the year featured the following speakers and topics:

JANUARY 25, KEYDET-GENERAL MOTEL, LEXINGTON
G. F. Drake, "John A. Graham"

APRIL 19, LEXINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
J. H. Reeves, "Early Man in Rockbridge County"

JULY 26, MT. CARMEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
STEELES TAVERN
W. H. McClure, "The McCormick Family and Their Inventions"

OCTOBER 25, SOUTHERN SEMINARY JUNIOR COLLEGE
R. Lyle, Jr. "Buena Vista and its Boom, 1889-1892"

Four four-drawer file cabinets of the Society's historical document collection were moved to McCormick Library at Washington and Lee University. Society librarian Charles W. Turner, aided by a student, Daniel Shapiro, began the recataloging process.

In May the Society received a bequest from the estate of Walter A. Paxton, a long time member from Buena Vista. The gift was "for the purpose of procuring and preserving historical documents and for the erection of markers and memorials, at the discretion of the said Trustees, and on approval of the Society by vote at a regular meeting thereof."

The first use of Mr. Paxton's bequest occurred following the discovery of about 300 Michael Miley glass negatives in the attic of Miss Nettie Dunlap's house on Edmondson Avenue in Lexington. Most of the pictures dated from the 1880-1910 period, and included were 94 scenes of Lexington, V.M.I., and other sites. The Society paid the Library of Congress \$323.52 to produce 96 large prints from the negatives owned by Mrs. Robert I. Burns, Jr.

The Society appropriated \$150 to pay for transcribing Mrs. McCulloch's taped interviews with Dr. Turner. This transcription was completed by the end of the year.

At the end of the year the Rockbridge Historical Society had 264 members and one life member.

1972

The Society's four general meetings during the year featured the following speakers and topics:

JANUARY 31, VIRGINIA HOUSE RESTAURANT, LEXINGTON
J. G. Leyburn, "Nineteenth Century Presbyterians,
Personalities, Problems, Peculiarities"

APRIL 24, LEXINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
C. W. Turner, "Ruth Anderson McCulloch
and Stories of Lexington in Her Own Words"

JULY 24, NEW MONMOUTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
S. M. Heflin, "Dr. William McCutchan Morrison,
Missionary to the Congo"

OCTOBER 23, LEJEUNE HALL, V M I
I. T. Sanders II, "The First Century
of Historic Preservation in Virginia"

The University of Virginia photocopied the Society's files in the Washington and Lee University Library.

J. Morrison Hutcheson bequeathed the Society \$200 without restrictions.

At the end of the year the Rockbridge Historical Society had 269 members and one life member.

1973

The Society's four general meetings during the year featured the following speakers and topics:

JANUARY 22, EVANS DINING HALL, W & L
R. R. Fletcher, "Lexington Civil War Babies:
Three National Fraternities"

APRIL 23, SOUTHERN SEMINARY JUNIOR COLLEGE
T. T. Brady, "The Early Iron Industry in Rockbridge County"

JULY 23, KEYDET-GENERAL MOTEL, LEXINGTON
L. A. McMurrin, Jr., "Bicentennial Objectives"

OCTOBER 22, LEJEUNE HALL, V M I
J. L. Couper, "Reminiscences of My Father"

In January the Society's librarian, Dr. Turner, carried out an inventory of the contents of The Castle for insurance purposes. Also at this time plans were being formulated for moving the Society's headquarters from The Castle, a building given to the organization by Professor Hale Houston in 1947, to the Campbell House next door. The Society could then rent The Castle and sections of the Campbell House while maintaining the ground floor of the latter as a museum and office. The City of Lexington and Washington and Lee University had already coordinated their efforts to develop a park and visitors center parking lot behind the two houses off Varner Lane.

To raise money for the necessary repairs to the two houses, the Society offered life memberships for \$50 until December 1, after which they would be \$80. Fifty additional persons became life members before the end of the year. Three officers of the Society—President A. W. Moger, Treasurer W. O. Hay, Jr., and Chairman of the Property Committee R. R. Fletcher—further contributed by accepting a total of \$2000 in non-interest bearing demand notes. A total of \$12,177 was spent on the Campbell House by the end of the year.

By late October the work had progressed sufficiently for the actual move by the Society from The Castle to the Campbell House. Richard Fletcher, with the assistance of Society librarian Charles Turner and Ma-

for Edwin L. Dooley, Jr., the Public Information Officer and Director of the V M I Museum, managed the transition. The Jaycees of Lexington-Rockbridge provided invaluable assistance. Mr. Fletcher, in a letter to Jaycee President Calmet M. Sawyer, said:

Captain Tom Gray and six Jaycee stalwarts did the impossible Saturday morning [October 27], moving virtually all of the Rockbridge Historical Society's possessions from five rooms in The Castle to three rooms in the Campbell House without a single bit of damage, a cross word, or an unsolved problem.

Besides the membership drive and the office move, the Society made a third major innovation during the year. Richard Fletcher began the new quarterly newsletter, *News-Notes* in July.

At the end of the year the Rockbridge Historical Society had 265 members and 51 life members.

1974

JANUARY 28, KEYDET-GENERAL MOTEL, LEXINGTON

H. J. Darst, Jr., "Benjamin Darst, Sr., Architect-BUILDER of Lexington—His Family and Their Connections"

APRIL 22, LEJEUNE HALL, V M I

P. H. Simpson, "Another Perspective on Lexington Architecture"

JULY 29, NEW PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

R. K. Patteson, Jr., "New Providence Presbyterian Church, 1746-1856"

OCTOBER 24, DUPONT HALL, W & L

W. D. Hoyt, "Photography as Social History"

The special memorial fund for Mrs. Ruth Anderson McCulloch following her death in 1971 was spent for a cabinet for the Society's archives and suitably labeled.

The members were invited to preview the Society's new headquarters at a special open house on April 24 at the Campbell House.

The Society launched a series of short seminars conducted by Major Edwin L. Dooley, Jr., of V M I, on the essentials of professional museum inventorying and cataloging. This was in preparation for the development of a Rockbridge County Historical Society community museum portraying the area's development since the Borden grant in the 1730s.

The bronze tablet setting forth The Castle's history was moved from inside the house to the outside wall facing the street. In further recognition of the man whose bequest gave the Society its first headquarters building, the Board extended the building's official name to "Hale Houston's Castle."

The Society's third building, at 107 East Washington, was remodeled and part of it rented to the city for ten years for use as a Visitor Center. At the October board meeting the name "Sloan House" was adopted for the structure, called after its builder (1840), prominent merchant Alexander P. Sloan.

In order for the Society to qualify as a tax-free organization under Internal Revenue Service rulings, the following amendment to the constitution and by-laws was approved by the Board and passed at the general meeting in October:

If at any time or for any cause the Rockbridge Historical Society should be dissolved, its property or material assets shall be turned over to an organization in Lexington or Rockbridge County which performs a public service similar to that of the Rockbridge Historical Society founded in 1939.

At the end of the year the Rockbridge Historical Society had 310 members and 55 life members.

Principal Acquisitions, 1970-1974

In addition to numerous books and individual documents, the Society received the following:

1. The letters and diaries of Captain J. H. B. Jones, from the 1842-72 period. The Society purchased these, together with some books, for \$300 from Jones' daughter-in-law, Mrs. Henry B. Jones.
2. A coverlet used at the Battle of Chancellorsville by one of Jackson's dying soldiers. Donated by Dr. James M. Moser.
3. A collection of early 20th century documents from the Walkers Creek School District, donated by Mrs. W. W. Heffelfinger.
4. The papers of Dr. Walter LeConte Stevens, a professor of physics at Washington and Lee University, 1900-20. Donated by the Washington and Lee physics department.
5. A large wooden shingle maker given by Mr. and Mrs. Jesse H. Harper.
6. Twelve Michael Miley prints donated by Frank Wade.
7. Mrs. Rose Pendleton's diary of three days of Hunter's Raid, donated by Miss Ellenor Gadsden.
8. Three 19th century farm implements from Rockbridge County (corn sheller, wheat cradle, plow) given by Dr. Stuart McCorkle.
9. The letters of the late Miss Jenny Wheat, a Rockbridge County teacher.
10. A walnut table-desk from the Daughters of the American Revolution headquarters in Washington, given by Mrs. George D. Pinkley.
11. One hundred copies of the special centennial (1939) edition of the *Lexington Gazette* were donated by *The News-Gazette* for resale by the Society.
12. A hand-carved stone watering trough, possibly carved about 1792, and an elegant cast iron Victorian fountain were donated by Mrs. Burton Deaver.
13. Ninety-nine folders of material including business papers from his father and grandfather donated by Dr. Preston Moore, the papers of Myers Hardware, the Rockbridge Agricultural Society, Confederate veterans' papers, records of the drive to complete Lee Chapel, Washington and Lee athletic papers, and the papers of Captain Boude.
14. Photocopies of 61 letters of James B. Davidson (from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin McCormick Collection) donated by Dr. Charles W. Turner.

Financial Report

(December 31, 1974)

Receipts

Membership dues	\$ 1274.00
Rents	9129.80
Net from dinner meetings	23.08
For memorials	947.50
From donations	91.50
From books sold	119.00
Miscellaneous	2.40
Bank loan	<u>6000.00</u>
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$17587.28

Expenditures

Postage & Printing	582.89
Office supplies	229.08
Maintenance & Improvements	12636.56
Utilities	1057.40
Insurance	576.00
City tax	1012.50
Mead Associates	115.00
Miscellaneous	<u>35.50</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$16244.93

<i>Excess of receipts over expenditures</i>	\$1342.35
Cash as of January 1	<u>456.58</u>
CASH AS OF DECEMBER 31	\$1798.93

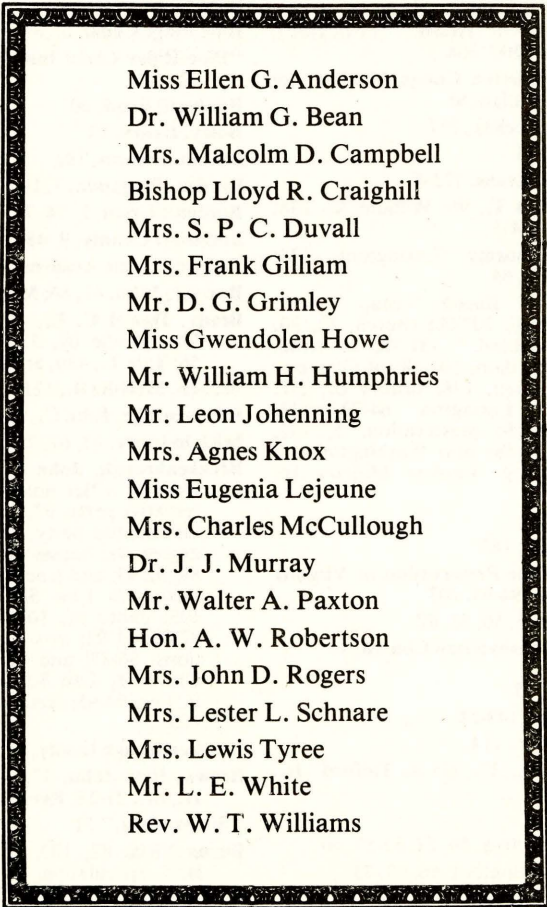
Assets

Cash as of December 31	\$ 1798.93
Publications for sale	1380.00
Real estate: The Castle	35000.00
Sloan House	35000.00
Campbell House	<u>70000.00</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	\$143178.93

Liabilities

Demand notes (non interest bearing)	\$ 2000.00
8% Note due December 17, 1977	6000.00
NET WORTH	<u>135178.93</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$143178.93

Necrology



Miss Ellen G. Anderson
Dr. William G. Bean
Mrs. Malcolm D. Campbell
Bishop Lloyd R. Craighill
Mrs. S. P. C. Duvall
Mrs. Frank Gilliam
Mr. D. G. Grimley
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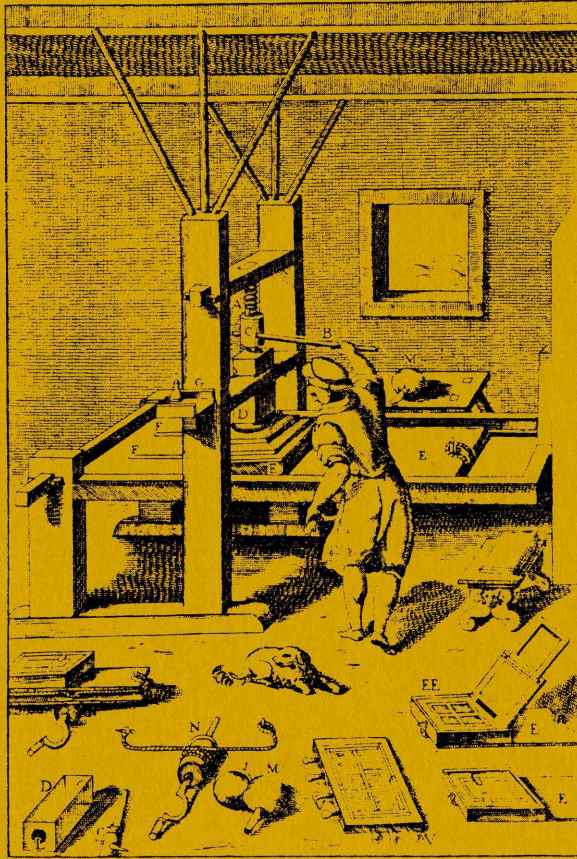
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Editor:

Larry I. Bland is editor of the Marshall Papers at the George C. Marshall Research Foundation in Lexington, Virginia. He received his Ph.D. in diplomatic history from the University of Wisconsin, and has taught American history in Wisconsin, North Carolina and Virginia.

Assistant Editor:

Joellen K. Bland is editing assistant for the Marshall Papers at the George C. Marshall Research Foundation in Lexington, Virginia. A graduate of Purdue University, she is also a freelance playwright with over twenty published dramatizations of classics.



Old Blue Hotel