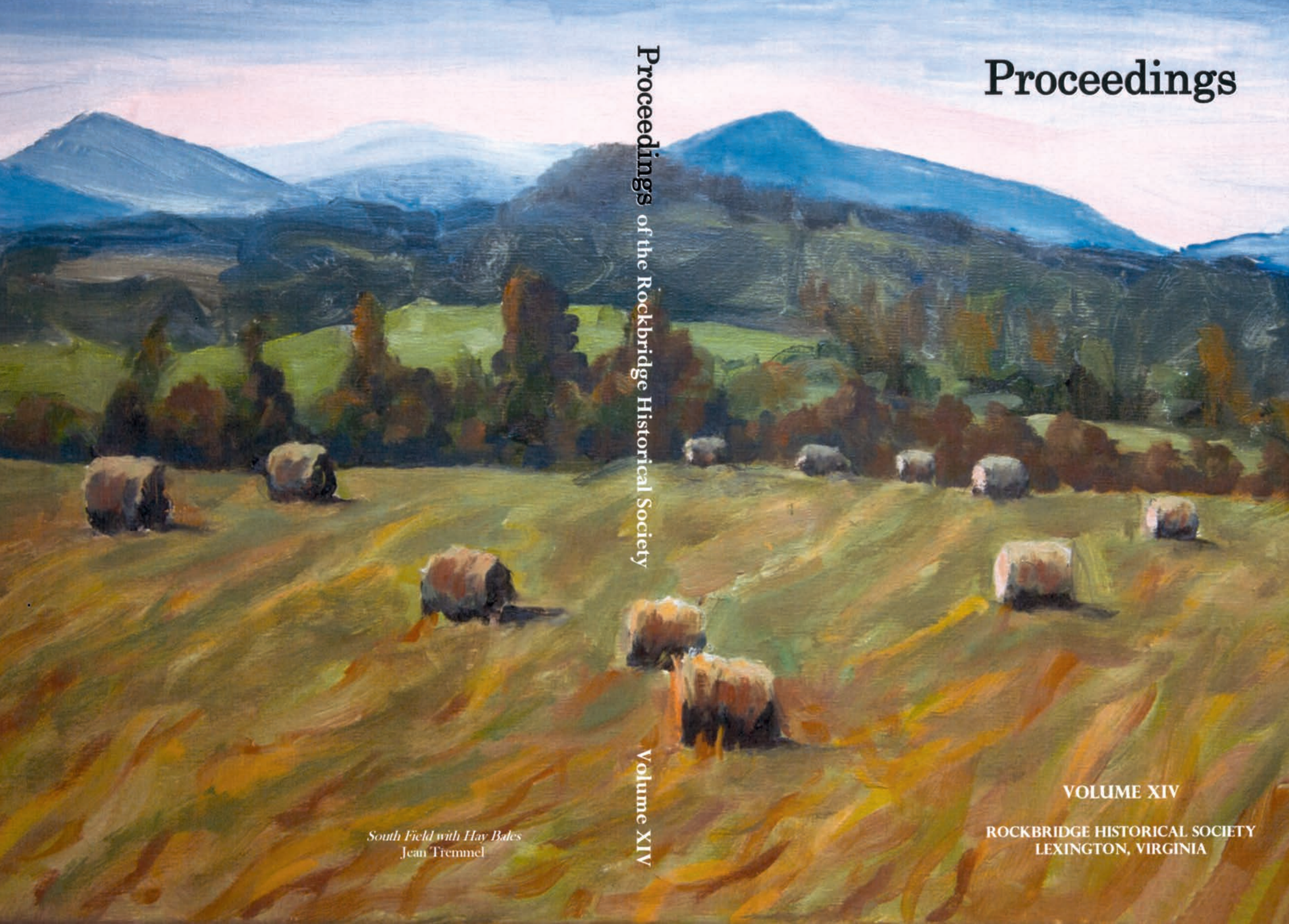

Proceedings

Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society Volume XIV

South Field with Hay Bales
Jean Tremmel

VOLUME XIV

ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA

THE
Proceedings
OF THE
ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME XIV
2006–2010

MARIAN HARRISON NOVAK, COEDITOR
W. DAVID NOVAK, COEDITOR
RICHARD W. HUBBARD, ASSISTANT EDITOR

Lexington, Virginia
2017

The Cover: Once hay stacks reigned in the fields of the Shenandoah Valley; then compact, rectangular hay bales lay scattered over these same fields at harvest. Now large, round bales dominate these scenes.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the McCormick reaper had led to the first baler that could make round bales. By the mid-1970s, several companies made balers that produced large round bales like those seen today. The round baler is presently the most popular baler in industrialized countries around the world.

The mountains of the Blue Ridge in the background of this painting have of course remained unchanged throughout the history of Rockbridge County. They are today as they were when the Shawnee created large fields at their feet for hunting grounds.

Artwork for the cover of this issue of the Rockbridge Historical Society's *Proceedings* is taken from an oil painting titled *South Field with Hay Bales*, painted in the fall of 2014 by Lexington artist Jean Marie Tremmel; it is but one of the artist's renditions of a field near Buena Vista, Virginia. Tremmel paints colorful scenes of Lexington and Rockbridge County en plein air and in her McDowell Street studio. The painting was photographed for the cover by Lexington photographer Justin Peery.

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The Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Volume XIV
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To the people of Rockbridge County, Virginia, past and present—

A people without knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.

—Marcus Garvey

If you don't know history, then you don't know anything. You are a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree.

—Michael Crichton

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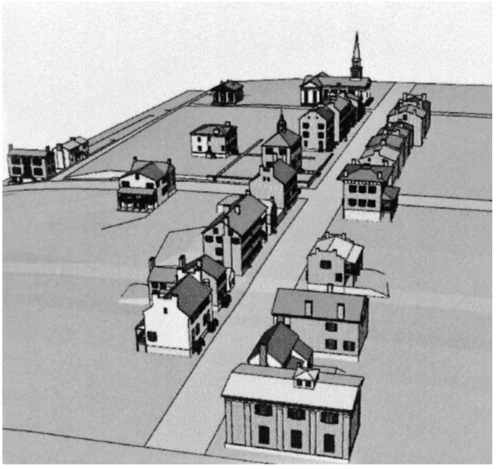
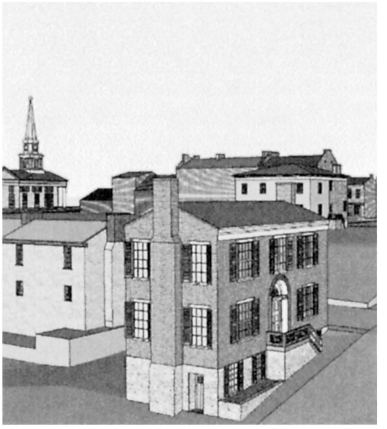


Main Street Lexington, 1867
Digital Drawing by Ed Dooley
(The Campbell House is to the far left.)

This depiction of Main Street, Lexington, Virginia, by Edwin L. Dooley is part of a set of digitally-reconstructed images of various buildings in Lexington from which Dooley created a virtual tour, showing the buildings as they appeared in 1867. Many of these digitally-reconstructed images—along with the present-day and old photographs used to design the reconstructions—were on display at the Rockbridge Historical Society from late 2012 through 2013 in an exhibit called Main Street Lexington, 1867. *This tour can now be seen at: http://hdl.handle.net/11021/27318 (Washington and Lee University's website).*

The Campbell House, farthest left in the picture above (and shown close-up on page ix) is located at 301 Washington Street in Lexington, Virginia; it is now the headquarters and museum of the Rockbridge Historical Society. This ca. 1845 home was donated to the Society by Leslie Lyle Campbell—and thus its name.

More information about the Campbell House and the Rockbridge Historical Society is at www.rockbridgehistoricalsociety.com.



The Campbell House
Digital Drawing by Ed Dooley

A NEW ERA

STEPHEN D. BECK
PRESIDENT
THE ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Like those issues that came before, Volume XIV of the Rockbridge Historical Society's *Proceedings* is an eclectic mix of topics comprising public RHS presentations given since January of 2006. This *Proceedings* will be the last of its kind. Over the past decade the manner of public presentations has morphed from the reading of rather scholarly papers to more visual programing. High video content through the use of PowerPoint and CDs—while increasing the interest in our public programs—has resulted in far fewer topics being covered in printable form. Thus the number of topics that qualify for the *Proceedings* has waned over the past few years so that it is now below an acceptable level.

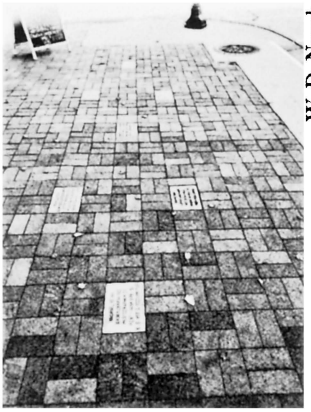
As a result, the Board of Directors of the Society has decided to pursue a new format which will focus on an annual or bi-annual publication that will be more timely for our members and other readers. Such a publication will be very inclusive of our apt programing and other articles on local history that are relevant to the larger Rockbridge County audience we serve. Our local history is so rich and varied that even topics covered in the *Proceedings* over the past seventy five years still leave room for more extensive investigation and study. We will not ignore their potential to further amuse, educate, and amaze us. And of course there is a multiplicity of subjects that may never ever get fully explored. In this new publication we will not be bound by our RHS presentations but will be free to select from written works others have discovered about our deep heritage printed elsewhere. Therefore we encourage our members and other readers to identify articles from throughout the years they think should be considered for print in our new format.

This current *Proceedings* is the result in largest part to the joint efforts of Society members Marian Harrison and W. David Novak. With the able support of Richard Hubbard, our Treasurer, and Trustees Mary Skutt and David Coffey, the final product has taken the form here. The Society is grateful for their extraordinary efforts on its behalf and that of our members and the citizens of Rockbridge County.

❋

***Stephen Beck**, in his second term as president of the Rockbridge Historical Society, grew up in Wilmington, Delaware and has*

worked in New York City, Newark, Philadelphia, Wilmington, Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia, Richmond, Jacksonville, and Savannah over a thirty-year career in the development of large commercial real estate. He graduated from Hampden-Sydney College with a B.A in history and religion and received his MBA in finance from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. The only thing he has published is a 250-page classified field manual for the 525 MI Group in Vietnam, using a manual typewriter and a mimeograph machine. He is having the time of his life helping to lead the RHS through these exciting times.



W. D. Novak

The Crossroads
Main and Nelson

CROSSROADS

ERIC S. WILSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I joined the Rockbridge Historical Society as its Executive Director in 2012, returning to Lexington after the papers assembled here in this volume were delivered as Society programs, up through 2010. But I've been fortunate—as with so many volumes before—to keep learning from their insights, and from many of the authors themselves, who continue to share in the work of the Society and related community efforts.

In introduction, I'd like to tie these essays to some parallel and broader enterprises in local history that RHS has worked to both initiate, advance, and collaboratively extend in the years

leading to their publication. The articles themselves collectively map out a field of original work that's been impressively researched, imaginatively presented, and mindfully, carefully edited into this well-honed series of unique historical "snapshots." As you read through their range of voices and topics, I hope you'll keep their shared, broader mission in mind: connecting the finer details of neighborly stories with the deep run of Rockbridge history and its generations. These are key vehicles (to riff on one of our institutional mottos) *to help the past educate the present . . . and our future.*

Like many of the thirteen prior volumes that the Society has published since its founding in 1939, there are a number of common themes that internally connect these eleven pieces. As a group, they spotlight some of the presiding issues that have long drawn the attentions of RHS audiences. At the same time they work to provide us with original frames, or to reflect some of the shifting currents of our cultural moment, or to draw on newly available archives and media to present their material.

Their common chords include varied attentions to: educational institutions and their leaders; desegregation of churches and schools; the traces of everyday life learned from Rockbridge's outlying villages and cemeteries; and a balance of the "forgotten heroes" as well as revisited icons that have distinguished our communities over nearly four hundred years now.

Like all enterprises in history, the articles work to provide relevant connections and distinctions, within their contemporary eras and our own. But they also spy out new crossroads for departure and detour: grounding their efforts in precedent scholarship and conver-

sations, while striking out in new directions for new perspectives (and retrospectives). Often more pointedly than much of "history writ large," the crossroads of local history enable us to more precisely and personally center its subjects, and ourselves, at the intersections of People, Place, and Time.

From one such juncture, let's strike out through one "trail system" that RHS has recently traversed, both revisiting and connecting its various enterprises. The widest, most familiarly trafficked of historical routes in our area centers on The Great Road, running through the heart of the Valley of Virginia. With the Native American paths before it (and the animal pathways they followed by turns), that eighteenth-and-nineteenth-century avenue for Rockbridge settlement established the ground through which turnpike and railroad would follow, with highway and interstate since. In time, the information superhighways of modern telecommunications would build around that same infrastructure; indeed, the digital exchanges on which this publication depends course through those networks, connecting their own more expansive circuits of public history.

In the past few years, RHS has played a key role in developing two new and lasting spurs from this central corridor. Forged from long work, research, and partnerships, these joint trailheads opened to great local fanfare in the fall of 2016.

One recurrent area of institutional focus has been the Natural Bridge, namesake for Rockbridge itself, and southern anchor to the County's central corridor. In September 2016, Natural Bridge was named to be Virginia's thirty-seventh State Park, and one of only

twenty five of the nation's Affiliated Units of the National Park Service. RHS has been proud to partner in that enterprise, in keeping a lens well trained on the landscape's historical as well as environmental resources. Crucial to the recognition of the lasting value of the Bridge, its surrounding acreage, and view sheds, has been an appreciation of the local history centered there: Monacan heritage stretching back long before European settlements; the traffic and way stations of the Great Wagon Road and the footholds that tie Lewis and Clark distinctly to Virginia and Rockbridge; the industries of nineteenth-century forestry and twentieth-century tourist attractions still familiar to many who grew up here. All are elements featured in RHS' signature exhibit, *Images of the Rock Bridge* (with many materials still available to support the Park's Visitor's Center at the Park, and adjoining Historic Hotel). And all support Jefferson's own famous words—after buying the Bridge from King George II in 1774—that it is "the most sublime of Nature's works." Through the hard work of many public, private, and non-profit organizations, Jefferson's hopes that this treasure would be preserved in public trust have found new warrant.

In the process, particular praise and payoff has been earned from RHS Trustee David Coffey's groundbreaking essay in *Proceedings*, Volume XII, centered on Jefferson's use of the Bridge, and more pointedly the free black caretaker he hired to manage the property (another Virginian also named Patrick Henry, no less). Over several years of planning meetings, I've handed a copy of that article to historians and first-person interpreters, real es-

tate developers, tourism officials, park rangers, and local, state, and federal legislators; consistently, it's proven an eye-opening revelation in helping those parties identify new grounds to interpret and highlight that iconic site. In this gradual progress towards Jefferson's vision, the work of Society members and advocates has the evident capacity for wide and lasting change, with our *Proceedings* among the vital instruments that provide both credibility and valued contribution.

Only a month after Natural Bridge State Park was officially opened, RHS undertook another significant step toward recognizing Rockbridge history. In a ceremony at Lexington's central crossing at Main and Nelson Streets, the Society blazed another local trail that aims to preserve and promote area histories, whether long-researched, newly highlighted, or creatively re-told. After three years of advisory support, the Society formally inherited ownership of the *Righteous and Rascals of Rockbridge*, an enterprise in public history that may prove as visible and lasting as the volumes of *Proceedings* we've already contributed to the archives. More concentrated and more lively than most historic plaques, this series of sidewalk pavers calls the historically curious to "walk in the footprints of history." Their brief biographical inscriptions invite passersby to move more deliberately, if amusingly, down Lexington's Main Street and cross-streets, to browse the story stones that

W. D. Novak

thumbnail some of the lives of Rockbridge past. Over seventy-five stones (many of them featuring people who dot our past and present *Proceedings*) focus not only on the most celebrated but most colorful figures in Rockbridge history, attending to some of the often overlooked or under-told stories that flesh out a fuller range of local experience.

At the new Story Stones Trailhead at Main and Nelson, a central cluster of pavers prompts pedestrians to pause and reflect on those miniature scripts before following individually directed pathways. But recognizing the new media through which stories are both textually and visually narrated, a more flexible website at www.rockbridgehistoricalsociety.com broadens the journey through paragraph-length biographies to click while walking, along with historical photos, and maps that encourage trips to related area sites. Like our printed publications, these story stones—literally engraved in granite amid Lexington's historic red bricks—promise to give lasting means for people to read, to learn, to imagine, and to think more carefully and critically about who has shaped local history and how we might variously tell it. Across all evolving formats, these are legacies you can enjoy both publicly and privately, in town and at home. And when you discover something you like, share those discoveries with the neighbors and relatives who may share your stakes.

We hope this book will provide yet another outlet for RHS to continue its community service, and spur individual curiosity, just as the thirteen previous volumes of *Proceedings* have done, in concert with our other landmark publications: *The Streets of Lexington*

(1985), *Roads of Rockbridge* (1993, 2009) and *Remarkable Rockbridge* (2011).

Justly proud of those efforts, we now find ourselves at an exciting institutional crossroads. In recent years, like most organizations with similar mission and scale, RHS has found that the modes of production have evolved in regard to the ways our work is commissioned and shared. Presenters are less and less likely these days to deliver fully-scripted papers (such papers having traditionally been the central core for our periodic *Proceedings*). Increasingly, digital slideshows not only present a more extensive and flexible range of projected images, but have worked to cultivate a more conversational give and take with audiences. Our modes of cultural consumption have likewise changed, with people increasingly reading online: not only reading in more varied tempo (with more compressed and extended options in length), but readily linking to a range of related online resources and byways.

Of course, these advances come as but the most recent step in the expansion and evolution of communications media and social networks that have variously shaped Rockbridge since its founding in 1778. In moving ahead with the times, RHS has identified two key strategic priorities in its publications plans.

First, we plan to more systematically record, enhance, and amplify our digital resources. Given our rich holdings and programmatic growth, there are many prospects to support here in the years ahead. A more supple, content-rich website, more flexible capacities for online communications, opportunities for interactive display with our exhibits at Campbell House and in the community: all

are areas we've been turning our attention to, additionally mindful of their relevance and application in our educational outreach to local schools. The *Proceedings* will also remain a vital element of our digital archive. Thanks to our unique and invaluable partnership with Washington and Lee's Special Collections Library, a growing number of our holdings are being digitized, including all fourteen volumes of *The Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society*. The work of over seventy-five years of community historians will now be freely available for immediate access from home, or by mobile tablets and phones.

Second, this Volume XIV of *Proceedings* will be the last of its type that we publish. In moving from a more traditional chronicle of Society presentations, we're choosing instead to invest in a more frequently published journal, one that can more flexibly include more varied textual formats and topics that provide a new sampler of Rockbridge history. We're presently in the exciting stages of planning what directions this might take, and how to flag novel features for readers and our longstanding Society members.

Of course, we may continue to publish some article-length presentations or original essays that seem particularly relevant. At the same time, we hope this more frequently printed journal will provide the color and variety that serve readers' diverse interests. As potential options, we've discussed how to identify catchy excerpts from primary sources; galleries of historic photographs; reviews of museum exhibits, or of both new and classic books of interest; profiles of some of RRR's surprising "Rascals"; kernels;

perhaps even contests to find the most fascinating local trivia; or connections to some of the broader resources of our institutional partners in the County, the Valley, and across the Commonwealth, through our partners in the Virginia Association of Museums.

For all the new turns and journeys ahead, we're glad of your interest in the work here at hand. And we are grateful for all means of support and participation you can and continue to bring to the Rockbridge Historical Society. Your curiosity and care sustain our valued tradition of research, and they make possible the rewards that have come and will come from Rockbridge County's long labors of cultivation, creativity, and community commitments that we will continue to tend collectively at these crossroads.

❄

***Eric Wilson** has been the Executive Director of the Rockbridge Historical Society since 2012, and he serves as the state's Director for History with the Virginia Association of Museums. His love for history and passion for connecting history with literature, the arts, and architecture were forged growing up in Charlottesville, near the foot of Monticello. He earned his graduate and undergraduate degrees in English and American Literature at Brown University and Harvard University, respectively, and was awarded research fellowships for advanced study at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., and at Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom.*

After teaching appointments at Harvard and Boston College, Eric Wilson moved to Lexington to teach in the English Department at Washington and Lee University, with courses in Shakespeare, Renaissance Literature, and Women's Studies. As a member

of the history and English faculties at Norfolk Academy, he designed interdisciplinary courses ranging from African American Studies and Urban Studies, to Modern European History and Irish Literature. Since returning to Rockbridge County, he has also taught English classes and directed projects in Lexington City Schools. He is a founding Board Member of the Portsmouth Colored Community Library Museum (Portsmouth, Virginia) and the Miller's House Museum of transportation and industry (Lexington, Virginia). He is particularly delighted to help extend education in local history as his daughter grows up in Rockbridge.

Fig. 1: William H. Montgomery Gravestone (ca. 1826)
(Unless otherwise noted, all photographs in this article are by the author.)

EPITAPH ON W. H. MONTGOMERY'S STONE

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard
—Thomas Gray

THE SECRET LIFE OF ROCKBRIDGE CEMETERIES

J. DANIEL PEZZONI

Old cemeteries are treasure troves of information for genealogists and historians, and the historic graveyards of Rockbridge County and its communities are no exception. A particular grave marker may tell us something about the life (and death) of the individual it commemorates, but it also provides insights into the world in which the individual lived. The lichen-speckled sandstone monument of Dr. William H. Montgomery (fig. 1, at left) in Lexington's Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery is one of those peepholes into the past.

Dr. Montgomery died in 1826 at the relatively young age of thirty-four. That alone tells us something. Even the good doctor's calling did not save him from the cruel scythe that harvested young

and old in the era before modern medicine. His epitaph describes him as the "poor man's friend," which suggests he helped those in need regardless of means, and it includes lines from Thomas Gray's beloved poem, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.* One can almost picture the young doctor's heartbroken acquaintances, or family members if he had them, gathered at the workshop of the stone carver to work out the details of the tombstone and its epitaph, their grief made bearable by the consolation of literature.

That we can learn or surmise so much from Montgomery's epitaph is in itself remarkable. Most grave markers of the era were mute, or nearly so, being wooden headboards and fieldstone markers that were either uninscribed, minimally inscribed (initials on a fieldstone), or semi-permanently inscribed (scratched or painted information on a headboard that weathered away). Inscribed tombstones like the Montgomery memorial became progressively more common in area cemeteries over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and into the twentieth, and the graven word is a useful source of biographical and historical information, but there are also other meanings encoded in stone.

One such non-textual source of historical information is the form of grave markers. The Montgomery tombstone, for example, has a distinctive three-lobed top that relates it to the baroque classicism which prevailed in Britain at the end of the seventeenth century when Reformation-era iconoclasm subsided and ornately inscribed and decorated gravestones blossomed in British churchyards, a legacy perpetuated by British settlers in the New World.

The three-lobed form of the Montgomery tombstone (and oth-

ers like it) appears to be a balanced and hierarchic neoclassical reformulation of baroque prototypes. It may also reflect the influence of the rounded headboard and flanking-bed knobs profile of early Puritan tombstones. A survey of Pennsylvania German graveyards identified examples of the three-lobed form with obit dates from the 1790s, and it appears to have gained favor in Virginia about the same time. Whatever its precise origins and cultural associations (the German connection hints at acculturation), the three-lobed form became popular in American cemeteries after 1800 and remained a strong presence through the Civil War era.[1]

For thousands of years Native Americans lived in what became Rockbridge County, and there may be many ancient graves along local watercourses where native settlement occurred. The best-documented of the county's Native American funerary features was the Hays (or Hayes) Creek Mound, whose site, located near Brownsburg, was excavated in 1901 by Edward Valentine of Richmond. The burial mound is thought to have contained over a hundred human burials, some inside stone piles at the core of the earthen mound, as well as pipes and items of personal adornment and the skeletons of eight dogs. A modern analysis suggested the bones date to the early part of the second millennium A.D. The names of the people buried in the mound are, of course, unknown, as is the case with the graves of early European and African settlers whose graves are marked by unworked and uninscribed fieldstones. Such grave markers illustrate the primitive conditions of the backcountry where skill in stone working was rare and the effort that might have gone toward carving gravestones was devoted to more pressing matters. High mobili-

ty, too, may have been a factor. People who did not intend to stay in the area long, common in an era of relentless westward movement, would have been unlikely to invest in fine tombstones. In later years fieldstone markers were the lot of the poor and disenfranchised. For example, fieldstone markers pepper the graveyard of the slaves who lived, worked, and died at the Buffalo Forge iron plantation on Buffalo Creek.[2]

Wooden headboards were also dictated by poverty and exigency. In 1866 the remains of Confederate soldiers temporarily interred at the fairgrounds outside Lexington were moved to a newly created Confederate Section in the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery. A photograph of the plot shows white-painted wood headboards with the names painted on in black letters. In the photograph the garlanded headboards are clustered around a floral arbor with the inscription "They Died for Us." Later the headboards were removed and the names inscribed on a marble obelisk. Most if not all of the county's historic wooden grave markers have succumbed to the elements, to rot and insects, or to overzealous clean-up campaigns. The latter was the fate of wooden markers in a Walkers Creek area cemetery, piled up and burned as a result of a cemetery beautification initiative.[3]

Occasionally the area's early residents insisted on more permanent and refined memorials. Possibly the earliest known dated memorial is that of John McDowell (d. 1742) in the McDowell Cemetery near Fairfield (fig. 2). The roughly rectangular stone is neatly inscribed in a spidery hand and includes the date 1743 at the bottom. The date discrepancy suggests the stone may have been in-

scribed years after McDowell's death when details of the Indian-settler skirmish in which he was killed were murky. The carving style of the date appears slightly different from the rest of the epitaph, another curious feature, although the stone as a whole could certainly date to the eighteenth century. The McDowell Cemetery has undergone numerous restorations through the years, including reconstruction of its nineteenth-century brick wall in the early twentieth century. The current wall incorporates the earlier monolithic limestone gate posts and handsome wrought-iron gate. The view below shows the stabilization of the Gothic Revival memorial at the center of the cemetery in 2013.

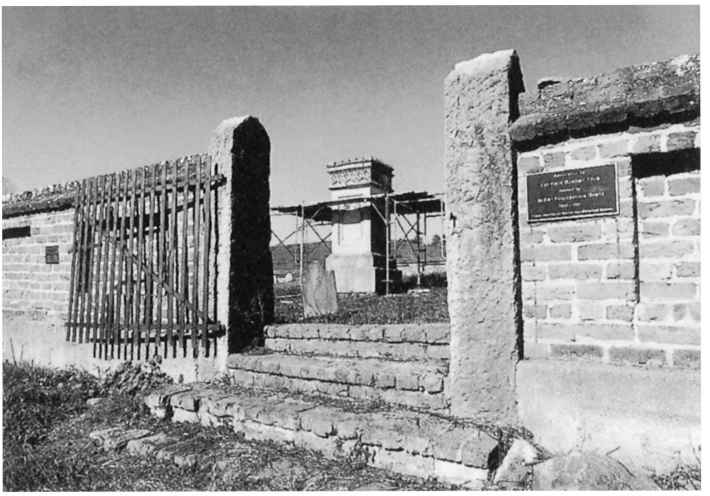


Fig. 2: McDowell Cemetery

Another of the county's oldest dated tombstones is also one of its most interesting: the coffin stone of John McKy at Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church Cemetery (fig. 3). McKy (or Mackey) died in 1773 and his tombstone was made the following year by Nethanel

Fig. 3: John McKy Coffin Stone

Evins, who signed his name as the tombstone's "bulder." The misspellings and other quirks of the epitaph indicate Evins, whose name also appears as Nathaniel Evans in the records, was unschooled in the craft of tombstone carving, though perhaps he was the best on offer in the early Rockbridge area. Such was not unusual in rural communities where tombstone carving was typically a sideline for an individual whose farming, stone-laying, or other trade was his principal vocation.

McKy's epitaph includes a version of a folk poem that appears on tombstones throughout the English-speaking world:

Remamber man as you pas by
As you are now so once was i
As i am now you soon will be
*Therefore think on eterniy &*c

In addition to the McKy stone, Evins presumably made the coffin-shaped monument for his wife Mary Evins, who died in

1777 and is buried in the McDowell Cemetery. The Mary Evins epitaph is more finely carved than the McKy epitaph, though the orthography is irregular. The McDowell Cemetery has a second coffin stone dedicated to John Parks (d. 1793), though attribution to Evins seems less certain for it. Coffin stones and the stark message they conveyed through their form were a staple of British graveyards during the eighteenth century, although they are comparatively rare in America. A late manifestation of the form is seen in the Ebenezer Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church Cemetery west of Lexington where monuments for members of the Brown and Harper families, who died during the 1860s–1890s period, feature short obelisks of marble that rise from coffin-stone bases like the conning towers of battleships (fig. 4). Coffin motifs are delicately chiseled on the slightly peaked "lids" of two of the stones.[4]

Fig. 4: Coffin-like Stone Memorials

Nethanel Evins is the first documented individual to have signed his name to a Rockbridge area tombstone. He was followed in the early nineteenth century by two members of the Donnelly family. Patrick H. Donnelly (ca. 1790–1840) lived in Lexington for at least part of his career, and more of his work is known than that of John Donnelly, whose only documented signed stone is that of William P. Carson (d. 1833) in the Timber Ridge cemetery. The Donnelly tombstones have the popular three-lobed top with the half-round center tympanum raised on a squared-off base and flanked by rounded epaulets at the corners. The clearly articulated tripartite symmetry of the form finds parallels in the Federal style of architecture which became fashionable during the early years of the American republic (hence its name) and is notable for its strong three-part symmetries. The raising of the tympanum on a pedestal also has an architectural flavor, although analogy with the lid of a funerary urn is a possibility.[5]

In later decades the three-lobed form might take on the trappings of other, non-classical styles. The headstone of Capt. James McChesney (d. 1842) in the New Providence Presbyterian Church Cemetery translates the form into the Gothic Revival style. The pointed top recalls the lancet windows of Gothic architecture, and the cinquefoil cusps in the epaulets are also Gothic. The center carving appears to show a shield and knightly plumage—perhaps a reference to McChesney's military rank, or possibly a coat of arms. At the center top is what appears to be a thistle, the Scottish emblem. The Scottish, Gothic, and martial adornments echo an antebellum-Virginia culture steeped in the romantic medievalism of novelist Sir Walter Scott.

The nineteenth-century battle of the styles pitted the Gothic Revival

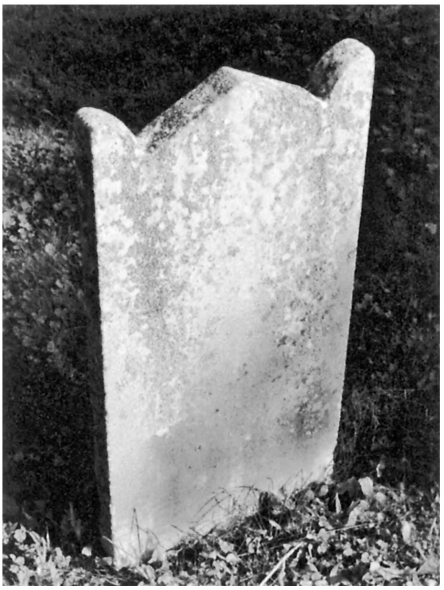


Fig. 5: Back of a Peaked Greek Revival-Influenced Gravestone

against the Greek Revival, and the competition played out in Rockbridge area cemeteries as well as in architecture. The Greek Revival rebuttal to the Gothic McChesney memorial is the headstone of William McCown (d. 1855) in the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery (fig. 5). The McCown tombstone is also a riff on the three-lobed form, except that for a center tympanum it substitutes a peaked pediment—an evocation of the triangular front of a Greek temple—and for the epaulets it employs quarter circles that recall Greek roof ornaments known as acroteria. A hallmark of the Greek Revival style was simplicity, which made it practical for the gravestones of the less affluent or those who preferred modesty (or whose families did). Peaked or slightly arched tops were standard Greek Revival treatments that remained popular for the graves of persons of all income levels and ethnicities into the twentieth century, long after the Grecian style had passed out of fashion in architecture. Classical culture was also evoked by the obelisk form—borrowed from the Egyptians by the Romans and revived during the Renaissance. Locally made limestone obelisks tend to be oddly proportioned. One is the plump obelisk that stands in

Fig. 6: John Brookes'
Obelisk Monument

Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery, erected to the memory of John Brookes, a Washington College student who died at the age of nineteen in 1842 (fig. 6).

At least one of Lexington's limestone obelisks was carved by Adam T. Hileman, who belonged to a new breed of local stonecut-

ters. In 1849 Hileman placed an advertisement in the *Lexington Gazette* for his "marble yard" on Mill Creek, perhaps in the Timber Ridge vicinity. His name for his shop reflects the growing popularity of marble for grave monuments. The shift from local freestone to imported marble is indicative of the improved transportation networks that developed over the course of the nineteenth century and is related to greater professionalism in the making of monuments during the same period.

Adam Hileman was one of at least five members of his family who carved gravestones. Adam's brothers Daniel, Philip, and John were active in the trade as was his nephew William, John's son. The signature or initials of John J. Hileman (1834–1891) have been documented on several dozen Rockbridge area monuments, making him the most prolific—or perhaps the most self-promoting—of the Hileman family carvers. John Hileman's 1870s tombstone workshop was conveniently located across Main Street from what is now the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery, where much of his work appears. The modest brick building, rehabilitated as a rental house by Lexington attorney Mack Crawford, has a wide entry for moving large stones in and out and marble window sills presumably made in the shop. Gravestone fragments still turn up on the lot.[6]

The Hilemans and another Lexington family stonecutting business, the "marble manufactory" of brothers James and Ambrose Fagan, faced competition from marble yards in the cities. Many Rockbridge area monuments were produced in the Lynchburg workshop of John B. Gaddess (1829–1877), one of Virginia's lead-

ing nineteenth-century tombstone producers. Gaddess's gleaming white marble monuments were popular with town and plantation elites, and their diffusion through the southwestern quadrant of the state approximates Lynchburg's economic hinterland, established by the James River and Kanawha Canal and the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad during the antebellum period. In addition to the multitude of signed monuments that advertised his business, in 1854 Gaddess published a catalog of suitable tombstone inscriptions. A well-proportioned marble Gaddess obelisk such as the one over the grave of Elizabeth McChesney Echols (d. 1853) in the New Providence cemetery outclassed local efforts in material, form, and technique.[7]

The nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were the heyday of experimentation in grave marker materials. Standardized Confederate Cross of Honor markers of cast iron were (and continue to be) manufactured outside the region for the graves of Confederate veterans, but there was also a vernacular iron grave marker tradition in the Shenandoah Valley. Iron grave markers are found in and around iron-making communities in Augusta, Page, and Shenandoah Counties, but they have not yet been documented locally despite the number of furnaces that operated in the Rockbridge area.[8]

Another alternative material, concrete, came into routine use at the beginning of the twentieth century. Concrete was more malleable than stone, which encouraged a range of forms and decorative treatments, and it could also serve as a matrix for other materials. A small concrete grave cross in the Ebenezer cemetery

is ornamented with chips of polished pink and black granite. Researcher Rich Weil, who has documented over a hundred local cemeteries for what at the time was the Ruth Anderson McCulloch Branch of Preservation Virginia, has recorded a cemetery in Arnolds Valley that has concrete markers decorated with costume jewelry.[9]

Symbolism was an essential aspect of many Rockbridge area grave memorials. Often symbols referenced mortality, as for example the coffin form of the John McKy tombstone (fig. 3) which reinforces the message of its rhyming inscription. Skulls and hourglasses were other popular *memento mori.* New England-made tombstones with the winged death head or skull motif turn up in the cemeteries of Virginia's port towns, though none are known to have made it as far inland as the Rockbridge area. Skulls and crossbones appear on at least two tombstones in Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery, one dated 1826, but generally speaking such stark reminders of mortality rarely appear in area cemeteries.

County residents instead preferred the more euphemistic iconography of the willow tree and funerary urn that came into vogue in the British world at the end of the eighteenth century. Headstones like that of Jane Miller (fig. 7) in the Oxford Presbyterian Church Cemetery depict graveyard tableaus of willows, monuments, and elegantly attired female mourners. The New Providence cemetery headstone of Mary Ott features a pedestal obelisk framed by heavy drapery. Similar mourning drapery framed the casket of Robert E. Lee when he lay in state at Lee Chapel on the Washington and Lee campus in 1870. Flowers, clasped hands, heavenward-pointing fin-

gers, and lambs (for children) were other stock images that enjoyed local popularity in the nineteenth century.[10]

Fig. 7: Jane Miller Gravestone Detail

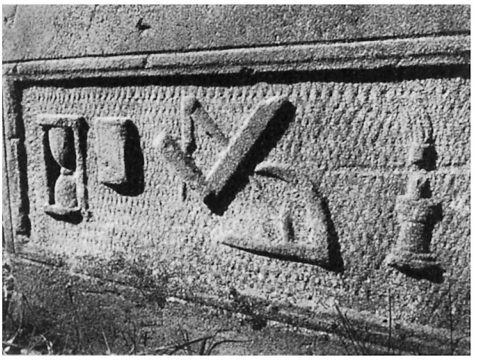


Fig. 8: Detail of
William H. Montgomery Gravestone
(See Fig. 1)

Dr. Montgomery's tombstone (fig. 1), in addition to its other interesting features, is an iconographer's dream. The horizontal panel under the inscription (fig. 8) features an hourglass, a tablet that may represent a Bible or the book of life, a builder's square

and compass, a scythe, and a torch or flaming urn. Most of these represented themes of life and death, but the square-and-compass motif is different: It signifies the Masonic Order, and its presence suggests that Montgomery belonged to a lodge. A Masonic connection may explain the unusual number of symbols on the tombstone since traditional Masonic art and architecture were rife with mystical designs. The Masons also had a strong interest in Egyptian culture, so the passing resemblance of the panel to a hieroglyphic cartouche, noted by architectural historian Leslie Giles, may not be coincidental.[11]

The forms and symbols of Rockbridge area cemeteries belonged to a tradition that spanned centuries and continents, yet the way in which the universal themes were expressed is unique to the region. Sadly, the nineteenth century witnessed a slow impoverishment, as local traditions came into conformity with the national mainstream. The process was virtually complete by the mid-twentieth century, epitomized by monuments of gray granite from quarries in Georgia and Vermont that rarely display the variety and vibrancy of earlier times.

The gradual domination of granite owed much to the stone's durability. Unlike marble and local freestone it was virtually impervious to weather and other agents of destruction. It was indeed the Rock of Ages—appropriately, the name of a leading manufacturer. Granite's extreme hardness limited its use for much of the nineteenth century but advances in mechanization, economies of scale, and full development of the national rail network gave it the advantage in the early twentieth century. Whether the blandness

of twentieth-century cemeteries reflected the resulting consolidation and standardization of the tombstone industry, or whether the industry simply catered to some deep yearning for conformity in the national psyche, is an interesting question.

With granite, imitation was the sincerest flattery. Several monuments in the Bratton's Run Cemetery with obit dates from the 1930s and 1940s are concrete, a material that encouraged expressiveness and experimentation in the hands of some folk craftsmen, yet here they mimic the block-like form and featureless surface of the most uninspired granite headstones of the era. Still, interesting things could happen behind the granite curtain of conformity. A few paces from the granite-mimicking Bratton Run monuments are oddly formed markers, also of concrete, that are stamped with the name Carter and what appears to be a corporate logo. Several are also stamped "skewback," the word for a wedge-shaped stone used in arch construction. These appear to be leftover or reused building blocks, perhaps salvaged from a derelict industrial plant in nearby Goshen or somehow acquired from a passing train. Something similar occurred in a cemetery in the Belfast Creek area where what appear to be fragments of ornamental slate mantels dating to the late nineteenth century were used to mark graves. The found objects and unconventional materials used for grave markers by resourceful poor families helped sustain alternative traditions.[12]

In recent decades a growing number of gravestone carvers have sought to imbue their work with the personality of the deceased. Occupational and, especially, avocational memorials illustrate the trend. Banjoes and guitars, for example, are common motifs on the

gravestones of musicians. A monument in the Goshen Baptist Church Cemetery is carved with simple line drawing of a hunting dog and bear that identify the deceased as an avid hunter, and over the years visitors have left bear and dog figurines on the base of the tombstone and in the space behind the footstone. The current practice of placing objects at a gravesite has ancient roots in the European and African source regions of Rockbridge area inhabitants. Another historical practice that remains strong is the affixing of a porcelain plaque bearing a photographic image of the deceased, sometimes including the spouse, on the tombstone. The technique has been in use for over a century and is experiencing renewed local popularity. These developments point to the continuation of old traditions and the birth of new ones in Rockbridge area cemeteries.

*

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[9] Richard Well, personal communication with the author, May 2009.

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Virginia Military Institute (VMI) Archives*

THE HORSE AND VMI

JAMES M. MORGAN JR.

They are all gone now, and so are most of the men who rode them. But no one who attended a Virginia Military Institute (VMI) Garrison Review in the days when horses participated could ever forget the sight: pennants on lances fluttering in the breeze, caissons and gun carriages creaking and rattling as the cadet cavalry squadron and artillery battalion passed the reviewing stand, first at the walk, then at the trot, while the band played appropriate tunes climaxed by "Garry Owen" as the units went by

Subsequent references are abbreviated to "VMI Archives."

VMI Garrison Review
(ca. 1939)

at the gallop. (More information about and the lyrics to "Garry Owen" can be found in the author's appendix on pages 37–38.)

But adding elegance to occasional formations was in fact a relatively minor function of the horse at VMI. Cadets who chose cavalry or artillery as their Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) branch learned basic horsemanship, mounted formations, elementary tactics and, of course, horse care; this training took place throughout the academic year for members of all classes and in the summer encampments which first rising classmen (entering freshmen) attended.

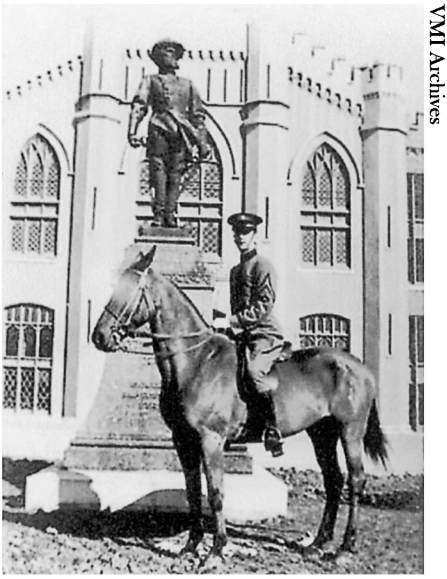
The presence of horses at VMI affected cadet attitudes in other ways as well. The officers of the mounted services with their burnished boots, shiny spurs and flared breeches projected a certain élan matched in most cases by their personalities. The enlisted men displayed a high order of professional competence, creating an impression that beguiled more than one naive youngster into believing that the regular army was staffed entirely by non-

commissioned officers (NCOs) of the same caliber.

In one important respect the account would be incomplete if it only extended to the days when horses were introduced at the Institute in connection with the ROTC program. VMI had schooled artillerists ever since it opened, and alumni had seen combat in that branch from the Mexican War onward. Furthermore, even though cavalry training was not included in the curriculum until after WWI, VMI men had also fought as horse soldiers from the Mexican War forward. There is no way of determining the precise amount that the exploits of these mounted warriors shaped the views of subsequent generations of cadets. But in any case their skill and gallantry enhanced the reputation of the Institute and therefore earned them a rightful place in its annals.

It was fitting indeed that the movie *Brother Rat* (1938) opened with scenes of equestrian activities. From the moment of the arrival of many cadets on campus, horses figured importantly in their lives, not only in connection with cavalry and artillery training but in sports and recreation as well. Few other educational institutions could boast of polo squads, trick riders or horse show teams, and none had their own packs of fox hounds. The Institute sponsored all these sports and also permitted cadets who demonstrated sufficient proficiency to take horses out for recreational rides, thereby affording an excellent escape from the rigors of barracks life, if only temporarily.

One activity usually open to all comers, Rats (fourth classmen, or freshmen) as well as old cadets, was privileged riding. Throughout the entire era that horses remained at the Institute, cadets who



VMI Archives

ROTC Cavalry Cadet Walter Edens
(1939)

were qualified could take mounts out during free periods, such as Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons and on certain holidays, and ride at White's Farm or on the nearby country roads in Rockbridge County. Civilian guests could go along provided that they too demonstrated the required degree of equestrian competence.

There were several rules governing the privilege; two of these were that riders could not trespass on private property, and the party must consist of at least two people.

Cadets could qualify for riding privileges in two ways. Instructors who taught equitation as part of the ROTC program would certify students they deemed proficient, usually at the end of the academic term. Cadets, regardless of branch or academic class, could also obtain privileges by attending voluntary sessions

in equitation presented several times weekly during free periods.

In either case, to qualify it was necessary to demonstrate an ability to control a horse at the various gaits and also to clear low jumps. The standards were not unduly high, but they did insure that the rider could handle a mount without danger to the animal, himself or anyone else.

Early Mounted Service by Alumni

Long before horses had been brought to Lexington for training cadets, VMI men had served in mounted units. Twenty-six alumni fought in the Mexican War (1846–1848), which began only seven years after the Institute opened. One of that number, Hamilton L. Shields of the Class of 1842 (the first group of cadets to matriculate), saw action as an artillerist; another, Littleton T. Menefee, a member of the Class of 1846, suffered wounds at Cerro Gordo while with the Mounted Rifles. The fact that former cadets could participate as artillerists and cavalrymen in the war with Mexico and later conflicts before the advent of ROTC is not as incongruous as it might seem. In all probability the vast majority of the young men, coming from small towns, farms and plantations, had grown up around horses, and though they might not have been familiar with the military systems of equitation and stable management, were nonetheless competent riders.

Then too, the technical and tactical aspects of artillery had been taught at the Institute since 1839. In fact, the lack of horses at the Institute in the days before the Civil War made it necessary for the cadets themselves to act as draft animals and pull the field piec-

es around by hand. The standard army cannon proved too heavy for the young students, so in 1847 the War Department issued specially made six-pounders on lighter carriages to VMI; these guns became Jackson's Battery. It is interesting to note that "Old Jack," the man for whom the battery was named, the immortal "Stonewall," VMI's patron saint, was intimately connected with artillery instruction. He had come to the Institute to teach gunnery techniques as well as natural philosophy (physics).

Benjamin Franklin Ficklin of the Class of 1849 had no direct connection with the artillery or cavalry, but his notoriety did stem at least in part from horses. Ficklin was one of those cadets whose antics delight fellow members of the corps while driving tactical officers to distraction. A native of Charlottesville, Ficklin was dismissed for misconduct early in his career as a cadet. He then enlisted in the infantry during the Mexican War. Upon completion of his service he somehow managed to gain re-admittance to the Institute, where he proceeded to make himself legendary.

In one instance Ficklin painted the superintendent's horse "Old Coley" white with red zebra stripes. On another occasion he fired one of the cannons of the battery on the west side of the VMI Barracks at the artillery instructor Thomas J. Jackson.

Ben also demonstrated an original turn of mind. On being reported absent from guard duty, he claimed that he had fallen asleep and dreamed he was officer of the day. But despite these boyish exploits, Ben Ficklin turned out to be much more than a clown. After graduation he was general manager of the Pony Express and subsequently served as a lieutenant colonel in the 45th

Virginia Infantry during the Civil War.

Since VMI cadets had taken infantry and artillery training from 1839 onward, neither the National Defense Act of 1916 (which, among other augmentations of the Nation's defense, created the ROTC) nor its predecessor the Morrill Act of 1862 initiated drastic changes at the Institute with the possible exception of adding cavalry instruction to the military science curriculum. This was but one of several ways in which the Virginia Military Institute differed from other colleges offering ROTC training. At some institutions military science was simply an elective; on the other hand, students attending the land grant colleges established by the Morrill Act had to take two years of the subject but then could drop it. Cadets at the Institute, whether enrolled in the ROTC or not, were required to complete four years of military science to qualify for graduation.

Organizing the First Artillery Battery

The question and desirability of organizing mounted instruction units was first broached in the middle of 1845, but the concept was not fully realized until 1919 when the first federal mounts arrived. In 1848 Slaughter Ficklin, Ben Ficklin's brother and a friend of first VMI Superintendent Francis H. Smith, was questioned by Superintendent Smith: "What would be the chance of getting some ten or twenty horses from you until the first of July for their keeping with a view of practicing cadets at horse artillery drill?" There was no record of a reply, but throughout the next seventy years horses were hired by the Institute from time to time for various purposes.

However, there were no state or federal service-connected artillery or cavalry horses detailed to VMI by the Commonwealth.

The battery was designed under the direction of Maj. Rufus L. Baker, commander of the Watervliet Arsenal in New York State. Four six-pounder, bronze guns and two twelve-pounders constituted the original cadet battery. The six-pounders weighed 564 pounds each and the twelve-pounder howitzers 578 pounds. The special design was made to permit young cadets to man the batteries without horses, acting as prime movers of the pieces; similar artillery pieces of equal caliber would have weighed over seven-hundred pounds each. All wheels were reduced six to eight inches in diameter. The powder charge for each was estimated to be three-quarters of a pound.

The pieces were cast at Cyrus Alger and Company, a Boston, Massachusetts foundry. Today, the original four guns of the cadet battery, named Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and painted in the traditional red artillery color in which they were delivered in 1848, stand flanking the statue of Gen. Thomas J. Jackson.

In May 1913, the Commandant of Cadets, Col. Jennings C. Wise, Class of 1902, planned simultaneously for the retirement of the cadet battery and the half-century anniversary of the death of Jackson. The VMI treasurer, Col. William T. Poague, who served as a second lieutenant and battery commander of the Rockbridge Artillery and by war's end had become the Chief of Artillery of the III Corps, had an active part in the dual ceremony. Poague had been with the Rockbridge Artillery when the battery had fired the first shot in the Valley at the Battle of Falling Waters, or Haines-

ville.

The last casualty inflicted by these historic pieces was Cadet Robert Xavier Pagliaro, a '48 matriculant from New York City. His death on Thanksgiving eve, November 1946, was the result of the actions of another cadet who placed a black-powder charge in the muzzle of the southernmost piece (John) for illegal firing at a post-torchlight parade. The parade was to follow a pre-Taps stand off at Limit Gates between cadets and other college students before the traditional Thanksgiving Day football game in Roanoke between VMI and Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI, now known as Virginia Tech). Cadet Pagliaro was unaware the gun had been primed, and on his way back to the Barracks thrust his lighted torch into the piece's muzzle; he was struck in the abdomen by the wooden staff of the torch, rushed to the VMI hospital on a cadet-borne stretcher where he was placed on the foyer floor and died in my arms. I was then a sub-professor faculty member and that night the Officer in Charge of Barracks.

Raising Funds for the First Stable

In a letter of January 1, 1917 to William Couper, '04, then living in New Jersey, from Gen. E. W. Nichols, Superintendent, the former was asked to assist in raising funds for the erection of stables. These were planned for the arrival of horses for cavalry and field-artillery purposes in the anticipated college military program proposed under the congressional National Defense Act of 1916.

It was a simple scheme: VMI men everywhere would be requested by mail to donate their earned salary of May 1st of that

year. The suggestion of contributing one day's pay was made by C. F. Dykeman, '06. A one-sheet circular with an attached blank envelope with only the class of the alumnus stamped thereon was to be sent with the initial mailing. All donations were anonymous if the alumnus returned only the class-stamped envelope. If an alumnus wished his gift to be acknowledged by the Superintendent, he could enclose a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

Some four thousand letters were distributed and a total of $11,999.14 was initially raised. The record shows that then Capt. George C. Marshall, '01, contributed $10. The expense of the successful campaign was said to be less than $300 including postage and printing. The proposed building project was suspended on the advent of America's entry into World War I on April 17, 1917.

Early Pasturage

Before the first contingent of horses arrived, there was neither a corral nor stables. What is now the north end of the athletic (football) gridiron was an open field through which ran a small stream. The first horses to arrive were turned into the open field following a heavy series of downpours, and the area soon became a quagmire. When the football field was developed, the stream was contained in a culvert which then continued under the site of the original stables.

In 1919 and early 1920 accommodations to stable the horses could not be provided soon enough.

Stable Facilities

The original complex to house the first mounts received was completed on November 1, 1919. Construction costs totaled $19,431.88 and included the stables and separate buildings for a farrier, a blacksmith shop, a hay shed, latrine, and portions of a culvert at the stable location.

VMI Archives

VMI ROTC Cavalry Unit Drilling at White's Farm
(ca. 1920)

White's Farm

White's Farm, originally situated on the road that was known as the National Highway that went from Lexington to Rockbridge Baths and Goshen, was located across the North (Maury) River, approximately one and one-half road miles from Barracks.

The tract, originally embracing 155 acres, was purchased on June 20, 1921, by notes of $15,000 plus a cash payment of $15,000 on June 8, 1923. There was an original small tenant cottage on the property as well as a barn, the combined assumed valuation of

which was $2,500; therefore, the land was valued at $27,500, or just over $175 per acre. The purchase was a bargain in view of its importance to VMI as a cavalry riding plain, a field-artillery maneuver area, and a target range.

The Farm was described as a "piece of rolling terrain" by Gen. Charles E. Kilbourne and as "fertile and valuable and readily salable" by others. Mounted instruction was conducted for three decades thereon. Today, a portion of White's Farm serves as The Virginia Horse Center.

Last Parade Grund Appearance

The mounted units at VMI made their last Parade Ground appearance at a Garrison Review for the gathered alumni reunion classes on Monday morning, June 7, 1948. Three weeks later to the day, the last Army-supplied mount left and was transported from VMI to the Front Royal, Virginia, Remount Depot on June 28,1948.

VMI ROTC Corps Organization, 1920 to 1940

During the period that federal mounts were available at VMI, the Corps averaged six hundred to just over seven hundred young men organized into a regiment of two battalions of three companies each. ROTC instruction was available in three categories: Cavalry, Infantry, and Field Artillery. The regiment was organized as follows:

First Battalion
Company A - Cavalry
Company B - Infantry
Company C - Cavalry

SECOND BATTALION
COMPANY D - FIELD ARTILLERY
COMPANY E - FIELD ARTILLERY
COMPANY F - FIELD ARTILLERY

Therefore, almost fifty percent of cadets were enrolled in artillery instruction, one third in cavalry, and the remaining were learning infantry tactics.

OTHER INSTITUTIONS WITH FEDERALLY SUPPLIED MOUNTS

Other military institutions that had federally-supplied mounts for cavalry and field artillery associations at the time VMI did:

CORNELL UNIVERSITY
NEW MEXICO MILITARY INSTITUTE
CULVER MILITARY ACADEMY
NORWICH UNIVERSITY
GEORGIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
OKLAHOMA MILITARY ACADEMY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
PENNSYLVANIA MILITARY COLLEGE
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
TEXAS AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAGNE

ADDITIONAL INTERESTING STATISTICS

In 1997, when the idea was proposed to prepare a written record of the horse years at VMI, 1919–1948, it was agreed that all living alumni who could be identified as having studied either Cavalry or Field Artillery ROTC would be contacted and asked for their horse -related memories. Some eight hundred names of living alumni were identified and asked to respond. Over 150 replies were cate-

gorized by class, the respondents identified, and their comments quoted.

By 1920, ROTC artillery instruction was open only to engineering students. Cadets in the advanced course were required to attend "summer camps" of six-weeks duration each.

Federally-supplied animals at VMI were provided from the beginning of the ROTC program through the early days of World War II and nearly tripled as follows:

1917 - 30 HORSES
1919 - 40 HORSES
1921 - 45 HORSES
1923 - 40 HORSES
1927 - 62 HORSES
1933 - 60 HORSES
1940 - 80 HORSES

In May of 1947, Lt. Gen. C. P. Hall, Director of the War Department Organization and Training Division, reported to the Superintendent that the federal government was supporting the following number of horses at the institutions listed:

CORNELL UNIVERSITY, 39
NEW MEXICO MILITARY INSTITUTE, 98
NORWICH UNIVERSITY, 50
OKLAHOMA MILITARY ACADEMY, 90
VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE, 105

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA
BURIAL LOCATION OF TWO NOTABLE WAR HORSES

The remains of Traveller, the war horse of Gen. Robert E. Lee, and Little Sorrel, the famous war horse of Lt. Gen. Thomas J. Jackson, are buried approximately one quarter of a mile apart in Lexington.

The final resting place of Traveller is adjacent to the Robert E. Lee Chapel on the campus of Washington and Lee University. Little Sorrel's thirty-five pounds of ashes plus one tooth were laid to rest on Sunday, July 20, 1997, in a walnut coffin in front of Jackson's statue overlooking the VMI Parade Ground; Sorrel's hide was previously preserved and mounted over a plaster of Paris statue where it may be observed daily in the VMI Museum. Its description notes: "General Jackson's favorite . . . war charger. . . 'Little Sorrel' was . . . rather a dumpy, quiet little horse, beloved by his owner for his steady good temper and easy gaits."*

HORSES RETURN TO VMI

Interest in VMI mounts has evolved over the past forty years. In the 1970s Col. John H. Reeves, late Professor of Biology, became a prime force in a renewed interest in horses at VMI when he sponsored a riding team on his Bellevue Stables county property. He taught the team, known as the VMI Greys, from 1970 to 1982. The Greys participated in Rockbridge fox hunts on or near his farm and infrequently offered exhibitions at the Institute. Funding problems regretfully caused interest to wane, and the team was disbanded in 1986.

In 1997, a number of cadets and faculty helped to organize an equestrian club and a drill team, principally with the help of Col. David Bolen, Professor of Mathematics and Master of the Rockbridge Hunt. In this effort they were principally supported by Mrs. Terry R. Whitmore, daughter of Col. Reeves, of the Stone Mountain

* *A photograph of Little Sorrel in Lexington in 1863 appears on page 36.*

The VMI Greys

VMI Archives

Stables at Natural Bridge, Virginia. Mrs. Whitmore provided mounts for those cadets who had not brought their own horses to Lexington.

The Club made its first appearance at an afternoon parade in the Spring of 2002. Most steeds were middle-sized bays, browns, and chestnuts. Riding teams from the Club participated in Rockbridge Hounds events and at the nearby Virginia Horse Center. Those cadets with sufficient skills advanced to the Mounted Drill Team and Mounted Color Guard. Naturally, this required weekly efforts on the part of the participating cadets, similar to intercollegiate activity schedules; some spent ten hours a week on equine-related activities. The equestrian club and drill team were considered club sports and were funded through the Office of Cadet Affairs. There was no charge to cadets who wished to participate in horse activities.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, it was unusual to observe a horse-mounted unit on the VMI Parade Ground. By 2005, the horses were gone.

The day of the military horse at VMI and in the U.S. Army has

long since ended, and the drill teams and horse clubs have vanished, too. Yet both the spirit that ennobled the mounted units and the unique spectacle of soldiers and cadets on horseback live on. West Point still sponsors a riding club; mounted color guards lead the parades of some former horse units, such as the First Cavalry Division. Field grade officers of mounted units journey on caissons followed by riderless horses to their final bivouacs at Arlington National Cemetery. And, of course, reenactor organizations frequently feature horse-cavalry and horse-artillery units.

This being so, it seems appropriate to add that the animals do indeed have a role to play in modern times, not as warhorses but as heartwarming reminders of a glorious past.

James M. Morgan Jr. *of Richmond, Virginia, matriculated at VMI in September, 1941, left school to enlist in the U.S. Army after Pearl Harbor, served in the infantry, returned to VMI upon release from the service, and after graduation was commissioned a second lieutenant. As a cadet, he was a member of Company C and was enrolled in the Cavalry ROTC. His Army service, active and reserve, totaled thirty-three years. His VMI service included nineteen years as a faculty member in the Department of Civil Engineering and nineteen years as Dean of the Faculty. This article is from a presentation to the Rockbridge Historical Society made in January of 2006.*

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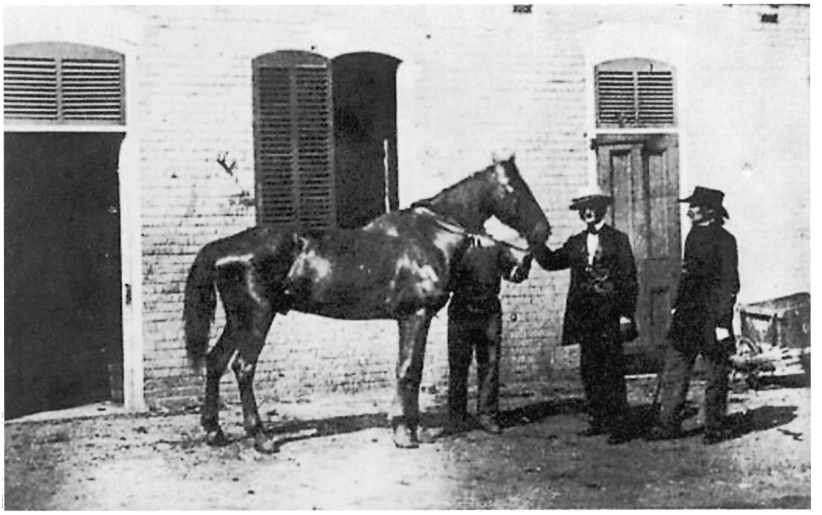
New York Public Library



Little Sorrel in Lexington, Virginia, 1863

Written at the bottom of this photograph are these lines:

"Fancy" or "little Sorrel" Stonewall Jackson's horse— Taken at Gov. Ino. [John] Letcher's stable—1863—

Dr. Ino. [John] Mayo seen on the extreme right.

*Photos from this negative were not sold.**

* *The source for this photograph is the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library. (1863). "Fancy" or "Little Sorrel," "Stonewall" Jackson's horse, taken at Govn. Jno. Letcher's stable, 1863. . . ." Copyright undetermined. Retrieved from:*

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AUTHOR'S APPENDIX
"GARRY OWEN"

"Garry Owen," frequently called "Garryowen," is the most famous regimental march in our army. For more than half a century this rollicking old Irish tune has been inseparably joined with the name of George A. Custer in the annals of the Seventh Cavalry. In 1868 the Seventh, under Custer, was engaged in a winter campaign against the Cheyenne on the Washita River in present-day Roger Mills County, Oklahoma. On the morning of November 26, after a long, hard march through the knee-deep snow, the regiment discovered the camp of Chief Black Kettle. At dawn, just as the bugles were sounding the charge, the band struck up "Garryowen." To its stirring notes the Seventh charged the camp from three sides and completely defeated the Indians.

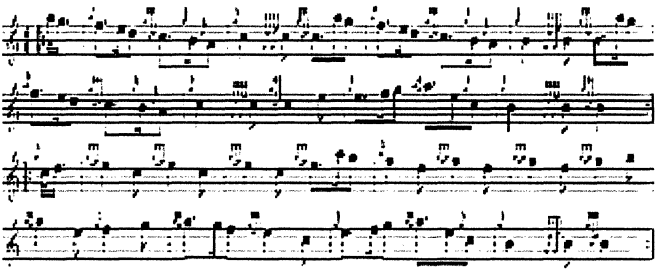
Eight years later Custer heard his favorite tune for perhaps the last time when, with Gen. Alfred Terry, he and the Seventh marched out of Fort Lincoln on the ill-fated expedition which was to end in Custer's complete defeat at the Little Bighorn.

–JMM

Library of Congress

The Seventh Cavalry Charging into Black Kettle's Village at Daylight
They Rushed in to the Tune of "Garry Owen"
(Print from page 804 of Harper's Weekly, December 19, 1868)

THE TUNE AND LYRICS FOR GARRY OWEN



Let Bacchus' sons be not dismayed
but join with me, each jovial blade,
come, drink and sing and lend your aid
to help me with the chorus:

Chorus:
Instead of spa, we'll drink brown ale
and pay the reckoning on the nail;
no man for debt shall go to jail
from Garryowen in glory.

We are the boys that take delight
smashing the Limerick light when lighting,
through all the streets like sporters fighting
and tearing all before us. (Chorus)

We'll break the windows, we'll break the doors,
the watch knock down by threes and fours,
then let the doctors work their cures
and tinker up our bruises. (Chorus)

We'll beat the bailiffs out of fun,
we'll make the mayor and sheriffs run.
We are the boys no man dares dun
if he regards a whole skin. (Chorus)

Our hearts so stout have got no fame,
for soon 'tis known from whence it came.
Where're we go they fear the name
of Garryowen in glory. (Chorus)

The Horses Are Back

Now, in 2017—more than ten years after James M. Morgan Jr. presented his paper "The Horse and VMI" before the Rockbridge Historical Society—horses are again part of the VMI experience, for the Virginia Military Institute once again boasts an equestrian team.

Students, alumni, and faculty members such as Myke Gluck lobbied for years to have an equestrian club to replace those that had existed at VMI in the past. Eventually they enlisted the help of Gammon Castellvi of Penmerryl Farms in Greenville, Virginia, who was more than willing to support such a program with all the facilities at her farm. Finally, in 2009, the VMI Equestrian Club was formed, with Penmerryl Farm supplying the horses and Gammon in charge of training the VMI student riders. From 2009-2012 the club trained at Sunrise Stables in Lexington. The training moved to Penmerryl Farm in 2012.

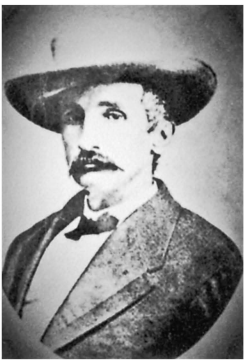
The club (photographed below) began with a mere handful of students but has now grown to have between fifteen and twenty members, fairly evenly split between female and male riders. Five times a week students go to Penmerryl to practice with Gammon and her staff (she accepts students who have never had riding experience). The club participates in local, state, and national events and competitions.

Tori Nuckols, Gammon's daughter, helps in training VMI students for riding events. Students can bring their own horses and board them at Penmerryl, but most students use the horses provided by the farm.

—DN & MN

The VMI Equestrian Club, 2013

DID YOU KNOW?



A former VMI cadet once owned Jefferson's Monticello. *The (undeservedly) little-known VMI cadet Benjamin Franklin Ficklin (Class of 1849 and pictured above)—only some of whose pranks, adventures and accomplishments are listed in the preceding article by James M. Morgan Jr.—once owned Monticello, the former home of President Thomas Jefferson.*

*Uriah Phillips Levy, often recognized unofficially as the first Jewish commodore in the US. Navy, bought the rundown estate in 1834; he had taken an interest in its preservation and restoration because, as he explained, he admired Jefferson for his contributions in the making of the country.**

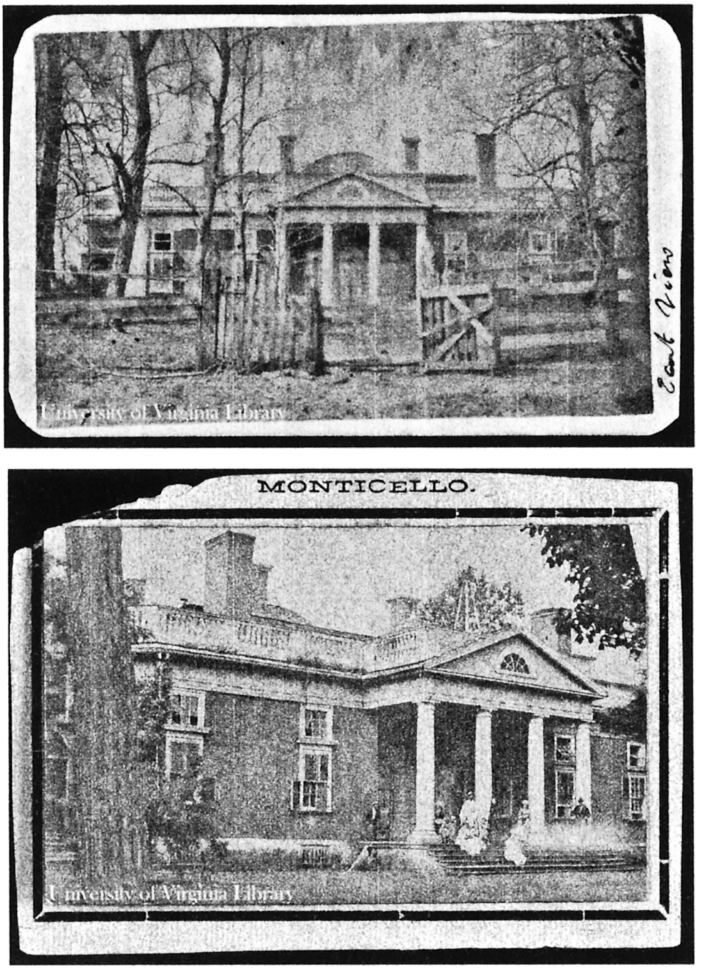
Levy was in the Union Navy in the Civil War. In 1862 (the year of Levy's death of pneumonia in New York City), the Confederate government confiscated Monticello under the 1861 Alien Enemies Act ; it was sold at auction on November 17, 1864. The following notice in the Richmond Daily Dispatch *(November 22, 1864) reported* the sale:

> NOTICE OF SALE OF MONTICELLO . . .
>
> Monticello, the former residence of Thomas Jefferson, in Albemarle county, Virginia, was sold at auction on Thursday, under the sequestration act, for eighty thousand five hundred dollars—Benjamin F. Ficklin purchaser.

Though he did not live at Monticello, Ficklin did occasionally stay there. It is reported, however, that certain of his relatives (he had no wife or children) did live in the house and that his father actually died in Jefferson's bed.

Ficklin did not receive the actual title to the property until March 17, 1865—three weeks and two days before Lee's surrender at Appomattox. The United States Government soon seized the property and returned it to Uriah

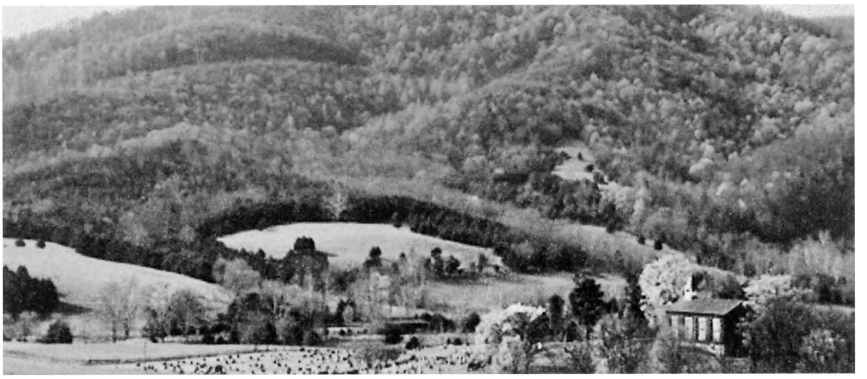
Levy's heirs. Due first to bad oversight during Levy's last years and later the upheavals of war, the property had been neglected and abused for a long time. It would be years before Monticello was to be restored again. –MN



Monticello before and after the 1880s Restoration
(The 1875 photo above is by William Roads; the later photo below is by an unknown. photographer.)

**Much of the information for this "Did You Know" segment can be found in Marc Leepson's* Saving Monticello *(2001).*

Oxford Presbyterian Church



On the Buffalo Side
Old Oxford Church, Rockbridge County

Forgotten Heroes from The Buffalo Side of Rockbridge

Horace Douty

Let's begin with the upper waters of South Buffalo near the Botetourt County line. Today the road seems little more than a scenic nature trail along the meandering trout stream. Two hundred fifty years ago it was a major north-south artery, first used as an Indian warpath. White settlers moved in, and for the next hundred years those headwaters teemed with industrial activity some eight miles upstream from the log fort called Oxford Meeting

House.

The Taylor Tannery came in first, creating the finest leather products in these "back parts" of Virginia. A substantial number of employees brought their families. The hills rang with the sounds of axes and oxen. Heavy loads of local tanbark rolled in from every direction, while loads of finished leather rolled out. One of the remarkable Taylors named William taught school and later preached in the little village. He went on to win international fame as "Bishop of Africa and the World" but seems strangely forgotten in his Rockbridge homeland.

Matthias Rapp and his wife Mary Saville gave the community its name. He is the genius who designed and built powerful horizontal water turbines in contrast to the familiar vertical overshot wheels. By 1850 Rapps Mill, Virginia, embraced two general stores, a post office, two schools, a church, a cemetery, three mills, a large tannery, several distilleries and assorted cottage industries. The highland village rivaled Lexington as Rockbridge's commercial center. When the North River Canal eventually chose to follow the Maury (North) River instead of Buffalo Creek, the die was cast. Lexington, not Rapps, evolved as the waterway port and industrial hub. But Rapps Mill continued to thrive. Strong turbines drove the mills, the furniture factory and the grain-grinding equipment. Commercial activity was strong.

The *Lexington Gazette* of January 20, 1898, describes a new business venture in an article titled, "The Onyx Stone Quarry." The report glowingly predicts that handsome homes across America would be demanding polished stone tabletops, mined and pro-

cessed at Rapps Mill. Massive stalactites were transported the short distance by rail line to the mill, then sliced into shining furniture tops. As with other ventures during that era, the golden boom gradually faded, the cavern forgotten. The impressive cave did continue to provide an intriguing meeting place for church activity on hot summer Sundays. Its day may come again as governments and industries seek remote shelters for storage and safety.

Today the commercial swirl has fallen silent. The rural landscape is largely reclaimed by mother nature. The unique home built by Matthias Rapp still stands, occupied by Dr. James Parsons and his son Tom and daughter Ruth, with the walls of stacked two -by-fours yet visible. The church and cemetery are in use. Beneath the forest canopy a persistent historian can find carefully engineered trenches which once carried a heavy flow of water power to the busy mills.

The number of mills which operated along Buffalo Creek may be unsurpassed anywhere. Small and large, they mostly processed the local grain harvest. The settlers were Scots-Irish Presbyterians who seemed to thrive on hard work. However, they were clever enough to realize that if a gallon of Scotch whiskey brought more profit than a wagonload of corn, Christian stewardship demanded that the crop be distilled. God helped them grow the grain. Surely He meant for them to process it in these nearby mills and turn it into a value-added product such as whiskey. For nearly a century whiskey was a major export from Rockbridge. In a good year more than 60,000 gallons left the wharf at Lexington alone. Transporting an equivalent amount of raw grain was out of

the question. Many, if not most, of the leading Presbyterian elders operated commercial distilleries on their farms. Once liquefied, there were no problems with spoilage, or rats, or mice, or over-production.

We leave Rapps, following the bright water downstream to encounter the legendary "Uncle Bob" Hamilton. Here was a witty man who loved fun and who filled the cup of life to the brim. Bob was so busy hunting, fishing and making money he had little time to waste in church, so he compensated by simply building a house of worship. We now call it Hamilton School, one of the oldest of its kind still standing. Uncle Bob gave nicknames to everything, including his log church—or school. He called it Coonskin College, because so many coonskin caps appeared there on raucous election days. Bob freely permitted every religious faith to use his building on a first-come basis. Bishop Taylor began preaching here before covering America and most of the world with his powerful message. Black families buried their dead in the grassy churchyard. Civil War volunteers got their first taste of drills and training on that level ground. Uncle Bob's church filled a need as school and community center for several generations, but now sits beside the road like a ragged beggar.

Bob Hamilton's farm can be recognized today by the sign proclaiming "Dundee Plantation." There he entertained anyone who would hunt and fish with him. Native trout were plentiful in Buffalo Creek. Grouse, quail and deer populated the uplands. Rabbits burst from every thicket. Foxes entertained mounted huntsmen. Raccoons kept hounds bugling at night. Following an after-

noon of vigorous sport in the colorful autumn hills, Uncle Bob's cook set a feast for the party before a blazing fireplace. He served generous quantities of the best adult beverages in the Buffalo area, made on his own premises from his own fruits and grains. Now we understand why Col. John Thomas Lewis (J. T. L.) Preston and other Lexington notables were such frequent visitors.

Alex Caruthers and J. T. L. Preston took a trip out west, encountering some trouble with Snakefoot Indians. Back in Rockbridge, while visiting Uncle Bob, Caruthers spotted some extraordinarily long bare footprints along the creek. He exclaimed with great authority that such prints could only be made by a Snakefoot Indian. Although Bob easily recognized the tracks of his bigfooted neighbor Elisha, his humor and wit took charge. "Son, you are absolutely right. This has to be Snakefoot Territory!" The name stuck. Young Caruthers spread word in Lexington that Native Americans still lurked in the hills and hollows of Buffalo. Not just any kind, but Snakefoot Indians, for he had identified their tracks. I think Uncle Bob smiles in heaven today when people write their address as "Snakefoot Lane, Lexington, Virginia."

Some old maps show the south branch of Buffalo Creek as Snakefoot. Honorable Judge Robert Johnston was born near Hamilton School. He rose in fame to become a member of the Confederate Congress. Despite his status, Judge Johnston was commonly called "Snakefoot Johnston" in the polished halls of justice. If anyone should ask you tomorrow where Snakefoot Territory lies in Virginia, take them to the Old Oxford Presbyterian Church and point upstream of the South Buffalo along the western edge of

Short Hill. The entire valley is Snakefoot.

We cannot depart Snakefoot and Uncle Bob without a reference to the Short Hill Turnpike, long abandoned. At considerable expense that highway was carefully graded and built to connect the Blue Grass Trail (in front of Oxford) with the shipping facilities on the James River near Glasgow. Instead of skirting the mountain as our roads do now, the turnpike chose to conquer the summit. For a century it carried local and long-distance traffic from Glasgow to Buffalo and from Oxford to the blue grass of Kentucky. Local settlers easily avoided paying toll. They opened so many avenues around the tollgates, the main road became known as the Short Hill Shunpike.

The Rev. Samuel Houston used the turnpike regularly. Please take note: Gen. Sam Houston and the Rev. Samuel Houston are two different men. They are cousins, both born in Rockbridge. Both earned fame on battlefields. But the parson came along thirty-five years earlier than Gen. Sam Houston, or President Houston as he was known in Texas.

The venerable Rev. Houston founded a classical school and theological seminary at his historic home called Rural Valley, educating farmers' sons for professions in ministry and law. He invented successful farm equipment and promoted new agricultural practices. His horticultural publications inspired growers over the entire southland of America. He conducted more weddings than any other pastor in the county, many of them up there on the crest of Short Hill Mountain to save travel time for himself and the newlyweds.

He was pastor of the Oxford, Falling Springs and High Bridge Churches. He also often preached in the Hamilton School building, which was used as a church.

Rev. Houston first married Mary, the sister of Capt. James Hall, who lived next to Oxford Church. Mary Hall was known for her beauty and especially her striking eyes. One was blue, the other jet black. Tragically, Mary died in Tennessee, enfolded in the arms of her heartbroken husband. Our young hero moved back here to stay. His lifelong mentor was the Rev. Dr. William Graham. Both men were intellectual giants bordering on genius. At different times each of them served as pastor of Oxford.

Rev. Houston's impact on Rockbridge is so phenomenal it is strange that he could be forgotten. As a soldier of the American Revolution, he helped win the famous battle of Guilford Court House. He established the first Presbyterian church in the state of Tennessee, where historic highway markers give him acclaim. Back in Rockbridge, he served as secretary for the trustees of Liberty Hall. He was instrumental in securing that notable gift from President George Washington, which eventually saved the little college—which was first called Liberty Hall, then Washington College, and later Washington and Lee University.

Without William Graham there would never have been a Washington and Lee University. He was the founder and first principal of Liberty Hall. Yet he too is largely forgotten, lying under the grass on the east side of Lee Chapel on Washington and Lee's campus. I wonder how he feels as visitors pass his unnoticed grave while flocking to the other side of the Chapel to place flow-

ers on a horse's monument. Graham died less than two hundred years ago. How soon we forget!

Oxford Church is more than 250 years old but, thankfully, is not forgotten. First came the log fort, called Oxford Meeting House, because only the Anglican Church was officially recognized in Virginia at the time, and so was the only religious body that could have a building called a church. The sturdy eight-sided fort stood for sixty years only a few feet from the present Old Oxford Church building. The graveyard was in place then, the only public burying ground in this part of Rockbridge.

Poor Daniel Blain's young heart would be broken while he served as Oxford's pastor. He had won the heart, he thought, of a lovely little redhead named Mary Moore. He admired not only her loveliness but her strength, too. After all, she had survived the hell of Indian captivity as a young girl. Mary was formally engaged to be his wedded wife. But look what happened. She suddenly married another Presbyterian clergyman, the Rev. Samuel Brown from just up the road at New Providence Church. Our hearts go out to Daniel. Here on this very knoll he sobbed his grief. Here he endured the consoling but embarrassed murmurs and nods of his congregation. Adding insult to injury, none other than his friend and colleague the Rev. Houston performed the ceremony.

Ironically, Elizabeth Brown, daughter of Rev. John Brown, first pastor of New Providence, had broken the heart of William Graham some years earlier by rejecting his ardent love. When Eusebius McCorkle was pastor of Oxford, he too fell in love with the

gorgeous Elizabeth. His tears moistened the sod around Old Oxford Church while she married Thomas Craighead, son of the Rev. Alexander Craighead, first owner of Thorn Hill, the historic ridge where John and Magdalena (Woods) Bowyer built their classic mansion around 1790. (The author and his wife Ellen built their brick colonial home next door in 2007, naming it Magdalena.) Oxford's early pastors were definitely not lucky in love. Poor Eusebius promptly moved away, never to return.

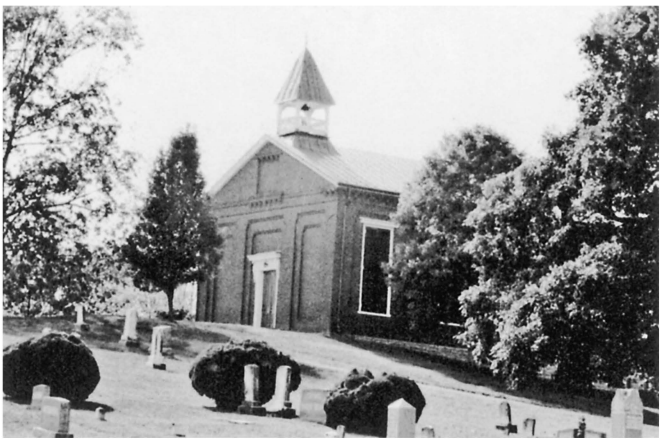
Capt. James Hall, mentioned earlier, may be the most famous and controversial resident of Oxford's graveyard. Since I am the one telling the story, I choose to remember and honor James first as a British warrior in America's Colonial and Indian wars, then as a fighting patriot during our Revolution. Hall and his Buffalo militia had suffered too much from the handsome Shawnee chief Hokolesqua, or Cornstalk. So they killed him and the other Shawnee who had been detained when they came to Point Pleasant Fort on a mission to discuss growing tensions between them and the settlers.

At Gov. Patrick Henry's insistence, Capt. Hall stood trial for murder in Rockbridge's first court. He won acquittal, not surprisingly since his military compatriot Gen. John Bowyer of Thorn Hill was the court's presiding officer. James Hall's valiant service to our nation in the Revolutionary War was rewarded by a huge grant of acreage lying just outside Oxford churchyard and extending all the way to the Mississippi. He and his family accepted only a small fraction of the land, an area from Buffalo Creek to Wide Gap Road. His stone house stands a few hundred yards south of

Oxford Church on the hill overlooking the cress pond. The stone exterior walls are now covered in white stucco and topped by a red roof. Do not confuse his home, as I first did, with the beautiful stone house below the church at the end of Oxford Lane.

When Capt. Hall died, his brother-in-law Rev. Samuel Houston conducted the burial service at Oxford Church. Hall and his wife are buried in Oxford's graveyard. For two hundred years his and Martha's graves had no marker. Then, in 2008, a monument was installed outside the front door of the church.

Oxford Presbyterian Church



Graves by the Front Door of Old Oxford Church

Also buried here on a grassy knoll are more than one hundred soldiers, veterans representing every declared war in America's history. Close to the knoll stands a monument to the Pettigrew family. Six of them died outside during a terrible winter storm while their home burned to the ground in the saddle of House Mountain. Were they murdered? The coroners thought so, and they ruled it homi-

cide. A suspect was tried and found guilty, but the judge objected and released him, to the outrage of the community. Sympathetic neighbors erected a monument over their mass grave in 1847. Unbelievably, they had to do it again in 1902. A powerful burst of lightning reduced the first monument to rubble, as if the family had not suffered sufficient trauma.

Nearby stands the white marble stone for Charlotte Bowyer, all alone in her large plot. Charlotte gave everything to some cruel con artists who promised to bring her husband and son home from the Civil War prison camp where they were unjustly detained. Her men were already dead, way up there in New Jersey, and the crooks knew it. Charlotte's story will make you weep.

Only a few feet from Charlotte is the large granite block inscribed "DIEHL." George West Diehl and his wife Iva are there. The tireless couple made history in several southern states as educators, authors, historians, genealogists and church leaders. Dr. Diehl once served as president of the Rockbridge Historical Society. Iva Shafer grew up near Hamilton School, never dreaming she would marry a tall Pennsylvanian who would henceforth keep her life racing, but it happened.

T. Rogers

George West Diehl

Her sister Lora was the last teacher at Hamilton School. Lora married Granville Johnston, the surveyor. Their daughter Mary married Pat Brady of Buffalo Forge. Granville and Lora's son John

William Johnston and his wife Louise were active members of Oxford Church for many years. Dr. Diehl served as pastor for nineteen years. He and Iva gave Dundee Plantation its name. Ida wanted to honor a family name: Dunn. However, adding George's last name gave them "Dunn-Diehl," which sounded too much like the close of a bargain. They shortened it to Dundee. It was Iva who brought Dr. Diehl to Buffalo Creek and to Oxford.

The cemetery at Old Oxford Church provides stories seemingly without end of remarkable men and women who chose to live and die in one of the most picturesque sections of our valley.*

Near to the Oxford Church the traveler encounters Sideway, Virginia, so called because the post office sits sideways, practically blocking the road. Oxford Church's mailing address could have been Sideway or Oakdale, but for whatever reason, the Murat post office on the other side of Kyger Hill got that honor. How did they come up with such an unusual name as Murat? After the tiny building was constructed, neighbors could not agree on a proper title. On the last day before the name was to be submitted, the exasperated postmaster exclaimed, "The next foot to cross this threshold shall name my post office!" In strolled a big tomcat. Could he do it? When asked, that cat did not hesitate. He looked the man in the eye and enunciated as carefully as could be, "Mew-raaw." After the laughter subsided the postmaster said, "I'm keeping my word. It's a good name. One of Napoleon's officers is General Murat, and he loves America." Some folks have difficulty with the pronunciation, yet

* *The glorious book* Rockbridge: A Photographic Essay *(2005), by Bruce Young, Jennifer Law Young and Willard Scott, begins and ends with scenes from Oxford.*

easily master other French words such as "bouquet" and "croquet" despite the non-phonetic spelling.

On Kyger Hill the visitor might pause to remember Lucy Long. Next to Traveller, Lucy Long was Gen. R. E. Lee's favorite horse, gentle and dependable and strong. She even served as his war horse when the spirited Traveller proved too difficult to control after Lee's hands were injured. Why do I mention her? Lucy Long's grave lies to your left as you top Kyger Hill and look into Oxford valley.

Another grave on Kyger Hill is that of Robert Granville Campbell, another patriarch of Buffalo. Granville, as he was called, had distinguished himself as a Confederate soldier, and no doubt it was he who persuaded his chaplain John Andrew Scott to come here as pastor at Oxford. Veterans built the "new" brick church that even today shelters the congregation of Old Oxford Church. They dismantled the old stone structure, carefully salvaged the materials, and in 1868, during one of the most difficult times in the American South, worked the miracle. Granville Campbell also deserves credit for helping construct and pay for what was then New Oxford Church across the hill, now called Collierstown Presbyterian Church. Campbell built a handsome brick home for his family at the junction of North and South Buffalo. That gracious, pillared edifice still stands and is currently owned and occupied by Will and Jane Harris and their children.

Mr. Campbell became seriously ill. We are told that on his way to Baltimore for treatment he stopped the coach atop Kyger Hill. For long, poignant moments he gazed upon his church among

the meadows and mountains. Lovingly he absorbed the scenery, thinking he may never return. His premonition was accurate. He died at Johns Hopkins Hospital on June 29, 1895. The noble hero and his wife Sarah (Steele) rest outside the church door, surrounded by others with whom they shared a lifetime of affection.

Across the creek from Campbell's home we find another distinguished family, the Savilles. I have mentioned Mary Saville, wife of Matthias Rapp. Let me introduce you to Sidney Saville. He and his Oxford pastor Rev. Thomas Mowbray had a dream. They envisioned an academy of higher learning, here on Buffalo Creek. Within the walls of Old Oxford Church itself they put together an organization, and in less than one year they made their dream a reality. In 1904 Palmer Academy arose in a cornfield and opened its doors as a private school; then, in 1907, it became the first public high school in Rockbridge County outside of Lexington. The newly hired principal, another Presbyterian preacher, had to be fired because he did not know how to discipline the rawboned country boys. Sidney Saville had just retired as one of the first school superintendents of Rockbridge, and he knew how. He stepped in and saved the school. As teacher and headmaster he used his imposing body and mind—and a hickory stick. The troubles ended immediately.

Rev. Mowbray was not so fortunate. His term at Oxford ended before his own children could reap the benefits of his dream school. His crime: He entered a quarantined home to have prayer with a dying parishioner. His arrest and the resulting furor forced the visionary pastor to pack up and move out of the brand-new

parsonage. Palmer Academy was named for another Presbyterian divine, Rev. Dr. Benjamin Palmer, who never heard of the school on Buffalo Creek. Sidney heard him preach once at a Washington and Lee University event. He was so impressed he chose the name shortly after Palmer's death in New Orleans. Palmer Academy survives today as a community center, famed for the annual ice cream supper which draws thousands of hungry enthusiasts from far and near.

Ida, another strong member of the Saville clan, graduated from Palmer. Four years later she held a degree from Harrisonburg State Normal School, now known as James Madison University. ln 1925 Ida stood at the altar in the Oxford Church to marry Ralph Erskine Moore from Raphine. The couple immediately moved to the other side of the planet, and in Pakistan they performed astonishing mission work: Churches, agricultural centers, schools and hospitals flourish because Ralph and Ida were willing to leave our fertile paradise. They turned a foreign desert into a fruitful garden. Their names belong at the top of the list of unsung heroes from Buffalo.

While we are speaking of missionary successes, let us not forget Dora Jane Armstrong of Dry Hollow. You need to know about Dry Hollow. Ida grew up there. So did Dora. A bestselling author immortalized Dry Hollow by making it the setting of one of his novels, which we will learn about shortly. Where is this place? If you were to walk out the back door of Oxford Church and take Meeting House Lane over the hill toward Collierstown, you would be there in the first mile.

Born August 17, 1898, Dora Jane Armstrong made a momentous decision when she was young and single. She decided to take her medical skills to the jungles of Africa, to what was then called the Belgium Congo and is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. There she learned that when a mother died in childbirth, her baby—whether dead or alive—was put in the grave with her. Milk was not available in the jungle. The people kept no milk-producing animals, and they found it impossible to find someone to feed an orphaned baby, because they thought the jealous spirit of the dead birth mother would cause catastrophe to the foster mother.

This brave country girl, Dora Armstrong, brought about a transformation. Following the experimentations of George Washington Carver of Tuskegee, and the ideas of E. B. Stilz, who came as a missionary to the Congo, she determined that a milk could be made from a local crop: peanuts. She returned from Africa to work with chemists and nutritionists at Johns Hopkins University, where she perfected a baby formula made from peanuts. Peanut milk is widely used in Africa today. Thousands of African children owe their lives to "Mama Earth," as they called Dora.

When Dora came home, she married John Henry ("Johnny") Clark, continued as a nurse in our local hospital, and took in several little girls to raise. Until her death on June 24, 1963, she was affectionately called "Aunt Dora" by the people of Rockbridge. In heaven she must be "Saint Dora of Dry Hollow," another world-class heroine.

William Howard Armstrong took his first breath in Collierstown, under the shadow of Green Hill Mountain's north face.

On that September morning in 1914 nobody would have guessed that little Billy would become famous. They knew he was bright in school, reading all available books and making clever sketches of rural scenes others had not even noticed. William Armstrong became a schoolteacher. In 1944 he and his bride Martha Stone Street moved to Connecticut. With his own hands, this Collierstown boy built a stone house for his family. Then, Martha suddenly died, leaving William as father and mother to three little children. His book entitled *Through Troubled Waters* (1957) tells about the heartbreaking tragedy.

The story which brought William Armstrong fame is his novel *Sounder* (1969), winner of the John Newbery Medal (1970), and which was made into an immensely popular movie. However, the novel by Armstrong that demands the attention of those interested in Rockbridge history is entitled *The Mills of God* (1973). This gripping tale takes place in Dry Hollow, Rockbridge County, Virginia, USA. Like *Sounder*, it is the story of a boy and a dog.

We should not forget William. His cheerful genius as teacher and author earned honors and awards across America. He and Ida and Aunt Dora can and should be wonderful role models for our children, in contrast to the current American idols with clay feet.

The next village after Dry Hollow is Marmion, Virginia, with the Potter-Wade Mill, a general store, post office and doctor's office all in sight of each other. Marmion is the dateline for the writings of Gardner P. Hutton, who contributed news items for Rockbridge publications. He tells us that in 1850 there were more than thirty commercial establishments lining the creek upstream from

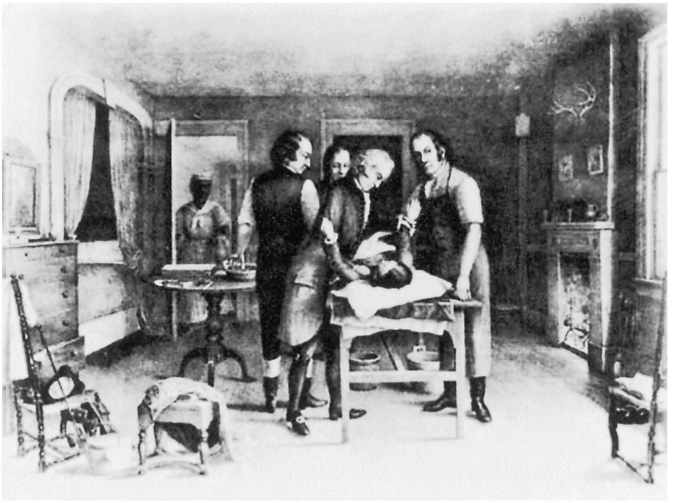
Marmion, including two more post offices (Collierstown and Alphin). The busy Lexington-Covington Turnpike had turned Collierstown into a business hub.

At Effinger School, only a mile around the bend from Oxford, Toad Run enters the mainstream. It was *Todd* Run back then. Jane Todd began her life there and grew to womanhood. She and another Rockbridge native, a neighbor boy named Ephraim McDowell, would change the course of human medical history. Here at Oxford in 1794 Jane stood before the Rev. Samuel Houston to marry James Crawford. The young couple moved to Kentucky and raised two distinguished sons, one of whom became the mayor of Louisville. The other son became a Presbyterian minister in Indiana. In the late fall of 1809, Jane, then forty-six and already the mother of several children, believed she was pregnant with twins.

Since she had heard that Ephraim McDowell, her former Rockbridge neighbor and now Dr. McDowell, had also migrated to the Kentucky frontier, she contacted him. He traveled the sixty miles from his home in Danville to Jane's home near Greensburg to examine her. He discovered that Jane had a large ovarian tumor and offered her an experimental surgery, since it was her only chance to survive. He also told her that if she agreed to it, she would have to come to his home in Danville, where he had the necessary equipment.

Jane Crawford rode the sixty miles to Dr. McDowell's home on horseback through cold and snow. After a few days' rest, she underwent the operation on Christmas morning of 1809, a Sunday.

While the congregation of the village church bowed in ear-



Dr. Ephraim McDowell Operates on Jane Todd Crawford
Christmas Morning, 1909

nest prayer, these two Rockbridge Presbyterians entered into a surgery never before successfully accomplished on planet Earth. Dr. Ephraim McDowell removed a tumor weighing twenty-two pounds from a patient who survived the ordeal. Hostile doctors everywhere scoffed and called the operation a hoax. They declared with absolute authority that no person could be opened up, have a twenty-two pound tumor removed, and live. Jane proved them wrong by living thirty-three more healthy years. She later wrote that, as she was given no anesthesia (none was available then), she endured by reciting Bible verses learned in the Old Oxford Church.

Thanks to Jane and Ephraim, millions of lives have since been saved. My own was, during an emergency appendectomy. Ironically, however, appendicitis killed Dr. McDowell before other doctors had learned to do what he had pioneered.

It strikes me as strange that so few local people know about that miracle. However, the world at large recognizes McDowell's gift. In 1909 physicians converged from all nations at a convention in New York City labeled The McDowell Centennial. They were celebrating our own Rockbridge native, Magdalena's grandson Dr. Ephraim McDowell.

And who is Magdalena? She is the famous beauty who with her husband John McDowell opened Borden's Grant back in 1737. After John was killed in 1742—one of Rockbridge's first victims of Indian hostility—the young widow married Benjamin Borden Jr. Only a few years later, Borden died of smallpox, making Magdalena not only the loveliest but also the richest woman west of the Blue Ridge. You will recall that she and her third husband Gen. John Bowyer built Thorn Hill Estate and named our county of Rockbridge and also the town of Lexington. Nobody knows where her grave is, but I suspect it is atop the historic hill of the same name. Now you can understand why my wife Ellen and I call our new home Magdalena.

Up the Blue Grass Trail from Oxford toward North Buffalo is where Squire John Steele Leech put his roots in the 1700s. At birth John was so tiny they held him in a quart cup. He grew to be over six feet tall with a body that matched his middle name. He won a sizeable wager once by mowing, with a cradle-scythe, eleven acres of rye in one day. Squire John is the subject of a glowing article written by Col. J. T. L. Preston, the Lexington legend mentioned earlier. His article was published in the *Lexington Gazette* of March 28, 1875. In this piece Preston praises John Leech with-

out reservation as one of the great men of Rockbridge. Without John Steele Leech, Oxford Church may have disappeared. Here is the story.

Rev. Andrew Baker Davidson, another hero, served as Oxford's pastor for more than 25 years during the first half of the nineteenth century. In the 1830s the Lexington–Covington Turnpike suddenly opened Collierstown to major traffic between Richmond and Charleston. Rev. Davidson's keen intuition responded. He began to hold services in Collierstown at Ship Rock Meeting House, where the little congregation rapidly grew. Davidson named the church New Oxford, and moved all official records and liturgical paraphernalia from the Old Oxford Church to Colliers Creek. Most of the members followed. Meeting House Lane, which for more than ninety years had brought people from Collierstown to Oxford, now saw the flow reversed. As a result, Oxford church closed its doors permanently—or so people thought.

Squire John Leech was never a member, much less an officer, at Oxford. Yet for some reason he threw all his powerful energy into a cause which he considered vital. He mounted his horse and rode hundreds of miles to unfamiliar Presbytery meetings, eloquently insisting that a church must stand at the century-old graveyard of Old Oxford Church. After grueling years of earnest commitment, he won. Presbytery finally agreed to establish a new church where the old one had been. Squire Leech and a handful of

Find A Grave

Picture Identified as Squire John Leech

faithful members defiantly named the new church Old Oxford. The two Oxfords, old and new, still create confusion when distant historians come to Rockbridge looking for "Oxford Church."

John Leech deserves honor and appreciation. He lies out front in the old graveyard he fought for so valiantly. His descendants remain on Buffalo, resolute and active. Unlike the squire, they joined Oxford to serve as members and officers of the ancient church. The Leech family also distinguish themselves as community leaders. The name appears often in local and state legislatures. Leeches from Buffalo have always brought honor to the positions.

When America celebrated her two-hundredth anniversary, another country, Canada, wondered what secrets made our nation so strong. Canadian Public Broadcasting was given the task of answering that question. Out of our fifty states, they chose Virginia in which to find the answer. From all the Virginia counties, they settled on Rockbridge. In Rockbridge, they zeroed in on Oxford and Buffalo for the rural segment. Charlie Boy Leech, his wife Mary Mackey and their children are heavily featured in the resulting documentary film, along with Oxford Church. This passionate movie is entitled *American Trinity*, because it identifies the three vital sources of America's greatness. You've never heard of it? By this point you shouldn't be surprised. It is simply one more well-kept secret in Rockbridge, just like the forgotten heroes of Buffalo.

There is hope, though. We have dusted off some wonderful names from the area of the Old Oxford Church. Perhaps we will see the day when all Rockbridge schoolchildren are made aware of their amazing heritage. It will surely give them strength and wis-

dom, so desperately needed to keep our nation noble.

When visitors to Old Oxford Church leave its sanctuary and step through Oxford's doors into the air of the Valley, they should take a deep breath and be aware that with this air they are inhaling the uncommon chemistry of Rockbridge County, Virginia—the same air that has inspired so many ordinary people and transformed them into heroes in numbers out of all proportion to wealth and population.

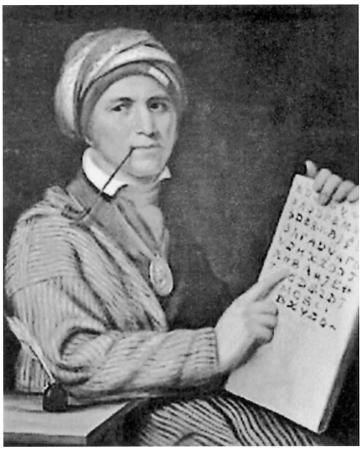
✝

W. D. Novak

From the Old Oxford Church Front Door

Dr. Horace Douty was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia, but as a career Presbyterian pastor who served churches in North Carolina and Virginia, he has lived mostly elsewhere until returning to Rockbridge in 2004. It was then that he became interested in the "uncommon" history of the area. Horace and his wife Ellen live in the home they built beside historic Thorn Hill mansion overlooking Lexington. He is the author of History Lessons from a Country Church, *volumes 1 and 2. He has been pastor of the Oxford Church near Lexington, Virginia, since 2006. This article is from his presentation before the Rockbridge Historical Society on September 28, 2009.*

DID YOU KNOW?



John Thomas Lewis (J. T. L.) Preston, Lexington native and founder of the Virginia Military Institute, had Cherokee relatives. *Preston was second cousin to the owner who gave his name to the splendidly appointed Blair House in Washington, D.C.: Francis Preston Blair. Francis Preston Blair's wife was Violet Gist (on right, above).*

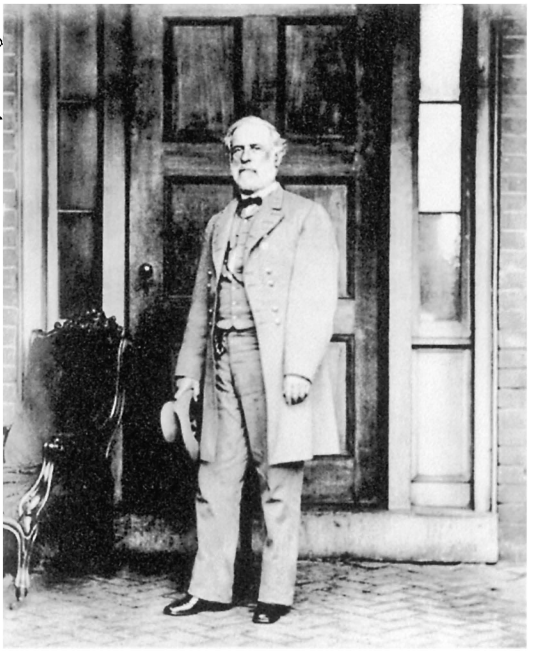
It is surprising to some to learn that—according to long family tradition and the conclusions of researchers—Eliza Violet Gist was the half-sister of the famous Cherokee Sequoyah (on left, above), the developer of the system of Cherokee writing called the syllabary. Sequoyah (whose English name is George Gist) and Eliza Violet Gist Blair are the children of Col. Nathaniel Gist by different mothers, one Cherokee and one of English ancestry.

Today the Blair House is owned by the people of the United States and is used as a guest house by the U.S. Government. But in the nineteenth century, as the beautiful and gracious home of Francis Preston Blair Sr. and his wife Eliza Violet Gist Blair, it was a place where the rich and the powerful of Washington society were entertained.

While Francis and Eliza Violet Blair lived in luxury in the Capitol, Sequoyah moved with his tribe across the South and Southwest, living in rustic log homes and struggling with poverty. In 1843 Sequoyah died in Mexico, searching for a lost band of Cherokees.

—MN

Library of Congress



Robert E Lee by Matthew Brady
(Richmond, April 1865)

LEE'S THREE DECISIONS

DAVID COX

On many a summer afternoon over the thirteen years I served as rector of R. E. Lee Memorial Church in Lexington, Virginia (until 2000), I would sit in my office upstairs and hear through my open window the Lexington Carriage Company guides pull their buggies to a stop. "We do not know," I heard them say, "of any other Episcopal church not named for a saint."

And I would always shake my head. After all, hundreds if not thousands of Episcopal churches carry some ascription of the God-

head, such as Christ Church, Emmanuel Church, or even the original name of this parish: Grace Church.

I could cite some named for beloved leaders who lack the term "saint," such as Bishop Seabury Church in Groton, Connecticut, or Meade Memorial and Johns Memorial in Alexandria and Farmington, recalling two great bishops of Virginia.

Or I could explain the New Testament concept of "saint," which is simply that of a believer who is sanctified by the Holy Spirit to be a servant of God in Christ.

But what I really wanted to do was to say, "Lee not a saint? Sir, you don't understand."

Over the years, I have grown to respect Robert E. Lee not as a saint in the canonized sense but rather in the biblical sense: a person of faith, a Christian, a believer, a servant of Christ. Since leaving the parish named for him, I have become steadily more interested in what he believed, and how that influenced his life and, especially, his momentous decisions that held such import for this state, section, and indeed this nation. Lee was not a theologian, but he did come to take his faith seriously, such that not just the fact of faith and the commitment to faith but also the very content of his faith brought him to the decisions that he made.

But, I believe, his faith was more complex than even he realized, formed and informed by differing traditions of his father and his mother, influenced by his wife and her mother, and by some leading religious figures of his time.

This paper considers three momentous decisions that Lee made: his decision to be confirmed; his decision to side with the

South in the war; and his decision to pursue peace once war was lost. In none of them did he leave a clear paper trail that definitively reveals his rationale for why he chose what he chose. But understanding the nature of his religious beliefs in light of the convictions and the events of his day may spark some enlightened speculation on what guided him to his decisions. If nothing else, perhaps the speculation can be of interest.

First, though, we must consider the background of Lee's faith.

Lee was born into a spiritual house divided. Like all of their genteel circle, Henry and Ann Carter Lee were both Episcopalians. But what it meant to be an Episcopalian was at that very moment changing dramatically, dividing congregations and families—including the Lees.

By the eighteenth century, Anglicanism—a general term to describe the tradition of the Church of England and its derivatives such as the Episcopal Church—had diverged from hard-core doctrines that had bred persecutions and civil wars. Faith in God put on a pragmatic mantle which equated religion with the pursuit of happiness, which in turn was defined as the pursuit of virtue and duty: Do your duty, do what is virtuous, and you find both happiness and God. This was the rationalistic approach that appealed to the Enlightenment in Europe. As preached by Anglican clergy in Virginia and circulated in cheap leaflets read in homes, it influenced figures such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Robert's father, Light Horse Harry Lee.[1]

But even as Anglican churches were filled with colonials ab-

sorbing this highly ethical gospel, others, notably George Whitefield and followers of John Wesley—both priests of the Church of England—were reviving the masses with their evangelical preaching of the Great Awakening. Duty had nothing to do with salvation; relying on what one does to get into heaven smacks too much of works righteousness: Turn to Christ and be saved. Decades passed before Virginia's elite heeded that word, but some at last did, including Mary Lee Fitzhugh Custis, Edmund Jennings Lee, and most relevantly of all, Ann Carter Lee. Robert's future mother-in-law, uncle, and mother became out-and-out evangelicals.

At first the Lee household seemed to be as one. At Stratford Hall, they would gather for prayers, some written by Thomas Wilson, the pious English bishop of Sodor and Man. Ann would read sermons of the enlightened Scottish Presbyterian Hugh Blair, who, like their Sunday-morning preachers, was big on duty but said it better.[2] In Alexandria, they would troop off on Sundays to Christ Church. But as years passed, things changed. The oft-besieged Henry Lee left home for good; Ann remained with five children to rear on little money. Evangelical religion offered more consolation than that of virtuous duty; and her new young rector at Christ Church, William Meade, preached a gospel of faith and conversion, as did clergy who followed him.

The children were caught in the middle. Pity poor Carter, Robert's older brother and recipient of totally conflicting advice from his parents: Henry wrote his son,

> To be virtuous, reason & experience tell us we must be religious. Hold fast yourself (& inculcate on your brother [singular!] to do like) this sheet anchor of happiness, this cititadel [*sic*] in the perils & tempests of life. Cherish it fondly & abhor its two great enemys superstition & enthusiasm. What I understand to be pure religion is a heart void of offence to God & man & a belief or faith in one God who delights in right & reproves wrong—the forms & ceremonys of religion differ, but in essence they all worship the almighty Creator & rest on his providence & protection here & hereafter. Among the ancients I would select for my son's reading Cicero de Natura Dorum & Plato—among the moderns the history of Jesus Christ commonly called the new testament, especially its first four books.

Note some Deistic, Enlightened emphases: of duty, of superstition and enthusiasm as enemies of reasonable religion, of classical writers on a par with Jesus. Speaking of whom, Henry writes,

> Whether Christ was an inspir[ed] man as some believe, or the son of God as Christians assert & some of them believe, all must acknowledge the excellence of the morality he taught & wish its spread for the good of mankind.

[A]s Christians assert & some of them [actually] believe. . . ." Shades of Mr. Jefferson, for whom Jesus was the ultimate moral exemplar. Then Henry concludes:

> As to the sects with us, I cannot help thinking the quaker mode of worship most impressive of man & humanity & therefore to be preferred.
>
> In silence they adore God, to whom no tongue of man cannot [sic] utter appropriate ideas & therefore rightly does the quaker apply silence as best expressing our inferiority & God's superiority—best comporting with our nothingness & his supremacy. But the form of religion is unimportant & may be left with the individual—not so as to its obligations & duties—[3]

So he prefers one of the most individualistic and least creedal liturgical of denominations.

Now hear what Ann wrote to Carter a couple of years later:

> My dear Carter, I am at times very unhappy lest you should become a sosinion [Socinian]—If you should, I shall have aided in making you so, as I permited you to go to a College, where the principles of that sect were disseminated. —Oh! pray fervently for faith in Jesus Christ. He is the only rock of your salvation; and the only security for your resurrection from the grave![4]

So, there you have it: husband and wife on opposite religious poles. He's a virtual Socinian, a fancy name for Unitarian, which she abhors. He slams both her faith and her worship: "Superstition" meant Roman Catholicism, and "Enthusiasm" was a euphemism for evangelicalism like Ann's. Plus, Ann's Episcopalianism is liturgically about as far from Quaker silence as one can imagine. Whereas Henry writes Carter at one point that "your dearest mother is singularly pious from love to Almighty God and love of virtue, which are synonymous; not from fear of hell—a low base influence,"[5] he later insults her creed and church. Poor Carter.

Poor Robert, too? Of him, we know next to nothing. Yes, we know he learned his Prayer Book catechism. He and the other parish children recited it to Mr. Meade, as Meade recalled fifty years later on his deathbed. We know he duteously supported his mother. We also know his close connection with his cousin Cassius, son of Edmund Jennings Lee, who was so strict that he would not allow himself or his slaves to travel on the Sabbath. And it was the religiously-committed Edmund about whom Light Horse Harry said

that, of his brothers, Robert most resembled.[6]

Perhaps Robert was too young to get caught in the middle the way Carter was. Perhaps he dealt with the religious division in the most rational way: He avoided it. In any event, at West Point he applied himself so fully that he managed to avoid both the great Christmas Eggnog Riot of 1826 that nearly got Jeff Davis expelled and also the evangelical revival then under way. The new chaplain, Charles McIlvaine, an Episcopalian, awakened the corps, sometimes literally. His first convert was Leonidas Polk, who became the only Episcopal bishop to serve as a Confederate general and who was to die in battle.

Posted to the swamps of Georgia, Lee writes of attending church in Savannah, whether more to worship or to mingle with the ladies we don't know. But right around the time of his engagement to Mary Anna Randolph Custis, she follows her mother's example with a profound evangelical conversion which, we can tell from letters, was not uppermost on the mind of the virile young officer. He writes of parties and balls; she writes of sermons. Young love.

They married. They had children. They went to church with as much regularity as they could manage. In post after post, Lee found his way to the local Episcopal Church, bringing his family when they were with him, alone when he had to. He, like all his family, read *The Southern Churchman* published by his Diocese of Virginia. He often encountered Bishop Meade, who in addition to all else was his wife's godfather. Thus, they kept in touch with trends, events, and leaders in the Episcopal Church—some of

which opened the eyes of the young churchman.

For instance, when Mary and some of the children accompanied Lee to his posting in St. Louis, they attended Christ Church. They all went back to Arlington; and when Lee returned alone, he found the parish quadrisected, no less: The vestry wanted the bishop to become rector, a common practice, and the bishop agreed only if they hadn't considered anyone else for the job, namely his onetime assistants, a Mr. Heyer and a Mr. Minard. Oh no, the vestry replied, so the bishop accepted, only to find out that each of them had their followings. Lee told Mary,

> The Hyites are bitter against him among whom is Mr. Hallam who says he will not go to the Church again while the B[ishop] is there, that he has treated Mr. H[eyer] very badly etc. The friends of Mr. H. presented him with $5000 over & above his salary before he took his departure. They talk of building a new Church for Mr. Minard & a meeting is to take place on the subject this week. . . . I do not think more than ¼ has attended since my return from up the river that did during the summer.

"Perhaps," he added innocently, "the novelty of the new church has worn off."[7] Imagine that—politics in the church: Robert was coming of age.

Then, as a member of the vestry of St. John's in Brooklyn, New York, Lee found himself in the midst of the "high church" Oxford Movement controversy. As a low-church Virginian, he followed Meade in condemning such catholicizing practices; and when pressed, he used a barracks-room vulgarism to mangle the name of the Puseyites, so-called after one of their leaders.

The point is, Lee became an active, educated churchman who

came to know and even love his church, for better and for worse. Strangely to today's Episcopalians, though, he never received Holy Communion until 1853—that is, just after he was confirmed. And why was he not confirmed until the ripe old age of forty-five? Therein lies the tale of the first of our decisions.

The Episcopal tradition historically values two rites of initiation into the Christian faith. In the first centuries of the Church, these were united as one: A new Christian was baptized, then brought immediately to the bishop sitting nearby, ready to lay hands on and anoint the candidate's head with oil to mark the sealing of the Holy Spirit. In time, the Western church separated these two actions, first the baptism, then the laying-on of hands and anointing by a bishop, so that each action became a single rite: A person was baptized, usually as an infant, then after some years the person would be confirmed when the bishop came around. At that point the person was deemed fully initiated, and thereby admitted to the communion table. We moderns take a different view, which underscores my point that, ever since these two once-conjoined acts were separated, the Church has had an especially hard time explaining the meaning of confirmation. For Bishop Meade and other nineteenth-century Evangelical Episcopalians, its purpose was clear. This was a rite signifying conversion, to be taught and treated as such.

That conviction—that confirmation marked a personal commitment to Christ—raised the bar considerably, and Meade wrote extensively on its spiritual significance. Furthermore, that confirmation punched the ticket to communion meant it elevated one to

the status of "communicant," one who receives the body and blood of Christ, which placed a person in high spiritual cotton. Meade expected much of communicants, too. They would be regular at church, certainly at three of the four times a year that communion was offered. They would exemplify Christian values in their daily lives, including avoiding all those nasty "worldly amusements" that Meade spent a lifetime excoriating. He wanted confirmation candidates to ask themselves, "Hast thou determined, by the help of God . . . that thou wilt renounce all places, amusements and practices unfavorable to piety. . . ?"

In 1850 he got his diocese to declare that "gaming, attendance on horse racing, and theatrical amusements, witnessing immodest and licentious exhibitions or shows, attending public balls, habitual neglect of public worship, or a denial of the doctrines of the Gospel . . . are offences for which discipline should be exercised" on communicants.[8]

As a result, confirmation, like marriage, was not to be undertaken lightly, but reverently, soberly, and in the fear of God. But no dancing? Robert Lee did love to dance.

Was that why Lee wasn't confirmed in his youth, as his children were? Maybe. Perhaps he wasn't around when a bishop came to town; but they all saw a lot of Bishop Meade, cousin and godfather, and also the new assisting bishop, John Johns. That theory doesn't wash. He never recorded having a spiritual experience that was a practical prerequisite for confirmation in Bishop Meade's Virginia. His younger daughters described just such a conversion prior to their confirmation at Trinity in Staunton, Virginia, on

Easter 1857 by Bishop Johns. It would have been out of character for their father to do so. But maybe that's what happened. In Whitefield's phrase, he "closed with Christ."

Consider the timing: Mary Lee's mother, Mary Lee Fitzhugh Custis, died rather suddenly on April 23, 1853. Never had Robert and Mary together endured so great a loss. He had not suffered the like since his mother died in 1829, nor Mary since her uncle Fitzhugh abruptly expired in 1830. Yet that event gives us a clue: Mary came to take her uncle's death so hard that it contributed to her religious conversion, especially when her mother asked, "My child, if this does not turn your heart to God's [grace?], what will?"[9]

Did his mother-in-law's death have a similar effect on Robert? Deep was his loss: "As a son I have always loved her, as a son I deeply mourn her," he wrote Mary a few weeks after the fact. "My heart will cherish her affection [illeg.] till it too ceases to beat, when I pray & trust I may be priviledged [sic] to join her."[10] He had been even more open a week before when trying to comfort his disconsolate wife:

> May God give you strength to bear it & enable us to say, "his will be done." The more I think of our in[calcul?]able loss the greater is my grief. But it is for you, your [dear?] father, for myself, the children, relatives, friends & servants I grieve. Not for her. She has gone from all trouble, care & sorrow to a happy immortality! There to rejoice & praise forever the Lord & Saviour she so long & faithfully[?] served. Let that be our comfort & that our consolation. We must discard all selfishness & all egotism & so act & live as she would have wished. May our death be like hers & may we all meet in happiness in Heaven.[11]

In any event, in July, 1853, he knelt at Christ Church, Alexandria, to receive, with two of his daughters, the laying-on of apostolic hands by Bishop John Johns.

Mary was thrilled. Not only had he confirmed his faith, they could now share communion:

> I had the inexpressible happiness a few weeks since of seeing my two daughters Mary & Annie with their dear Father kneeling at the confirmation table & today I knelt with my husband at the supper of our blessed Lord. Happiness long waited for yet it could only be expressed in silent tears of joy & shall I not trust Thee most kind & merciful Father for the rest. Oh could she, that beloved mother whom we mourn have cried to see this day! . . . Shall we not be able now to do something more for the glory of God. How much is to be accomplished our Lord direct & guide us.[12]

Whether this was a thorough conversion, a turning point of spiritual proportions, or a rite signifying what the Spirit had already wrought, Lee does become even more religiously serious, especially as he finds himself placed where he can actually "do something more for the glory of God." Already, at West Point, he had to decide what religious practices and exemptions to allow or disallow. Then, commanding troops in the wilds of Texas gave him responsibility not only for his own spiritual life but also for that of others. At Camp Cooper, for example, he had to officiate at the burial of one child, then another, the year-old son of a sergeant. He wrote Mary,

> I was admiring his appearance the very day before he was taken sick. Last Thursday his little waxen form was committed to the earth. His father came to me with the tears flowing down his cheeks & asked me to read the funeral service over his body,

> which I did at the grave for the second time in my life. I hope I shall not be called on again, for though I must believe, that it is far better for the child to be called by its Heavenly Creator into His presence, in its purity & innocence, unpolluted by sin & uncontaminated by the vices of the world, still it so wrings a parents heart with anguish, that it is painful to see. Yet I know it was done in mercy to both. In mercy to the child & mercy to the parents. The former has been saved from all sin & misery here, & the latter have been given a touching appeal, & powerful inducement to prepare for hereafter. May it prove effective, & may they require no more severe admonition.[13]

Notice, he moves from being a priest-like figure to meditating as a theologian on that most intractable of theological questions: Why is there evil in the world? His answer? It all happens for a reason or, in this case, two. God took the child out of this vale of misery for its own sake, but also for the sake of its parents, as a "touching appeal, & powerful inducement to prepare for hereafter."

Especially in confronting death, Lee shows a doctrine of providence hard at work, trying to explain God's role as both the ultimate ruler of all things and the direct instigator of all that happens, while still being "good." He is not only God of the universe, as his father might say, but also Lord of all creatures, as his mother believed. Since God always acts with reason, he must have some purpose in mind for taking the child in one case, his mother-in-law in another. So, God offers release to this child from this terrible world, while teaching the parents to shape up their own spiritual lives.

We might think this rather harsh, but it worked for Lee, for Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and for Francis H. Smith, who was

as evangelical an Episcopalian as Lee was.[14] So please remember these points: God acts. God acts with reason, and that reason is for our good. So the Christian should do two things: be resigned to what happens, because it is of God, and to look for God's silver lining no matter how dark the cloud may seem.

So God was in charge. Lee applied this principle in many ways, and not just regarding death. He perceived God's hand in something so simple as providing family companions to travel with Mary to Bath County. As he wrote to Mary from Texas June 5, 1857:

> See how kind our Heavenly father is to us. Always arranging for us better than we could for ourselves, & preparing blessings that we could not anticipate. May he always preserve in us such a clear sense of our obligations, that upon the receipt of every favour we may immediately turn our eyes to him from whom all cometh, & praise him & adore him as we ought.

And he wrote to her later, on July 1, 1860, of a potential crop failure, "Man proposes, but God disposes, & we must be content."[15]

He approached slavery in the same way. Lee and all his close kinfolk abhorred slavery even as they all relied on it for their way of life. Bishop Meade advocated the American Colonization Society and enlisted the Custises in a cause that naively sought to emancipate slaves and send them to Liberia, as it were "back to where they came from" (even if they didn't). Mary keenly wanted this for one of her maids.[16]

While Robert wasn't so avid about that idea, he too believed in the gradual emancipation of slaves, as guided not by governmental intrusion but by the grace of God, as carried out by people

such as his father-in-law, whose will provided that his slaves be freed. Lee, his executor, took this seriously, writing to one, "Mr. Custis directed that his slaves should be emancipated as soon as his debts & certain legacies could be paid. The funds for this are to be derived from the sale of certain land & the proceeds of his estates on the Pamunkey. Justice to the negroes requires that this should be accomplished as soon as possible."[17]

So he was against slavery. He also opposed secession. But he was torn. He wrote to his son Fitzhugh on January 23, 1861:

> The South in my opinion has been aggrieved by the acts of the North as you say. I feel the aggression, & am willing to take every proper step for redress. It is the principle I contend for, not individual or private benefit. As an American citizen I take great pride in my country, her prosperity & institutions & would defend any state if her rights were invaded. But I can anticipate no greater calamity for the country than a dissolution of the Union. It would be an accumulation of all the evils we complain of, & I am willing to sacrifice every thing but honor for its preservation. I hope therefore that all constitutional means will be exhausted, before there is a resort to force. Secession is nothing but revolution. The framers . . . intended [the Constitution] for perpetual union, so expressed in the preamble, & for the establishment of a government, not a compact, which can only be dissolved by resolution in the consent of all the people in convention assembled. It is idle to talk of secession. . . . In 1808 secession was termed treason by Virginia statesmen. What can it mean? Still a union that can only be maintained by swords & bayonets, & in which strife & civil war are to take the place of brotherly love & kindness, has no charm for me. I shall mourn for my country, & for the welfare & progress of mankind. If the Union is dissolved & the government disrupted, I shall return to my native state & share the miseries of my people and save in her defence will draw my sword no more.[18]

Lee's mind seems torn by two loyalties, one to nation, the other to state. What "country" does he "mourn" for?—the United States that he served as officer? Yet until the Civil War, "the United States" was a plural noun, a union of separate sovereign states.[19] He's not clear.

Lee shows a second contradiction, that is, between two views of the Constitution. On the one hand, the Framers intended it for unity, not anarchy. They established means to address and ideally resolve grievances. Thus, secession would mean revolution.[20] On the other hand, the Constitution guaranteed certain rights to states and to peoples which, if violated, would desecrate the spirit and essence of the Constitution itself.

Notice, however, no theological language. Lee makes no reference to the divine in any way: no scripture, no prayer, no particular appeal to God in this or other letters, not even to family where he is most prone to use it.

So I suggest that this critical moment in the life of Lee and of the nation posed for him an ethical dilemma. He was searching not so much for the explicit will of God but for the right thing to do, perhaps—perhaps—reflecting his father's tradition from his childhood that to do the right thing is also to do the will of God. Rather than his evangelical religion, Lee resorts more to that other element of his past, which was the "enlightened," "deistic" emphasis upon virtue and duty. He is exploring carefully the situation at hand, examining closely his loyalties and duties, and thereby making a decision which is ethical rather than theological in nature. That's not to say that his decision was objectively ethical,

for, by our standards and by those of many of his day, it was not. Lee himself recognized maybe it wasn't: In writing to others of his decision, he instructed them to follow their conscience as he sought to follow his. If he believed himself to be following divine command, would he have been so ambiguous? Being convinced that "God told me to do this" doesn't leave much room for others to hear what God may be saying differently. But that's my point. For Lee, I believe, this was primarily an ethical decision.

Four years later, Lee faced another choice. All his worst fears came true. Not only had war broken out, it had been devastating, no doubt far worse than he ever could have envisioned. Worse still, his side had lost. He was forced to surrender. What would that mean? Jefferson Davis wanted him to fight on. But guerrilla warfare would perpetuate the devastation, probably with no good outcome. Which direction should Lee now go, the way of continued war, or of peace, or of something in between?

If his letters just prior to the war avoided much religious language, those during it were filled with references to the divine. As war was breaking, he warned Mary to get away from Arlington. "It is sad to think of the devastation, if not ruin it may bring upon a spot so endeared to us. But God's will be done. We must be resigned. May He guard & keep you all is my constant prayer."[21] After the Seven Days Battle he described his "gratitude to our heavenly father for all the mercies he has extended to us. Our success has not been as great or complete as I could have desired; but God knows what is best for us."[22] In November, 1862, "The enemy

seems steadily to advance & apparently with his whole army. Time will alone disclose his intentions & the result is in the future. I pray that the God of battle may be with us!"[23] And in April, 1864, "I have been very grateful for the victories our merciful Father has given us. I pray they may continue!"[24]

But they didn't, raising a terrible question: What if the God of battle wasn't with him? Relying on the will of God for success creates a clear problem if God does not oblige—and worse, if the opposing side wins. What do you do if you have staked your life, your fortune, your family's home, if you have commanded armies that lost tens of thousands of men and have seen your home state utterly devastated, because, when all was said and done, God wasn't on your side?

Interestingly, tellingly, Lee abandons almost all God-talk after Appomattox. No more mention of prayers. No more entreaties of almighty grace. The silence of religious language is stunning, as if Lee undergoes a profound crisis of faith. Only in letters of condolence, and to his close confidante Markie Williams, do the old references reappear.

Had God abandoned him? Or worse, had he mistaken the will of God?

Never does Lee write such a thing, at least that I have found. But I did discover a conversation he allegedly had with an old friend from the Army. Marsena Patrick had known and admired Lee from Mexican War days. As a Yankee, he became provost marshal general in Richmond after Appomattox. Going for rations to feed his family, Lee encountered Patrick. They clasped hands

and, as Patrick told his son, Lee said, "Patrick[,] the only question on which we ever differed, has been settled, and the Lord has decided against me."[25]

One reminiscence, told twice by Patrick's son over forty years later, may be a thin reed on which to rest a thesis. But it is consistent with what we know of Lee at that period. We know that despite Jefferson Davis' urgings to wage guerrilla warfare, he surrendered unconditionally and told his men to go home and plant their crops. We know that he went to Richmond, removed the Confederate insignia from his gray coat, and faced a dramatically changed world not knowing what his future might bring.

We believe he went to church in those dark days in Richmond. That had always been his pattern even during the war, attending whenever he could. Saint Paul's Episcopal Church was not far from his rented home on Franklin Street. But whether the famous tale of the integration of the communion rail is true or not, we really don't know.

Many of you have heard the story. It was a Communion Sunday, perhaps the day of Pentecost (June 4 that year), but one when the Holy Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, was celebrated. The Rev. Dr. Charles Minnigerode had concluded his sermon, said the prayers to consecrate the bread and wine, then signaled the congregation to come forward to receive the sacrament. From the back of the church emerged an African American who knelt down to take the body and blood of Jesus. Everyone else froze. Mr. Minnigerode stood in his tracks; all others remained fixed in their pews, for such a thing had never happened before.

From the left side of the church, a tall, bewhiskered man strode forward, his worn gray coat testifying that he had been a Confederate soldier. Though its insignia had been removed, the coat needed no stars to identify its wearer to the congregation. Gen. Robert Edward Lee got down on his knees at the altar rail, near the black communicant, and bade the rector to proceed. With the hard ice of racism and resentment broken, the congregation poured forth to receive the sacrament that unites humans in fellowship with God and with each other. Or so the story goes.

Did this event really take place? If so, what did it mean—what did Lee intend? The earliest known published reports of the incident came only in 1905 in several Richmond newspapers. They got the story from an unreconstructed Confederate colonel from West Virginia, who claimed that the African American was put up to the act by Federal authorities eager to demonstrate their "new regime," and by his act Lee repudiated such audacity in the name of white Southern racial superiority.[26]

The fact that letters exist describing Jefferson Davis' rapid departure from St. Paul's when Petersburg was about to fall suggests that some witness surely would have told of such a striking happening involving Lee. Plus, 1905 was a time of increasing racial prejudice in North and South alike. The colonel's interpretation may have been intended to justify racism all the more.

Yes, Lee believed that whites were racially superior to blacks, but so did most whites of his era, even Lincoln. Yes, he had fought valiantly for the old order. But it was an order in which he did not entirely believe, questioning secession and opposing slavery. And

he did believe in the providence of God, that, if nothing else, posits that what happens usually reflects the will of the divine.

What do you do if you've been on the wrong side of God's history? Clearly, you change sides. If God was not on your side, you'd better change real fast to be on His. And so Lee came to Washington College seeking to rebuild a state that was part of a section that was clearly, unambiguously, irrefutably part of a nation that no longer saw itself as simply a conglomeration of states. He advised his former partners in arms not to abandon the South but to help rebuild it. As he explained to P. G. T. Beauregard, citing Washington who fought against the French under Braddock, then with them at Yorktown,

> [T]rue patriotism requires of men sometimes, to act exactly contrary at one period, to that which it does at another; & that the motive which impels them, viz. the desire to do right, is precisely the same. The circumstances which govern their actions undergo change, & their conduct must conform to the new order of things. History is full of illustrations of this."[27]

If that sounds rather like the virtue ethics of his Enlightened father, perhaps it is. In many ways Lee never gave up the sense of classical virtues, even as he took to heart the evangelical faith of his mother. In a sense he resembles old pagan Roman temples that Christians took over; and he could use the language of duty when it helped to make his point. Yes, Duty summoned him to bind up the wounds of war.

Virtue called him in 1865 to become a man of peace. Yet to this was joined an even louder claim: The Lord God of Hosts had

spoken, such that any Evangelical worth the salt of the earth had no option but to respond to work for a United States that was truly united. Lee did.

So it was as a man of peace that Lee came to Lexington. He immediately joined Grace Church, led by his erstwhile commander of artillery, William Nelson Pendleton. His last public meeting was one of the vestry, the governing board of laity which he chaired as warden. Members fretted over how to come up with the last $50 to pay the rector until Lee said in apparent exhaustion, "I will give that sum." He suffered his stroke only hours later.

At that meeting the vestry also agreed to explore seriously the expansion of the church, or building a new one, to hold the growing crowds, including many students, attending "General Lee's Church." After Lee died a new one was built as a memorial to him, his family actively participating in raising funds and planning its construction, so by 1903 what had been "Grace Memorial Church" became "R. E. Lee Memorial."[28]

He—who was astonished at the crowds turning out to see him on his last trip through the South—would have been appalled. But somehow it fits, for in my book he was indeed a saint, not one with a halo or a title, but in the most basic sense of a Christian, striving by faith to do his duty to God. And that, in the end, is what matters.

✝

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Graduate Theological Foundation (in association with Oxford University). He has also completed advanced studies at Harvard Divinity School and Virginia Theological Seminary. He has served as Rector of St. David's Episcopal Church in Connecticut, R. E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church in Lexington, Virginia, and St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Hot Springs, Virginia. For many years he was also the Episcopal chaplain at both the Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University. This article is from a Rockbridge Historical Society presentation made November 29, 2010. The material for the presentation came from part of a book-length study Rev. Cox has undertaken on how Robert E. Lee's faith "influenced the course of his life."

ENDNOTES

[1] Jacob M. Blosser, "Pursuing Happiness in Colonial Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 118, no. 3 (2010), 210-245.

[2] Elizabeth Brown Pryor, *Reading the M*an (New York: Viking, 2007), 226.

[3] HL to ACL, Barbados, September 13, 1813 (Library of Congress, Custis-Lee Family Papers, Box 1 [portions reprinted in Ethel Armes, Stratford Hall: The Great House of the Lees, (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1936), 313]), spelling and capitalization as in original.

[4] ACL to Carter Lee at Harvard, Alexandria, July 17, 1816 (LOC, Ethel Armes Coll. of Lee Family Papers [Box 2, 1809-1895]).

[5] Henry to Carter, q. in Armes, SH, 325.

[6] Pryor, *Reading*, 33.

[7] REL to Mary Custis Lee, St. Louis, November 3, 1839 (Arlington House Papers, 3700).

[8] Meade, "The Candidate for Confirmation Self-Examined" (New York: Protestant Episcopal Tract Society, [1841], 11; Canon XIX, Diocese of Virginia, *Journal of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (Baltimore: Joseph Robinson, 1850), 38-39.

[9] Mary Custis Lee, Diary, May 20, 1853 (Virginia Historical Society, Mss1 L51 g 4 [1852-58]).

[10] REL to Mary, May 2, 1853, West Point (VHS Mss1 L51 c 118).

[11] REL to Mary, April 27, 1853, West Point (VHS Mss1 L51 c 117).

[12] Mary, Diary, July 7, 1853 (VHS Mss1 L51 g 3).

[13] REL to Mary, Camp Cooper, TX, June 22, 1857 (VHS Mss1 L51 c 212).

[14] Ed Dooley on Smith.

[15] REL to Mary, Camp Cooper, TX, June 5, 1857 (VHS Mss1 L51 c 215); REL to Mary, San Antonio, July 1, 1860 (VHS Mss1 L51 c 257) (Mary said the same in a letter to Mildred, Hot Springs, VA, September 21-22, 1861 [VHS Mss1 L51 c 320]).

[16] Mary, Diary, entry for June 9, 1853 (VHS Mss1 L51 g 4).

[17] REL to Col. L. Thomas, Arlington, 16 June 1859 (W&L transcript).

[18] REL to William Henry Fitzhugh Lee, Fort Mason, San Antonio (TX), Jan. 29, 1861 (VHS, George Bolling Lee Papers, Mss1 L5114 c 41).

[19] Cf. Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 287.

[20] Cf. REL to Annette Carter, Fort Mason, San Antonio P. O., (TX,) January 16, 1861 (Lee Family Digital Archive).

[21] REL to Mary, Richmond, May 11, 1861 (VHS Mss1 L51 c 290).

[22] REL to Mary, Dabbs Farm, Henrico Co., VA, July 9, 1862 (VHS Mss1 L51 c 356).

[23] REL to Mary, Camp near Culpepper Court House, November 6, 1862 (VHS Mss1 L51 c 401).

[24] REL to Mary, Orange Co., April 27, 1864 (VHS Mss1 L51 c 515).

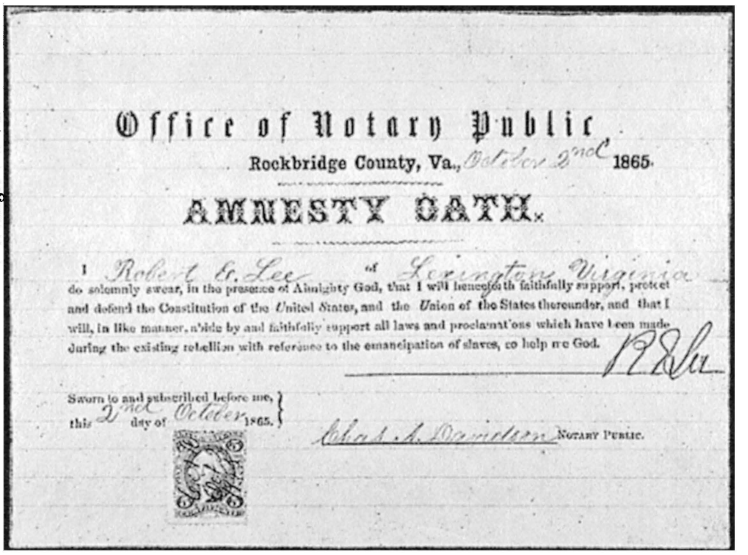
[25] J. M. Patrick to Gamaliel Bradford, Coronado, CA, December 5, 1915; also October 19, 1914, both in Gamaliel Bradford Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[26] Charles Bracelyn Flood Lee: *The Last Y*ears (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), 65–66; see "Negro Communed at St. Paul's Church," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 16, 1905, 5; "Negro Communed at St. Paul's Church," *Confederate Veteran*, 13 (August 1905), 360; and Philip Schwarz, "Robert E. Lee and the Black Man," unpubl. talk at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Adult Forum, January 13, 2002.

[27] REL to Beauregard, Lexington, October 3, 1865 (VHS LFP Letterbook, Mss1 L51 c 737, 22-23).

[28] Vestry Minutes, Grace Church, Lexington, VA, September 28, October 18-19, 1870.

DID YOU KNOW?


Washington and Lee Archives*

Office of Notary Public

Rockbridge County, Va., October 2nd 1865.

AMNESTY OATH.

I Robert E. Lee of Lexington Virginia do solemnly swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that I will henceforth faithfully support, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the Union of the States thereunder, and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all laws and proclamations which have been made during the existing rebellion with reference to the emancipation of slaves, so help me God. R E Lee

Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 2nd day of October 1865.

Chas. A. Dunnington NOTARY PUBLIC.

Robert E. Lee was not a citizen of the United States when he died.

Lee signed the Amnesty Oath in Lexington, Virginia, on October 2, 1865. Writing at the time to another former Confederate, Lee explained himself: "This war, being at an end, the Southern states having laid down their arms, and the questions at issue between them having been decided, I believe it to be the duty of everyone to unite in the restoration of the country and the reestablishment of peace and harmony. . . ."

Yet Robert E. Lee's citizenship was not restored until 1975. Some (perhaps intentional) clerical error or other official mishap caused his signed oath to be lost in the State Department records until 1970, when it was found by an archivist. On August 5, 1975, more than one hundred years after Lee surrendered his Army and almost 110 years after he signed the Amnesty Oath, President Gerald Ford signed Robert E. Lee's pardon and restored his United States citizenship.

–MN

* *Subsequent references are abbreviated to "W&L Archives."*

Hilary A. Herbert*

MOSES EZEKIEL

KEITH E. GIBSON

His works are found in the United States Capitol Building, public parks throughout the nation, and major museums in America and Europe. He was knighted by three European heads of state and received prestigious awards for his talent. Yet today the name Moses Ezekiel is all but forgotten in the world of art.

Moses Jacob Ezekiel was born on Oct 28, 1844, in Richmond, Virginia—the seventh of fourteen children born to Jacob and

**From page xiii in the front matter of Hilary A. Herbert's* History of the Arlington Confederate Monument *(1914).*

Catherine Myers de Castro in their house on 17th Street, between Main St. and Franklin (where the Main Street Station, James Center YMCA, and 17th Street Farmers Market are today) and one block west of the Masonic Lodge where George Washington was a member. The Ezekiel family were members of the Kahal Kadosh Beth Shalome synagogue. Founded in 1789, it was one of the original six colonial congregations to receive President Washington's assurance of "to bigotry no sanction; to persecution no assistance."

In the years before Ezekiel's birth, his father Jacob was a thriving dry goods merchant and member of the local militia company. He was also an activist for religious toleration. In 1844, the year Ezekiel was born, Jacob was leading the fight in Virginia to grant equality to those who worshiped on Saturday—a recognition which came the following year.

In the late 1850s the Ezekiel household experienced financial reversals. Young Moses went to live at his grandparents' home, which was also in Richmond. Although his grandmother recoiled at the fledgling artist's early attempts to mold religious themes such as "Moses Receiving the Law on Mount Sinai" (indeed, when the clay model collapsed, she declared the destruction divine intervention), she bought him his first oil paints and encouraged him to take lessons in painting. Only two of Ezekiel's early paintings are known. The back of the paste board of one is marked in Moses' unmistakable hand: *Mother.*

When the Civil War erupted in the spring of 1861, Richmond was plunged into the excitement and confusion of becoming a veritable military camp. That summer the Virginia Military

Institute cadets arrived from their college in Lexington to serve as drill instructors for over 15,000 Confederate recruits in the capital city. The VMI cadets were the "darlings of the Confederacy," as one reporter put it. Perhaps seventeen-year-old Moses was inspired by the cadets' sharp drilling and colorful uniforms, or perhaps he was inspired by his father's military example—but Ezekiel made up his mind to become a VMI cadet.

VMI Archives

Cadet Ezekiel Moses

Declaring that she would not have a son who would not fight for his home and country, Ezekiel's mother admonished him to learn to be a soldier. He became the first Jewish cadet at VMI in the fall of 1862. Although not well prepared academically or physically for the rigors of the Institute, Moses did his best not to disappoint his mother. One of his fellow cadets, however, was not impressed: "He never could chisel himself into a pretty soldier. . ." wrote classmate Cadet John Wise,

> his body thickset, and his legs were very short. In fact, he looked like a tin soldier that had been broken in the middle and mended with sealing wax. I resented bitterly the fact that, of all the Sergeants, he was the only one I ranked.

Art was not a main feature of Cadet Ezekiel's VMI routine—with one exception. Every day as the cadet corps formed up in front of the Barracks, the seven-foot bronze figure of George Washington looked down upon them. The statue was a copy of Houdon's marble likeness in the capitol building at Richmond.

Ezekiel did not record his impression of the work, but it is easy to think that, for the aspiring young sculptor, Washington's statue was a model for more than service to country.

Three events during Ezekiel's cadetship can be identified as greatly defining his later life. The first occurred on the long silent night of May 14, 1863. As Corporal of the Guard, Ezekiel stood watch over the remains of Professor Thomas J. Jackson—"Stonewall" Jackson, as he was known to the world by then. The VMI professor had left his post before Ezekiel had arrived at the school, but any cadet—any soldier—would have held this night's vigil as the highest of honors. In later years Ezekiel would be commissioned to execute two bronze statues of "Stonewall" Jackson.

The second event occurred exactly one year and one day after Cadet Ezekiel stood guard over Jackson's remains. On May 11, 1864, the VMI Cadet Corps was called away from its schoolwork to join the ranks of the Confederate Army heading down the Shenandoah Valley to repulse the invading Union Army. Eighty miles and four days later, Ezekiel and his fellow cadets turned the tide of battle and achieved a victory for the Confederacy at the Battle of New Market. Casualties among the cadet ranks were high: Ten cadets were killed; forty-seven others were wounded.

When the guns fell silent that evening, Moses searched the battlefield for his missing roommate, Thomas Jefferson, a descendent of the third president. Ezekiel found his mortally-wounded friend, borrowed a cart and moved Jefferson to the Clindenist home in the village of New Market. Two days later, in the waning hours of life, Tom Jefferson asked Moses to read a passage from

the New Testament (John 14:2): "In my father's house there are many mansions; I go now to prepare a place for you."

VMI Archives

Thomas Garland Jefferson
New Market Cadet

Ezekiel cradled Jefferson in his arms as life slipped away. Within five years—with the memories of Jefferson's death still fresh—Moses Ezekiel created his moving allegorical bronze *Virginia Mourning Her Dead.* The clay model remained in the artist's studio for twenty-five years before VMI called on Ezekiel to provide an appropriate monument for those who had died during the Civil War. Today at VMI *Virginia Mourning Her Dead* stands watch over the grave of Cadet Thomas Garland Jefferson.

The third event that shaped the young artist's life came in the way of encouragement from Robert E. Lee. The Lee and Ezekiel families had been friends in Richmond. After the war, Lee became president of Washington College, the private school adjoining VMI. Before his graduation in 1866, Cadet Ezekiel called upon Gen. Lee. "I hope you will be an artist, as it seems to me you are cut out for one," Lee commented. "[E]arn a reputation in whatever profession you undertake."

Moses Ezekiel left for Europe in the summer of 1870. Soon he was studying sculpture with Rudolf Siemering in Germany. After gaining admission to the highly selective Berlin Royal Academy,

Ezekiel studied under Albert Wolff. At age twenty-nine Ezekiel became the first American to win the coveted Michel-Beer Prix de Rome, entitling the artist to a stipend for study in Rome for two years.

His entry—*Israel*—reflected one of the main artistic interests of his career: religious freedom. "The relief is 8 feet by 6 feet," explained the artist,

> and its conception rather a historical poem . . . *Israel* is represented by a strong male figure . . . in the attitude of compliance and despair. . . . On the left is a female figure bowed in grief . . . representing Jerusalem; [to her] right is the last Jewish king reposing on his broken scepter; and where his blood is spilled a tree grows up in the form of a cross upon which Christ is nailed.

Ezekiel established his studio in the centuries-old Baths of Diocletian in Rome. The crumbling ruin with its towering vaulted ceilings appealed to Ezekiel's romantic notions. A friend stated the studio was "a stupendous spectacle, strewn with the mighty monuments of the past, a wilderness from which nothing springs but grass, fever germs and noble thoughts."

For the rest of his life, Ezekiel would make his home in this ancient classical city. The Baths—and an audience with its flamboyant artist resident—would become a "must visit" for Americans touring Europe. Many of Ezekiel's works can be seen in photographic images of the studio. One of these works was commissioned by the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith, which called upon Ezekiel to create a colossal marble monument to be called *Religious Liberty* for the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Ezekiel

agreed to execute the work in two years for a fee of $20,000.

"My conception of the group," explained the artist,

> was to make it the largest group in marble in the world. I wanted to depict Liberty panoplied for war, but covered with the mantle of peace. . . . At her right hand stands a nude boy representing that faith in a higher power, which is inherent in the souls of all men. . . . Her left hand would be resting upon the bound stage of the Union and Constitution, which says, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." At the base I placed the emblem of America, an eagle on the lookout for any adversary, and strangling with his talons an immense serpent, symbolizing intolerance. . . .

The seventy-three-ton statue proved a challenge to ship; it was delayed, and did not arrive until after the centennial celebration was over. Finally, on November 23, 1876, Thanksgiving Day, the work was unveiled in Fairmount Park near the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The statue was moved to its current location outside the National Museum of American Jewish History in 1986.

The work exceeded the intentions of the patrons, yet for Ezekiel it was a disappointing experience. "It cost me too much moral and physical suffering ever to be forgotten by a human being," he cryptically recalled years later. Part of the suffering was most likely due to the fact that it took five years to receive payment!

In 1899 Ezekiel was commissioned by citizens of Louisville, Kentucky, to create a likeness of one of the artist's great heroes, Thomas Jefferson. It had been Jefferson who penned the Statute of Religious Freedom and the Declaration of Independence. And it was the dying grand-nephew of the president that Ezekiel had held

in his arms on the New Market battlefield.

Ezekiel decided to represent Jefferson differently than he had been rendered by other artists up to that time: Ezekiel would mold a young man in his thirties, Jefferson's age at the time he wrote the Declaration. Jefferson is mounted on the Liberty Bell surrounded by four winged female figures representing Human Freedom, Justice, Religious Freedom, and Liberty. Scheduled to be dedicated on the Fourth of July 1901, a strike at the granite quarry making the base delayed the unveiling until November. A copy of the heroic bronze was placed in front of the Rotunda at the University of Virginia in 1910.

W. D. Novak

Copy of *Thomas Jefferson*
University of Virginia, Charlottesville

The offer to create what many believe is the artist's greatest professional and personal accomplishment—*The Confederate Memorial* at Arlington Cemetery—came while Ezekiel was visiting Washington, D.C., in June 1910. That work was commissioned by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to mark the location of the 482 Confederate soldiers buried in Arlington Cemetery. "I had been waiting for forty years," Ezekiel declared, "to have my love for the South recognized."

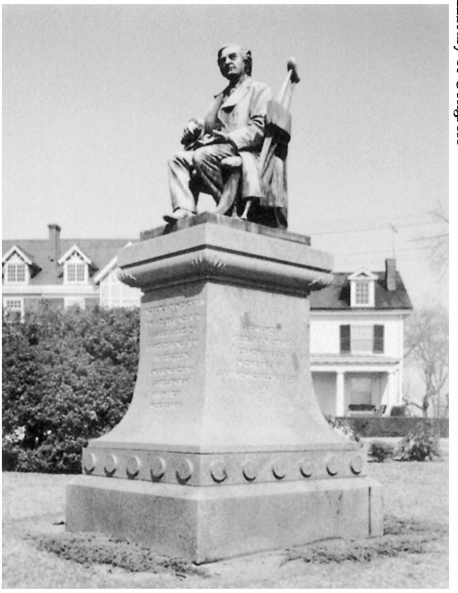
While waiting in the White House receiving room to visit with President Taft, Ezekiel took a piece of paper and a pen from his pocket and sketched his vision for the monument. "I would like to make a heroic bronze statue representing the South," Ezekiel wrote,

> a standing figure dignified and sorrowful with her right hand resting on the handle of the plough and her left hand extended, holding out a laurel wreath, whilst her head would be crowned with a wreath of olives. . . . On the base would appear the inscription from Isaiah 2:4: "And they shall turn their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks." Beneath this, the circular body of the monument ought to have a high relief upon it to represent the sacrifice and the heroism of the men and women of the South.

William Jennings Bryan spoke at the laying of the cornerstone of the monument in 1912. Two years later the towering bronze figure was dedicated by President Woodrow Wilson. Rising 32.5 feet, the memorial is the tallest bronze monument in the cemetery. War and several pressing commissions kept Ezekiel from attending the dedication.

One of Ezekiel's most successful bronze portraits is that of Sen-

ator John Warwick Daniel. A major in the Confederate Army, Daniel was maimed in the leg during the Battle of the Wilderness. (Within a week of that conflict, young Cadet Ezekiel was engaged in the Battle of New Market.) Daniel, noted for his abilities as an orator, was often referred to as the "Lame Lion of Lynchburg." He served his native state in the U.S. Senate from 1887 until his death in 1910.



Library of Congress

The Lame Lion of Lynchburg
Lynchburg, Virginia

Ezekiel chose to model the senator positioned in a classical Roman senate chair, gesturing to make a point. A century before artists and historians debated whether Franklin Roosevelt should be sculpted seated in a wheelchair, Ezekiel included the senator's ever present crutches in his bronze portrait—symbolic of Daniel's sacrifice and his ability to overcome adversity.

In a series of strange events reading more like a short story written by Edgar Allan Poe, Ezekiel was commissioned in 1907 to create a bronze portrait of the famous writer. The Women's Literary Club of Baltimore wished to have the statue completed by 1909 for the centennial of Poe's birth, but raising the necessary $20,000 progressed slowly. Ezekiel agreed to donate one half of the cost as a tribute to the poet he greatly admired.

The artist envisioned Poe seated in a classical chair adorned with images of the muses of music and poetry. The writer's head is tilted and he is rising slightly, as if being summoned by the muses. Following his established procedure, Ezekiel first sculpted Poe in the nude; then he added clothing. Once the clay form was transferred into plaster, it was crated and shipped to Ezekiel's foundry near Berlin. As the model sat in a customs house on the German border awaiting further transport, disaster struck. The customs house burned, destroying everything inside.

A year passed before Ezekiel prepared another plaster model. Ready to ship to Berlin, the Poe model was again destroyed when an earthquake struck. The spirit of Edgar Allan Poe seemed to be writing the last chapter!

As the determined artist readied the third model for the foundry, Italy was absorbed in World War. On January 12, 1917, Baltimore's *The Evening Sun* announced "The heroic monument to Edgar Allan Poe, recently completed by Sir Moses Ezekiel in Rome, . . . will not be shipped to this country until conditions due to war shall have so altered as to make shipment perfectly safe." "One day," the article concluded, with what might be interpreted

as a bit of sarcasm, "the statue is to be erected in Baltimore."

That day finally came on October 20, 1921, when the statue was at last dedicated in Wyman Park. The project had taken fourteen years to complete. Moses Ezekiel was not present; six months earlier the artist had been buried in Arlington Cemetery.

While working with the Red Cross in Italy to help relieve the suffering of wounded soldiers, just as he had done on the battlefield at New Market so many years earlier, the seventy-three-year -old artist contracted pneumonia. He died on March 27, 1917. In an envelope marked "to be opened at my death," Ezekiel expressed his desire to be buried with his comrades at the base of his Arlington *Confederate Memorial.* The World War kept Ezekiel's last request from being fulfilled until March 30, 1921. Ezekiel wrote the inscription that is found there today:

Moses Ezekiel
Sergeant, Company C
Battalion of Cadets
Virginia Military Institute.

Ezekiel's monumental art was based on the classical models that surrounded him in Rome, and it was executed in the strong tradition he learned in Germany. He was the last great artist of a passing style. By 1900, critics viewed Moses Ezekiel's works as stiff and unimaginative when compared to Auguste Rodin, Edgar Degas or Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Paris had supplanted Rome as the center of artistic inspiration.

It was the great disappointment of Ezekiel's professional life that he never received the commission which he desired above all others—that is, the creation of an equestrian statue of Robert E.

Lee. Between 1880 and 1889 there were three different competitions for such a monument to be placed in Richmond—Ezekiel made submissions to them all. The first effort was thwarted when the organizer embezzled the funds for the project. The second competition ended when Gov. James L. Kemper, who personally selected Ezekiel's submission, halted the project because other committee members could not agree. In the final competition, Ezekiel's model was awarded a one-thousand dollar prize. Tragically, the wax model was destroyed while being shipped between Washington and Richmond. Further negotiations between Ezekiel and the committee proved irreconcilable. The project was finally completed in 1890 by French artist Jean Antonin Mercié.

Yet, in a way, Moses Ezekiel's desire to create a lasting tribute to Robert E. Lee was fulfilled. The vast body of work created over a period spanning five decades endures as Ezekiel's tribute to his hero. It was Lee, you recall, who admonished the young VMI cadet to pursue art and to "earn a reputation." And so he did.

✡

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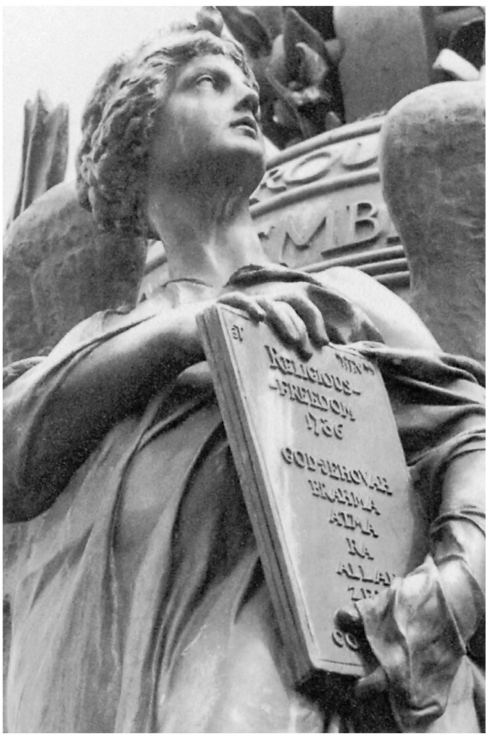
films, and feature films. He served two terms as president of the Rockbridge Historical Society. This article is from a presentation delivered before the Rockbridge Historical Society on May 19, 2008.

DID YOU KNOW?



Dan Addison

Detail of the Jefferson Statue
University of Virginia, Charlottesville

A surprising testament to the principles of religious freedom and diversity appears on Moses Ezekiel's more than century-old statue of Thomas Jefferson on the campus of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. *This statue, which looks out over the plaza in front of the Rotunda (see page 102 herein), is a copy made by the artist himself of the Jefferson statue commissioned for Jefferson County, Kentucky, by the philanthropic brothers Isaac and Bernard Bernheim, Jewish immigrants to the United States. In creating this work, it was Ezekiel's wish to pay honor to the man he, himself a Sephardic Jew, admired for establishing the principle of religious freedom in the United States. It was placed outside the Louisville Metro Hall in 1901.*

Though made much of at the dedication of the copy of the Jefferson Statue at the University of Virginia in 1910, the tablet and its meaning eventually went unnoticed. However, almost a century later, W. Scott Harrop, an

adjunct lecturer at the University of Virginia, did take notice of the tablet—and its engravings—in the hands of one of the winged figures atop the monument. He eventually wrote about these and Ezekiel's meaning in the 2012 spring issue of the University of Virginia's Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures Newsletter *(vol. 2, issue 2, 1-2). Harrop called his article "Sermon in Stone." And he reminds his readers that the four winged figures that stand just below Jefferson on this monument are meant to represent "the great Jeffersonian ideas: Liberty, Equality, Justice and Religious Freedom."*

This close-up view, photographed and graciously shared by University of Virginia photographer Dan Addison, shows in detail the tablet in the hands of the winged figure on the Jefferson Statue representing religious freedom. The viewer can see that Moses Ezekiel has engraved at the top left of this tablet the sacred Hindu word for "Om," the name of the Lord, and on the top right he has engraved the Hebrew word for "One God." Below this is "Religious-Freedom 1786." And these words are followed below by "God-Jehovah," "Bramha," "Atma," "Ra," "Allah," and "Zeus."

Finally, at the bottom, underneath the robed arm of the winged figure, the first letters of another word—as yet, it seems, unexplained.

—DN & MN

Public Domain

American Homestead in Winter
Currier & Ives

Bonds of Community: Social Life and Leisure in the Nineteenth-Century Valley of Virginia

Kenneth E. Koons

In the 1960s, a branch of history known as the new social history emerged in the United States. Its most basic premise is that ordinary people and their everyday activities had at least as much to do with the making of history as did the "famous men, great ideas, and big events" of the past. Thus, new social historians often spoke of the "history of the anonymous, inarticulate masses" and of "writing history from the bottom up."[1]

Recently, however, social historian Sigurđur Gylfi Magnússon has argued that social history has "[failed] to achieve its main purpose, namely, to make ordinary people the subject of history on their own terms."[2] Or, more pointedly, "social historians have not succeeded in turning the spotlight on groups of people whom it

had originally been the intention to bring into the ambit of history."[3]

Magnússon attributes this state of affairs to what he calls "the suffocating influence of . . . metanarratives on the research of social historians."[4] Essentially, his argument is that social historians have confined their researches and investigative inquiries to topics and themes that can be linked directly to grand narratives, and they have neglected those that cannot.

In the historiography of the nineteenth-century Valley of Virginia, we find an example illustrating Magnússon's point. In the 1860s, the Civil War profoundly disrupted the lives of ordinary men and women of the Valley of Virginia. As a region of considerable strategic significance in that war, cataclysmic developments unfolded there: Battles were fought, men died, homes were destroyed, civilian populations traumatized, and at the end of it all, economic infrastructure lay in ruins.[5] This was the single greatest transformative event in the history of the Valley and in the collective memory of its inhabitants. Thus it is easy to understand why scholars interested in the history of the nineteenth-century Valley of Virginia have focused so much of their collective attention on this era.

One result of this preoccupation with the Civil War era in Valley history, however, is that, in the vein suggested by Magnússon, scholarly attention has been diverted away from other periods, themes, and topics relevant to a deeper understanding of the lives of the region's inhabitants and to the history of social experience and economic life in the region. For greater than a century

before the firing on Fort Sumter and for considerably longer than a century after Appomattox, successive generations of ordinary men and women made their homes on farms in the Valley and in its hamlets, villages, and towns, quietly working and earning livelihoods, marrying, forming families and raising children, dying, playing, worshipping, socializing, and the like. But we know little about these and other aspects of the private lives of Valley peoples.

This essay explores patterns of social experience among rural inhabitants of the nineteenth-century Valley of Virginia during the long period when this region formed the premier wheat-growing region of the American South. It relies heavily upon vignettes of daily life drawn from the diaries of farmers, laborers, and village shopkeepers as it examines the familial, demographic, and other life experiences of Valley residents. What was the nature of community life on Valley farms and in rural neighborhoods, as well as in villages and towns? What patterns of leisure and neighborly conviviality prevailed among peoples of the Valley? What circumstances brought people together, thereby serving as forces of social cohesion? What did people do for fun? What did people understand "the good life" to be, and to what extent did they believe they lived it? What circumstances produced tension and conflict? What problems, challenges, troubles, and the like, did people face in their lives, and how did they meet them? We are often very keen to know about—and to celebrate even—the capacities of Valley residents to cope with the trauma and chaos of the Civil War. But how did people of the region live

during other periods of the nineteenth century when they were free of the mayhem of invading armies, destruction, and violent death? Answers to questions such as these, formulated with an eye to discerning differences according to age and gender, can produce a more textured and multi-dimensional understanding of the lives of people of the past and help to remedy the problem articulated by Magnússon.

However, given the longstanding scholarly tradition in which "linking the particular to the universal"[6] is regarded as conventional and necessary, how might one study and write about the lived experiences of ordinary people of past times without "reducing history to anecdotal antiquarianism," to again use Magnússon's words? Magnússon has argued for the writing of social history that "places its emphasis on . . . small units and is conceived as a counter to research that . . . tries to cast all life, in whatever form it manifests itself, in one and the same mold."[7]

In a similar vein, social historians Richard Ivan Jobs and Patrick McDevitt, cognizant themselves of the growing tendency of social historians to produce works that "privilege the macro over the micro," have put forward a new interpretive framework to guide socio-historical inquiry.[8] Arguing persuasively that "larger macro-histories may be about people, but too rarely bring to light their most basic and defining relationships,"[9] Jobs and McDevitt call for socio-historical studies that examine "cultural practice," by which they mean the interactions through which peoples of the past formed personal relationships with others at work, in the home, and in the community.

Through the study of cultural practice—the "primary relationships that one directly maintains with friends, family, and community that constitute the core of an individual's social network and occupies the bulk of lived experience"[10]—social historians can directly study the social forces and dynamics through which individuals created and shaped their own worlds of existence and experience. In this sense, this paper may be viewed as a case study of cultural practice in the nineteenth-century Valley of Virginia.

During the nineteenth century, the Valley of Virginia was the most productive wheat-farming region of the American South; consequently, any attempt to understand the cultural identity and experiences of the region's inhabitants must take this into account. This article focuses mainly on the social experiences of the Valley's farm populations. In virtually all of the diaries and collections of letters drawn upon here, there is strong and pervasive evidence of wheat culture. Seasonal work tasks associated with wheat farming—plowing, sowing, reaping, and threshing—are in full evidence. This was a region of mixed agriculture, and so other chores occupied people as well. These included: planting, shocking and shucking corn; mowing and gathering hay; feeding and caring for livestock; picking apples; and cutting fire wood. And so it went, according to the seasonal rhythms of agrarian life.[11] People worked hard—of that there is much evidence. But how did they live otherwise?

Opportunities and occasions for neighborly sociability and conviviality abounded in the rural neighborhoods of the nine-

teenth-century Valley of Virginia. People built and maintained bonds of community with their friends, neighbors, and relatives through continuous rounds of visiting. People were in and out of each other's homes routinely, and a strong sense of familial privacy seemed to be lacking. Residential space seemed semi-public rather than private.[12]

In these endless rounds of visiting, people often shared meals and frequently, owing to the difficulties of travel, they visited for the day and stayed the entire night. Also, on many occasions visitors and their hosts would travel together to visit still other people in their neighborhoods. Diarists often mentioned that a certain person or family was "here today," "with us today," "spent the day with us," "here and took dinner with us" or "with us yesterday [and] left this morning." Conversely, diarists mentioned having "spent the day at" some other person's or family's home. Thus, for example, on July 23, 1843, Henry Boswell Jones, from near Brownsburg, in northern Rockbridge County, mentioned in his dairy that "A. Carson, William Withrow, Mrs. Morgan, and Ladies, visited today." Or on July 28: "Mrs. Beard is with us." On August 4: "Mrs. H. Brown, Mrs. McNutt and Mrs. Withrow were with us."[13]

Examples from the diary of Isaac Acker, who lived near Broadway in Rockingham County, illustrate the great logistical complexity of some of these visits. On December 18, 1880, he wrote that "Mrs. Caucas and Hattie Driver here, stayed all night." The next day: "Mrs. Caucas and Hattie went home. Isaac Myers and wife and Noah Kline and Sallie Moyers came this evening." The third day—December 20—"Noah Kline and Sallie Moyers

went home, Isaac Myers and wife are still here." A month later, on January 20, 1881, Acker described another round of visitation lasting three days, and involving a small host of different individuals and families. On the 20th, he wrote: "After dinner Sallie, Mrs. Jacob Moyers, and myself went up to Aunt Mary g. Stayed at Mary's all night." January 21—the next day: "Mrs. Moyers, Harve Swank's wife, Sallie and myself left Aunt Mary's, went over to Cousin Barbry Swanks. After dinner, Sallie and myself went to John Funk's, spent the afternoon; in the evening we went to Ben Drivers, stayed all night." January 22, the third day: "This morning we left Ben Drivers. Sallie and I come to Aunt Mary Swanks, got Mrs. Moyers, come to John Ackers, stayed till after dinner, then come home."[14]

These kinds of visits reflected and reinforced strong ties of friendship. A. H. McCue, of eastern Augusta County, was explicit about this. His diary entry for December 14, 1883, reads: "Sam Hamilton spent the night with me. Ma being in Staunton. Hugh Hamilton came down and stayed till bedtime. They are pleasant friends and ones I always enjoy."[15] Often, people would visit their friends or neighbors who were ill or believed to be dying and "sit" with them. In the diaries, "sat-up with" is the typical phrase used to describe having done this.

In the nineteenth century, many inhabitants of the Valley of Virginia migrated westward, to states such as Missouri, Indiana, and Texas (other states, too, of course, but these are the ones most frequently mentioned in the diaries). Often, people visited "for one last time" before they departed. Thus, for example, on January

29, 1881, Isaac Acker wrote in his diary that "Jacob Myers came to our house [and] stayed all night, for the last time before he goes west." Only days later, on February 1, Acker wrote that "Harve Myers was here [and] took dinner with us; tomorrow he leaves for Missouri."[16]

Still another element of these patterns of neighborly visits was that they were often linked to church attendance. The Isaac Acker family, for example, would attend church—or "preachings" as they called it—and then spend the remainder of the day at the home of a friend or a neighbor. A few examples drawn from April and May of 1880 are representative: after preaching "took dinner at Mr. Sherkey's"; after preaching, "took dinner at Meyers"; after preaching "went to Mauppins in the evening." At least in the Acker household, this pattern of Sunday visitation was so strong that even when they did not attend "preaching," they visited friends or neighbors, or they hosted visitors in their own home. But, to be clear, the Ackers did not visit every Sunday, and they visited on other days of the week as well. Moreover, sometimes they went to "preachings" on days other than Sunday.[17]

Acker was active in the leadership of the local Baptist church where, for example, he served as treasurer of their building fund.[18] Often, however, he attended "preachings" at other churches in the neighborhood, including the Creek Church, Trissels Church, Greenmount Church, the Brush Church, Branneman's Church, and a church in Timberville whose actual name he did not specify. Thus, an eclectic view of religious observance seems to have prevailed in the Acker household. But even when he attended

preaching at the Baptist Church, Acker always specified the type of preaching. Often, of course, it was "Baptist preaching" that Acker heard, but on other occasions it was "Dunkard preaching" or "Presbyterian preaching." On August 28, 1881, for example, Acker wrote that "Sallie [his wife] and me went to Baptist Church, Baptist preaching. After dinner we went to Baptist Church, Dunkard preaching, and [in the] evening we went to the Creek preaching."[19] Other Valley diarists mentioned this as well. In July of 1883, A. H. McCue wrote of a Baptist minister preaching the sermon in his Presbyterian Church.[20]

Isaac Acker also wrote of what he called "big meetings"—a widely used local appellation for what, in some circles, were otherwise known as "revivals." In September of 1880 he mentioned a "big meeting at Greenmount," and a month or so later in October, a "Mennonite big meeting at Trissels." The following May, he mentioned a "big meeting at Branneman's Church" and, in July of 1881, "at Baptist Church, Presbyterian big meeting."[21]

In February of 1873, Sallie Martin, a young farm woman of southwestern Augusta County, near Middlebrook, mentioned one of these big meetings in a letter to her brother, who was then a student at Hampden-Sydney College: "The meeting is still going on at St. Marks [St. Marks was a nearby Lutheran Church and not the church of her own family—the Martins were Presbyterians]. I think there are about 35 mourners. Among them are Col. Williams, Mr. Abram Troxel, several Areharts, and Alice Clemmer. Three professed—Henry Clemmer's wife, Lee Arehart, and Bill Patterson. T. J., Lettie, and myself [T. J. Martin, sometimes called

Tom, was an older brother, and Lettie was a younger sister] were up there last night and I never did hear such a noise coming from a church . . . they intend on carrying it on next week."[22]

Temperance and the evils of strong drink were increasingly on many people's minds as the nineteenth century progressed. Even in the absence of formal organizations dedicated to the eradication of strong spirits, the religious sentiments of many were such that they frowned upon drinking and did what they could to minimize it in their communities. In September of 1852, for example, Henry Jones noted in his diary that "Rev. Junkin preached a temperance sermon," and a few months later, in February of 1853, he wrote that he had "heard a good temperance lecture by Rev. James Paine." A year later, in February of 1854, Jones joined the "Sons of Temperance."[23]

About thirty years later, in August of 1883, A. H. McCue noted in his diary that a "Mr. Porterfield" was attempting to acquire a license to establish a tavern in Fishersville, a village located near his farm in eastern Augusta County. McCue made a special trip to Staunton to "see about the bar room that Porterfield is trying to get at Fishersville." Two days later, McCue noted that "we beat Mr. Porterfield, as the Judge refused to grant the license to sell at Fishersville."[24]

In resisting the licensure of a drinking establishment in his neighborhood, perhaps McCue was working to prevent the kind of civic disorder that shopkeeper Henry Smalz had observed in the streets of the town of Bridgewater in 1872, when he recorded in his diary that there had been "a great many" incidents of may-

hem "to night by the boys—shooting, cursing, swearing, and being drunk."[25] Or, the kind of public disorder suggested by Isaac Acker having "found" his neighbor "Rawley Roads drunk in the fence corner this side of Kline's Mill." Acker commented that "his horse come to our house. I brought him home in the buggy."[26]

Acker might have been sympathetic rather than censorious toward Roads, because he'd had his own experiences with strong drink. There is one documented instance of Acker drinking at Cowan's Station, the local railroad depot in his neighborhood where he took his agricultural produce and where he was called upon occasionally to fix the cattle weighing scales there.[27] Also, Acker sometimes bought a gallon of wine from a neighbor.[28] It seems, however, that Acker did most of his drinking in Harrisonburg. He traveled to Harrisonburg seven times between December of 1880 and April of 1881, and on five of those occasions he returned home drunk—"I got tite" was the expression he usually recorded in his diary, or sometimes, "I got a little tite." Sometimes he used the word "wooley" to describe a state of inebriation. Often, after these bouts of drinking, he was sick the next day: "I layed around sick all day," or "I had a headache and sick, did not do anything."[29]

On some of these occasions, the father of Acker's wife's first husband (Acker had married a widow), whom he referred to as "Old Man Shoup" (or "Old Shoup," or simply "Old Man"), accompanied him: "Old Man Shoup, Dick Ashby and myself went to Harrisonburg. Old Man and myself came back together. I was a

little tite. Old Man was tolerable wooley."[30] Harrisonburg, then, was the locally accessible big town where, apparently, one could readily buy and consume alcoholic beverages. As a larger town of the region—it served as the seat of government in Rockingham County—Harrisonburg, a town of about 2,500 people in 1880,[31] was the site of larger public gatherings than one would find in the country villages of the region. In some instances, these gatherings could lead to violence. On July 4, 1871, Henry Smalz reported a "great celebration in Harrisonburg by the negroes. They were about 300 in procession, and 4 speakers by the colored and 2 from the whites. A tremendous fight ensued" which resulted in bloodshed and the intervention of "the police."[32]

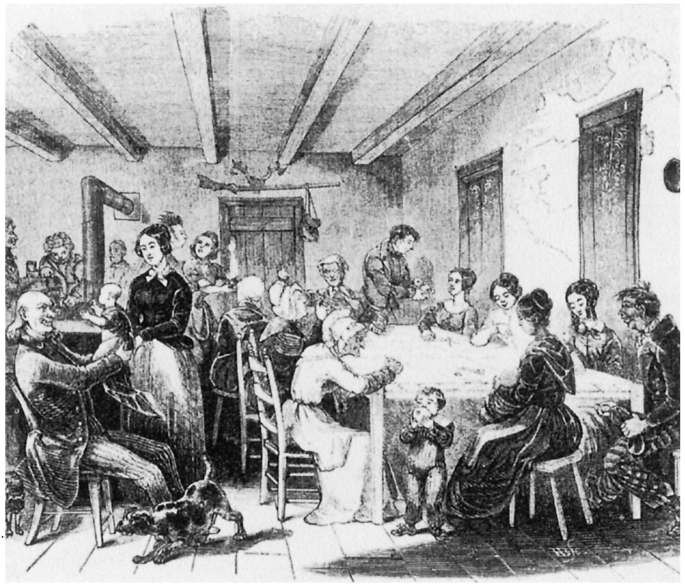
But in the 1870s and 1880s Smalz witnessed all manner of unruly behavior and public disorder in his smaller town of Bridgewater, as well. In September of 1871, for example, he witnessed a black man "and his wife engage in assault and battery." In October and November of 1871 numerous acquaintances of his were "fined for galloping their horses through the streets of Bridgewater." In February of 1882, Hopewell, in shooting a chicken for Sally Lawrence, "fired a pistol on the Sabbath." In April 2, 1882: "Camron Mist got tarred and feathered." In November of 1884: "Mrs. Showalter beat a little child . . . black and blue." And, as one last example, in June of 1885: "Shifflett stabbed Riddle 2 times in the side."[33]

On April 20, 1882, Smalz recorded in his diary that "Joseph Beery hung himself in his granary this morning about 5:00 on Linville Creek, the cause unknown." The next day, Isaac Acker

wrote in his diary: "Joseph Beery was buried [today] hung."[34] Acker and Smalz lived twelve miles from one another, and Beery had lived about half-way between them.[35] Thus, news traveled at least six miles in one day.

People who lived outside of the towns, on the farms and in the open-country neighborhoods of the Valley's rural districts, found many ways to entertain themselves. Sometimes, work and leisure were integrated—quilting bees, for example. On April 14, 1848, Henry Jones reported that "Mrs. Jones had a quilting today."[36] Similarly, on May 11, 1849, William Harner, who lived near McGaheysville, in eastern Rockingham County, mentioned that he "went to George Life's to a quilting."[37]

Trinity College Library, Hartford, Connecticut



Quilting Party in Western Virginia
From page 249 in Gleason's Pictorial-Drawing Room Companion
(1854)

Shucking corn was work that required the help of many hands, and it is reasonable to suppose that work parties would have been associated with this chore. None of the farm diaries include evidence of corn shucking parties per se, but diarists often mention the names of others helping them shuck corn. Presumably, this and similar forms of work would have provided occasions of sociability as well as shared labor.

Public Domain

Corn Husking
Currier & Ives

A particular example of neighborly sociability relating to work activities stemmed from the tradition of Valley farmers engaging in a kind of transhumance whereby they would send their cattle to mountain pastures in the spring and bring them home in the fall. During the summer, parties of men would go to the mountain to check on their cattle, and sometimes this entailed

their spending the night camping there. In 1875, Emanuel Suter, for example, belled his cattle on April 28, sent them to the mountain on May 24, and went to the mountains to check on them on June 11. His diary entry for that day reads as follows: "This afternoon, I in company with John B. Swope and others went up in the mountains to Black Run Camp to see about our cattle. There we spent the night. A good many other persons are here tonight—Joseph Heatwole, John Simeons, Jacob Harmon, Solomon Rhodes, Samuel Burkholder, and others."[38]

William Harner also went to the mountains occasionally, but he hunted bears and squirrels rather than cattle. Harner sharpened his marksmanship skills by participating in shooting matches. From October of 1847 to June of 1850, for example, he competed in no fewer than thirty-one shooting matches. He must have been a good shot. He won twenty-six times, lost six times, and failed to comment about his performance in the contests three times. When he won, his rewards included small amounts of money—from one to six dollars—turkeys, quarters of beef, a bushel of apples, and on one occasion a few pounds of honey. There must have been an element of gambling to these contests, because sometimes when Harner did not win he mentioned that he had lost small amounts of money.[39] Also noteworthy is that these thirty-one shooting matches took place at twenty-three different locations. Interest and participation in these contests must have been widespread.

"Singings" were another popular diversion attended by people of all ages. As often as they are mentioned by diarists, however, it is difficult to discern whether these were concerts—events one

attended in order to listen to the singing of others—or events one attended as a participant. There were some concert-like affairs, to be sure. One evening in November of 1880, Isaac Acker and his wife Sallie went to a concert in his nearby town of Broadway to hear the Edom and Keezletown choirs (Edom and Keezletown were nearby villages).[40] William Harner noted in his diary on March 3, 1848, that "singing commenced by Mr. Funk and son." Harner regularly attended singings.[41]

Singings were often attended by young men and women in large numbers. They were viewed as a socially acceptable way for young men and women of courting age to become acquainted with one another. A party-like atmosphere seems to have prevailed at these singings. Here, in 1873, is Sallie Martin, writing to her brother Lowery about their brother Tom: "You say it is time for Tom to stop blowing and commence operations. Well, he took Miss Delia Brown to singing last Saturday but when he goes to parties he does not have much to say to the ladies."[42]

The teenaged siblings of the Martin family frequently attended singings, but they also participated in what they called "storm parties" and, near February 14, "Valentine parties" or "Valentine draws." The gist of so-called storm parties, apparently, was that during periods of rainy or otherwise inclement weather all the partygoers—typically older teenagers of the neighborhood—would meet at the house of some predetermined host with the intention of having a party and spending the entire night. In a January 21, 1873, letter to her son at Hampden-Sydney, Ruth Martin—the mother of the Martin siblings—mentioned the "very heavy fall of

rain" in recent days, and that "last Thursday night some of the youngsters had intended having a storm party that night at unkle Billies but did not get farther than Mr. Turks and the rain came on and they stayed there all night." She goes on to mention six people who were "among their number."[43]

Apparently, the partygoers went on to "unkle Billies" and had a party there as well, because a few days later, Salle Martin wrote to her brother about this party: "I had a very nice time that night at uncle Billies. . . . They danced and you ought to have seen me trying, but I was not the only one that did not know how."[44] Dancing, then, occurred at some of these storm parties.

At least within the Martin household, dancing was a contentious issue. Ruth Martin, writing to her son a few days later, on February 12, told him "they talk of having a Valentine Party at Grandfathers tomorrow night. Your father has told T. J. that he has no objection to a party; but they are to have no dancing."[45] On February 17, Sallie wrote another letter to her brother at Hampden -Sydney, in which she described this party:

> Tom and I were at another party [a Valentine drawing] last Friday night at Grandfathers. I enjoyed myself very much. There were about 35 there, some from Rockbridge. They had two violins . . . and we had a good deal of music and you knew it would be a great temptation to the dancers. They started dancing on Weevily Wheat but I can't say they stopped there . . . I will tell you [about it] when you come home. I didn't like my draw at all because I did not draw any gentlemen's name I knew. . . . We broke up about one o'clock. Several of us stayed all night.[46]

The Martin siblings and their cousins also organized picnics in the summer. A cousin of the Martin siblings wrote to Lowrie Mar-

tin—who was now in Colorado rather than at Hampden-Sydney—describing one of these picnics: "I had the pleasure of visiting Goshen Pass last Tuesday, with a party from this neighborhood." He then names them all, and those attending include his cousins—the Martin siblings—and also his own brothers and sisters:

> Their was also a party from the pastures.[47] We started from here about five o'clock in the morning and arrived to the mountain early in the morning. The party all seemed to enjoy themselves hugely. I spent an exceedingly pleasant day and spent most of the time climbing over the rocks, gathering laurel and other wildflowers. We dined at laurel Run; spread lunch upon a huge flat rock which formed a part of the bed of the creek. Some of the party had their first experiences with ticks, which was rather amusing to see how quick they got rid of them.[48]

Riding in horse-drawn sleighs was a winter diversion enjoyed by many. People went sleighing for fun and enjoyment, as well as for its functionality in traveling in deep snows. On February 7, 1865, Henry Jones of Rockbridge County noted that it had snowed four inches and "many sleighing parties are out."[49] Similarly, on February 1, 1882, Henry Smalz of Bridgewater commented on the "very fine sleighing."[50]

One of Isaac Acker's diary entries conjures a Currier and Ives image and suggests perhaps that sleighing was an activity enjoyed especially by the young. In January, 1881, he wrote that "last night there were 15 sleighs and 41 youngsters at our house." Acker, who seems to have been young-at-heart in many ways, also liked to sleigh. By December 21, 1880, twenty-two inches of snow had fallen over the previous two days. Acker began to use his sleigh the

next day and, in the ensuing weeks, it seems that he mentioned every instance in which he used a sleigh, and frequently he noted the quality of sleighing conditions. Thus, on December 24th and 31st, he commented on the "fine sleighing"; on January 11, 1881—the sleighing was "nice," each of the next few days, "fine sleighing." January 17th: "town was full of sleighs."

By the 19th much of the snow had melted but "some still sleighing." More snow fell on the 21st, and on the 23rd Acker recorded that he was "still sleighing." And so it went until February 10th when he wrote: "Today ends the sleighing. Has been good sleighing for seven and one-half weeks." On a few occasions, Acker combined his recreational drinking with his love of sleighing: December, 1880: "Noah Roads and I went to Harrisonburg in a slay; drove from town in one hour and ten minutes. I got tite." Or, January 1881: "George Trissel, Daniel Showalter, and myself went to Harrisonburg in a sleigh. I got tite. Pleasant day."[51]

On the subject of Isaac Acker's diversions, he also visited the thermal springs on the western edge of the Valley. In mid-August of 1881, his hired man took him and his uncle to Orkney Springs, where they spent a week. Nearly every day he "rolled a few games on the alley" with people he knew—neighbors, one guesses.[52] Other diarists visited the springs as well. In July of 1853, Henry Jones visited Alum Springs, in western Rockbridge County, for two weeks, and in August of 1883 A. H. McCue of eastern Augusta County went to Stribling Springs, in the western part of his county, for one week.[53]

Apparently, visiting the springs was a gendered activity; nei-

ther Acker nor Jones took their wives on these trips to the springs. McCue was not married at the time. Perhaps his status as a single man made it easier for him to take a long trip to Texas—what would today be called a vacation. Here is his May 1883 description of this trip:

> Kemper and self [Kemper was his good friend and, later in life, his business partner] . . . started to Texas on May 3rd and had a splendid trip. Went to Louisville, KY and from there to Memphis, Tennessee, and from there to Little Rock, Ark—and then to Fort Worth, Texas. . . . I should attempt a full account of my trip. It wood fill this book, and as I can't well share this book for that purpose, [I] will not do so.

He went on to describe his trip home—through Indian territory—and concluded by remarking: "We were gone just 16 days and we two saw a heap that we had never seen before."[54]

A diverse array of other community events, holiday celebrations, or private affairs brought people together. On New Year's Day, 1849, William Harner attended a "ball" at Albert Warble's—Mr. Warble had sponsored two of the shooting matches in which Harner had competed.[55] On Christmas Eve, 1872, Sallie Martin wrote to her brother that "we children are all invited over to Aunt Ellen's tomorrow and our cousins [the] Smileys are to come up and of course we will have a big dinner."[56]

In December of 1883 A. H. McCue accompanied his mother to visit a Mrs. Goodwin on the occasion of her "wooden wedding day" (fifth wedding anniversary), simply "to spend the day" with her. A sampling of gatherings mentioned by A. H. McCue in the early 1880s include church festivals (one was put on by "young

ladies of the church" as a fundraiser); lawn parties (at which ice cream was served); public speeches; election days (on November 12, 1883, A. H. McCue commented on a post-election celebration: "had a big jollification in Staunton tonight, the biggest thing of the kind ever held in Staunton. Come home about 2:00 am and pretty nearly played out"); court days; agricultural fairs (McCue entered his riding horse in the Augusta County fair and won second place); oyster suppers and benefits; and farm auctions.[57]

Of course, weddings and funerals brought people together. As Robert McCormick of northern Rockbridge County explained to his brother William, in a letter written in May of 1840: "We are all well and all your relations as well. And matters are going on much as usual: they are marrying and dying."[58] In addition to conveying gossip of the neighborhood, letter writers often informed their friends and relatives of recent deaths and marriages.

As with weddings today, some were large celebrations; others were small, informal, and unceremonious. In May of 1840, after listing a few of the recent marriages in his neighborhood, Robert McCormick wrote the following: "But really, the people make so little ado about getting married about here these times that if you do not make a memorandum of it at the time, you will be apt to do as I have done [and forget about them]."[59]

In December of 1842, after complaining of the poor economic climate and listing ten recent marriages, McCormick wrote, "This is the way we go it these hard times. It seems that when no other business promises to be profitable, the people have turned their attention to marrying."[60] McCormick also spoke of the frequency

of cousin-marriage: "Henrietta Perry and a cousin of hers [a Mr. Gay] were married a short time ago. . . . [The only] stranger at Miss Perry's wedding [was] the preacher." Or, in another instance: "Jackson Bushong is also married to a cousin of his [Lydia Bushong]. Neither the neighbors nor any of his mother's family saw him married."[61]

Some weddings were elopements or near-elopements involving only the couple. Others, however, could be quite large and grand affairs. In September of 1847 Henry Jones attended a wedding at which "there were upwards of 100 people." Judging by his diary entries, the wedding of Jones' own son in October of 1859 seemed much smaller, and Jones himself did not attend. On October 6th he wrote that "my son, David William, is enroute to Augusta County, with friends, intending to marry Miss Mary Mitchell of New Hope." On the next day, the 7th, Jones' "son brought home his bride at 5:00 pm. We had a pleasant party. We broke up and scattered about midnight."[62]

On September 7, 1848, William Harner attended a wedding and the next day he attended what he called an "infare." This was "a house-warming, reception, party, or entertainment given by a newly married couple, or by the husband upon receiving the wife to his house. In the 1880s, it was customary for a bridegroom's parents to host an infare the day following the wedding."[63] Harner attended another wedding on January 8, 1849, and did not come home from the wedding until sometime on the 9th, suggesting that some kind of post-wedding celebration might have taken place.[64]

Sometimes weddings could be traumatic for the family. One well-documented case of this pertains to the family of Isaac Acker. Acker's stepdaughter Carrie apparently had become smitten with a man of her neighborhood named William Read. Acker's diary entries over four consecutive days in November of 1880 begins the story. November 17th: "Caught Roby [a hired hand] carrying letters for Carrie and Reed. Discharged Roby at once." November 18th: "Old Man Shoup, Carrie, and myself went to Harpers Ferry. Carrie run off with Reed [and] got married." November 19th: "Stayed all night at Harpers Ferry. Came up [on] the freight [train] this morning, got to Cowan's Station, got drunk. John Sherkey brought me to his house . . . give me my supper, brought me home tolerable straight." November 20th: "At home all day . . . I was sick all day from drinking the night before."[65]

There is no mention in Acker's diary of how old Carrie was when she married Read in 1880, but the federal census of that year reveals that she was fifteen or sixteen years of age.[66] (Census takers recorded information as of June 1, 1880, so Carrie might have turned sixteen by the time she married Read in November of that year). Even by the standards of that day, Carrie was very young to have married at fifteen or sixteen. Among the fifty-five couples married in nearby Shenandoah County during the period from June 1879 to June of 1880, the average age of marriage among women was 22.2 and 25.2 among men.[67]

Acker first saw Carrie again nine days later in his travels about the neighborhood. On December 30th: "Carrie cam home for the first time." On the 31st: "Carrie here all day." On January

1st: "William Read come home this evening for the first time, after Carrie." January 2nd: "Carrie and Read left." In the ensuing weeks, Carrie was back in Acker's life, to some extent. She was doing things with him again.

W. D. Novak

The Isaac Acker House in Rockingham County
(Fall 2016)

On January 18th, for example, Acker "went to a 'surprise' [party] with Carrie and Sallie." On February 4th they went into the town of Broadway together. On February 14th: "Carrie and Bill Read over this evening and went back tonight." Acker must have been deeply disappointed in the turn that his daughter's life had taken, perhaps even bitter. But Carrie was still his daughter, and when her marriage to Read failed, he sent his hired man, William Summers, "to Reeds after Carrie's trunk and cow. She moved home."

This was on April 2, 1881. On January 6, 1882, Acker sent his hired man to pick-up Old Man Shoup, Carrie's grandfather. Together, they spent the day in Acker's farm shop waiting for Carrie to give birth. Acker's diary entry for that day ended with a note that said, "Carrie had a young son today. Born at 3:00 in the afternoon."[68]

Reflecting on the uncertainties of life and troubles in his own neighborhood—a shooting, a wedding, and a murder—Henry Jones of Rockbridge County wrote in his diary in June of 1869: ". . . [T]hus we go, not knowing what the next day will bring."[69] Whatever the proverbial next day would bring for common folk of the Valley of Virginia, however, the bonds of family, neighborly friendship, and community, remained in place.

The historical record is filled with evidence and stories reflecting the lived experiences of peoples of past times. Anecdotes and vignettes relating to cultural practice among inhabitants of the nineteenth-century Valley of Virginia are not so obscure that they cannot be found. Social historians simply need to care enough about cultural practices to notice them and write about them in an organized and systematic way. And for this to happen, social historians must free themselves of scholarly pressures to link their studies to key events in the master narratives that traditional historians have constructed. The study of cultural practice offers a way to realize the promise of the new social history as it pertains to the nineteenth-century Valley of Virginia—and many other regions as well—by writing "history from the bottom up."

*

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ENDNOTES

[1] Discussion of the early development of social history in the United States may be found in Peter N. Stearns, "Social History and History: A Progress Report," *Journal of Social History* 19 (Winter 1985), 319 -334.

[2] Sigurđur Gylfi Magnússon, "'The Singularization of History': Social History and Microhistory Within the Postmodern State of Knowledge," *Journal of Social History* 36 (Spring 2003), 701.

[3] Ibid., 709.

[4] Ibid., 712.

[5] John L. Heatwole, *The Burning: Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Howell Press, 1998).

[6] David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* (Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), 217.

[7] Magnússon, "The Singularization of History," 723.

[8] Richard Ivan Jobs and Patrick McDevitt, "Introduction: Where the Hell are the People?" *Journal of Social History, Special Issue, Kith and Kin: Interpersonal Relationships and Cultural Practices* 39 (Winter 2005), 309.

[9] Ibid., 312.

[10]Ibid., 310–311.

[11] Kenneth E. Koons, "'The Staple of Our Country': Wheat in the Regional Farm Economy of the Nineteenth-Century Valley of Virginia," in *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900*, ed. Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra, 3–20 (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 2000).

[12] Historians of the family and family life have commented on the extent to which, gradually during the modern period and increasingly during the nineteenth century, homes became private sanctuaries to which family members retreated from the outside world. Until then, homes were subject to intrusion by neighbors and non-nuclear kin. See Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1977), 3-4 and John R. Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 32–33.

[13] Charles W. Turner, ed., *The Diary of Henry Boswell Jones of Brownsburg (1842-1871)* (Verona, Virginia: McClure Printing Co., 1979).

[14] Isaac Acker Diary, 1880-1906, in Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

[15]A. H. McCue Diary and Account Books, McCue-Robertson Family Collection, 1879–1882 volume, in Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

[16] Isaac Acker Diary.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., April 2, 1880.

[19] Isaac Acker Diary.

[20] A. H. McCue Diary.

[21] Isaac Acker Diary.

[22] Sallie Martin, Airy Mount [Farm], Augusta County, Virginia, to Walter L. Martin, Hampden-Sydney, Prince Edward County, Virginia, 3 February 1873, in Martin Family Papers, held privately, photocopies in possession of the author. Many of the "mourners" were neighbors of the Martin family whose homes can be located on the map in Jedediah Hotchkiss, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Augusta County, Virginia* (Chicago: Waterman, Watkins, and Company, 1885).

[23] Turner, *Diary of Henry Boswell Jones*.

[24] A. H. McCue Diary.

[25] Henry Smalz Diary, in Henry Smalz Papers, 1871–1891, in Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

[26] Isaac Acker Diary, June 2, 1882.

[27] Ibid., November 19, 1880.

[28] For example, see Ibid., January 14, 1881.

[29] Ibid., December 22, 1880; January 25, 1881; and April 18, 1881.

[30] Ibid., April 17, 1881.

[31] Bureau of the Census, *A Compendium of the Tenth Census (June 1, 1870)* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1885).

[32] Henry Smalz Diary.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.; Isaac Acker Diary.

[35] See J. M. Lathrop and B. N. Griffing, *An Atlas of Rockingham County, Virginia: From Actual Surveys by J. M. Lathrop and B. N. Griffing* (Philadelphia: D. J. Lake & Co., 1885).

[36] Turner, *Diary of Henry Boswell Jones.*

[37] William Harner Diary, 1847-1861, in Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

[38] Emanuel Suter Diary, 1864-1902, in Suter Papers, Menno Simons Historical Library and Archives, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

[39] For example, see William Harner Diary, June 12, 1848.

[40] Isaac Acker Diary.

[41] William Harner Diary. As examples, see entries for March 18, April 15, and June 3, 1848.

[42] Sallie Martin, Airy Mount [Farm], Augusta County, Virginia, to Walter L. Martin, Hampden-Sydney, Prince Edward County, Virginia, 17 February 1873, in Martin Family Papers.

[43] R. A. E. [Ruth] Martin, Airy Mount [Farm], Augusta County, Virginia, to Walter L. Martin, Hampden-Sydney, Prince Edward County, Virginia, 21 January 1873, in Martin Family Papers.

[44] Sallie Martin, Airy Mount [Farm], Augusta County, Virginia, to Walter L. Martin, Hampden-Sydney, Prince Edward County, Virginia, 3 February 1873, in Martin Family Papers.

[45] R. E. [Ruth] Martin, Airy Mount [Farm], Augusta County, Virginia, to Walter L. Martin, Hampden-Sydney, Prince Edward County, Virginia, 12 February 1873, in Martin Family Papers.

[46] Sallie Martin, Airy Mount [Farm], Augusta County, Virginia, to Walter L. Martin, Hampden-Sydney, Prince Edward County, Virginia, 17 February 1873, in Martin Family Papers. Ruth Martin, the mother of Sallie, probably knew of the dancing, since she had written a letter to her son on the back side of the same page that her daughter had written. There seems to have been a generational divide regarding the acceptability of dancing in this Presbyterian household. The grandfather (age unknown) had given permission to have the party; the father (James Martin, Ruth's husband), aged sixty five, asserted that there would be no dancing; and yet there was dancing and, probably, the wife of James Martin and mother of Sallie (Ruth Martin), aged forty seven, knew about it. In any case, the circumstances of this party and details of their report to others raise interesting issues about generational differences regarding dancing, and the nature of parental authority. For a useful discussion of attitudes about dancing among congregations of the Shenandoah Valley, see Stephen L. Longenecker, *Shenandoah Religion: Outsiders and the Mainstream, 1716-1865* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2002), 89–91.

[47] The Pastures was a neighboring magisterial district in Augusta County.

[48] Russell (illeg.), Moffetts Creek, Virginia, to W. Lowrie Martin, Colorado Springs, 4 June 1880, in Martin Family Papers.

[49] Turner, *Diary of Henry Boswell Jones.*

[50] Henry Smalz Diary.

[51] Isaac Acker Diary.

[52] Ibid.

[53] A. H. McCue Diary and Turner, *Diary of Henry Boswell Jones.*

[54] A. H. McCue Diary.

[55] William Harner Diary.

[56] Sallie Martin, Airy Mount [Farm], Augusta County, Virginia, to Walter L. Martin, Hampden-Sydney, Prince Edward County, Virginia, 24 December 1872, in Martin Family Papers.

[57] A. H. McCue Diary, passim.

[58] Robert McCormick, Augusta County, Virginia, to William McCormick, Caledonia, Washington County, Missouri, 30 May 1840, in William Steele McCormick Papers, 1833–1879, McCormick Collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

[59] McCormick.

[60] Ibid., 25 December 1842.

[61] Ibid., 30 May 1840.

[62] Turner, *Diary of Henry Boswell Jones.*

[63] See *http://www.hyperdictionary.com/dictionary/infare.*

[64] William Harner Diary.

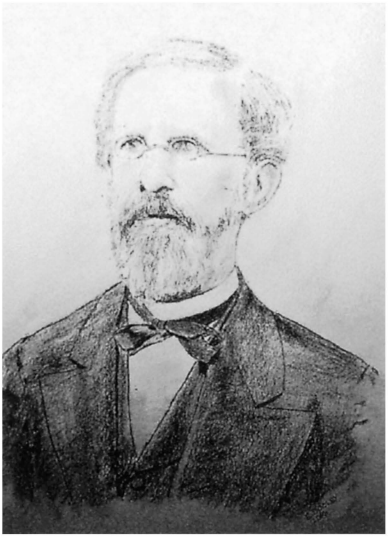
[65] Isaac Acker Diary.

[66] Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1880, Manuscript Population Schedules, Rockingham County, Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Publications, M432).

[67] Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1880, Shenandoah County, Virginia.*

[68] Isaac Acker Diary.

[69] Turner, *Diary of Henry Boswell Jones.*



Superintendent Francis H. Smith
Drawing by Ed Dooley
(2016)

FRANCIS H. SMITH'S EUROPEAN TRIP IN 1858

EDWIN L. DOOLEY JR.

In a memoir written shortly before his death in 1890, Gen. Francis H. Smith, VMI's first Superintendent, included the following statement regarding a trip he took to Europe in 1858:

> The strain of official duty was severely felt by me during the incessant calls made on me at that time [1857-1858]. The Board of Visitors realized this, and were convinced that I needed respite, and acting under their advice, and by their authority, I accepted a furlough to visit Europe in 1858. It was made my duty by the Board of Visitors to visit the Military, Scientific, and Agricultural institutions of Europe with instructions to report

> thereon upon my return. I sailed from New York on the 9th of June, 1858, and returned on the last of December, 1858.[1]

During Smith's six-month visit to Europe, he traveled through Ireland, Scotland, England, France, Holland, several German states, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy. Besides taking notes for the official report he would write on his return, he wrote lengthy letters to his wife Sarah nearly every day about his experiences. When Smith returned to Lexington, he had his clerk, Robert Henry Campbell, copy the letters into three small letter books. Over the years the letter books passed down through descendants of Smith, but sadly one of them, the third—having to do with his visit to Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and Italy—was lost. The two surviving books ended up in the possession of Col. Alexander Morrison (VMI 1939), a Smith descendant, who made them available for transcription and research. (See endnote 30 on page 162.)

His letters home provide many interesting details of his trip, but they also give us a rare personal picture of Smith that one does not find in the thousands of pages of official correspondence at VMI that have survived from his fifty-year tenure as superintendent.

For example, Smith's letters to Sarah tell us much about his religious faith. In writing home about the churches he visited and the preachers he heard in England, Smith reveals a spirit of evangelicalism that was animating the Anglican Church—and by extension the American Episcopal Church—at the time. In America, this development was related to the Second Great Awakening that occurred in the early years of the nineteenth century. Although

Evangelicals of various denominations differed over beliefs, theology, ritual, governance, church organization, and emotional display, they shared certain convictions, including faith based on the Bible alone, a belief in man's inherent sinfulness, a need to be "born again," a preference for spontaneous preaching, rejection of elaborate ritual, strict keeping of the Sabbath, and concern over the expansion of Roman Catholicism. Smith's letters strongly suggest that he and Sarah had been seriously influenced in their youth by the Second Great Awakening, and that by 1858 both were committed Evangelical Episcopalians. They were in good company because Bishop William Meade and Robert E. Lee, to mention but two prominent Virginians, also strongly embraced this movement.[2]

The letters also show that Smith was deeply devoted to his family. He and Sarah had six children between the ages of one and nineteen. A seventh child, Anna Marsden Smith, had been born in 1836 and died in 1846. We often read that nineteenth-century men and women were not in the habit of expressing their affections, and that the death of a child—so common in those years—was accepted with providential resignation. But a very different picture emerges from Smith's letters. His words are deeply affectionate toward his wife and children, and they reveal that the death of young Anna grieved the couple for many years. Instead of painting a picture of an austere Victorian patriarch, the letters reveal a man of deep emotion and affection.

Smith began his voyage on June 9, 1858, in New York Harbor, where he boarded the wooden-hull, steam-driven, paddle

side-wheeler *Africa*, a British and North American Royal Mail steamer that had been making the New York to Liverpool trip since 1850.[3] Accompanying Smith were several young VMI men: Francis Smith, a nephew (VMI 1856); John Cocke (VMI 1856), the son of Col. Philip Cocke Sr.; George Cocke, president of the VMI Board of Visitors; Robert Taylor (VMI 1857); Robert Terrill (VMI 1858); and Albert Grady (VMI 1865). In addition, to these young traveling companions, Smith was joined by the Rev. Dr. Charles F. E. Minnigerode, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Richmond.

Smith's voyage across the Atlantic, following the northern passage, took ten days. The fastest steamer at this time was the *Vanderbilt*, which set a record in 1855 crossing from New York to Southampton in nine days and five hours. So Smith's journey was a quick one, although not an altogether comfortable one. In his first letter home, he wrote: "After passing Cape Race [at the farthest southern point of Newfoundland], on Sunday, the breeze freshened, until it blew a gale, by midnight; and for 3 days we had a severe northern gale which, at times, blew into a perfect hurricane. . . . From the commencement of the rough weather until yesterday morning, I was sick." But, he added reassuringly, "I have often suffered more in the Stage to Staunton."[4] Smith gave thanks to the captain for getting them through, and, of course, to ". . . our Saviour and deliverer."[5] Like many other men and women of his day, Francis Smith had a providential view of life: Providence had sustained him in his voyage across the stormy Atlantic, and Providence would sustain him on his travels in Europe.

On the ninth day, the *Africa* reached the Irish Channel and

proceeded to steam on to Liverpool, England. The next morning, June 20th, a Sunday, the passengers debarked in Liverpool. After a quick stop to check into the Waterloo Inn, Smith and Dr. Minnigerode hastened to St. Paul's Church to hear the rector, Dr. John McNeill, preach. McNeill was a Scottish evangelical preacher whose sermons were read on both sides of the Atlantic. Important to Smith, and revealing of Smith's religious faith, McNeill was an outspoken critic of ecclesiastical formalism. In his letter to Sarah, the normally austere Smith wrote, "[Dr. McNeill] preached such a sermon as did me good, so that I could scarcely keep my seat from the very Joy it afforded me, in the sound evangelical and high spiritual tone which pervaded it."[6]

Because Smith was on a semi-official visit to England and Europe sponsored by the Institute's Board of Visitors to gather information on scientific education, he carried letters of introduction to some of the highest U.S. officials in the countries he would visit. Thus, for example, his credentials were forwarded to George Mifflin Dallas, Minister to Great Britain, and to John Young Mason, U.S. Minister Plenipotentiary to France. Actually, Smith did not need an official letter to call on Mason because he and Smith had been friends for some years. Smith also carried letters of introduction to the various scientific and military schools that he planned to visit, some of which required official government approval of a visit. In addition, he had as his banker in London the enormously influential George Peabody, who opened many doors for him and invited him to sumptuous dinners where he met other Americans and notables.

Smith's plan of travel in England began with a visit to some of the grand homes around Liverpool, and then on to Wales. From there he would cross over to Ireland, then to Scotland, and finally back to England, with a visit to London before heading for the Continent. These are the locations covered in the first two, the extant, letter books. Although the entire trip had a specific educational purpose, the first part of the trip—in Great Britain—was decidedly a tourist's vacation, with visits to many natural wonders, castles, manor houses, historic and cultural sites, and, on Sundays, to churches to hear well-known evangelical preachers.

In Ireland and Scotland, he took a special interest in a bitter controversy that was raging over the organization of public education, and especially over the education of the poor and the question of which version of the Bible children should use or whether to allow its use at all. Smith, who favored religious instruction in the classroom, followed the debate closely.

For the most part, Smith was critical of what he saw in Ireland, especially the crushing poverty that he saw all around him. He described it as "the land of beggars."[7] At one point, however, he wrote the following to his children:

> I would add with reference to Ireland that what struck me most of all was the happy, smiling, and ruddy faces of the little children. Amid all the squalid misery around them, the goodness of God seemed to provide for them, by enabling them to enjoy life, such as it was to them, without realizing how little they had.

As a lesson to his children, he added, "Could my dear little Children realize by contrast how many blessings they enjoy, which

are denied to these Irish children, they would never be unthankful again." And perhaps a bit defensively in reference to the house servant who worked in the Superintendent's Quarters, he added, "And Bob is daily enjoying comforts of which thousands of the men and women of Ireland know nothing."[8]

This is Smith's only allusion to slavery. His letters do not indicate that he was challenged on the matter of slavery, despite the fact that abolitionist sentiment was running strong in England at the time. The standard answer given by defenders of slavery was that Southern slaves, though not free, were cared for by their masters and better cared for than industrial workers in British factories or, as in Ireland, the poor.

Although critical of conditions in Ireland, Smith enjoyed visiting the University of Dublin, the Bank of Ireland, and St. Patrick's Church, Dublin, of which Jonathan Swift was once dean, and he sent post cards and other illustrations to his family. As for Dublin, Smith's impressions were not favorable. "It is a dull, heavy town, and our Hotel miserable. . . ," he wrote, but the countryside and scenery beyond the city captivated him, especially the Giant's Causeway, a mass of basalt columns forming stepping stones from the land into the sea. Smith was deeply moved by the stunning scenery of the countryside. For him, nature was the temple of God in which God's infinite powers were revealed. We can also see in his love of nature an affinity to the back-to-nature movement popular at this time, especially among the younger generation.

Crossing over to Scotland, Smith headed for Glasgow, where he wrote, "We were at once struck with the active business-like

aspect of Glasgow, as compared with the dullness of Dublin and Belfast."[9] This was the land of John Knox, champion of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland, and Smith made a point of visiting the colossal statue of Knox near Glasgow Cathedral. From there the party took a three-day trip to the Islands of Iona and Staffa, to visit Fingal's Cave, and then went from Loch Lomond to Inverness, Stirling Castle, and Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh, all described in great detail in his letters.

Loch Lomond held special significance to Francis and Sarah Smith because of its association with the novels of Sir Walter Scott, who was highly popular with antebellum Southerners and whom the Smiths apparently read with great pleasure. Throughout his travels in Scotland, Smith drew attention in his letters to the connection between castles, lakes, countryside and other scenes in Scott's novels, revealing an intimate knowledge of those stories. Later, he visited Scott's home of Abbotsford, which was open to the public.[10] Although Smith enjoyed his tour of Scotland and admired the industriousness of the Scots, he left the country with mixed feelings. "My impression . . . of Scotland. . . ," he wrote, "is that it is the land of robbers . . . . The post boys and inn keepers, the waiters and everybody, will cheat you, if they can."[11]

Smith, a mathematician, took pleasure in describing for his wife the dimensions of buildings he visited. For example, when he traveled next to the city of York, in northern England, he wrote to Sarah describing York Minster as "the finest building of the kind in Europe. Let it suffice for the present that I tell you that it is five hundred and twenty four feet long by upwards of two hun-

dred feet wide. The large inner pillars which terminate the nave are sixty three feet in circumference." He did not go into detail about the stonework and the artwork of the cathedral, but he did add that "the arching of the roof—the aisles—the great windows with their ancient stained glass, presented to us so many objects of admiration, that for the time, we . . . were wrapped in admiration at the living splendor before us."[12] This was a rare compliment for Smith, as he often stated his dislike of medieval architecture, which he found to be dark, mysterious, and reflective of a theology he rejected.

Traveling from northern England to London, Smith visited the major tourist sites, including Chatsworth, Haddon Hall, Kenilworth Castle, Warwick Castle, Blenheim Palace, and Buckingham Palace. As he passed not far from the home of Florence Nightingale, he said, "We all felt like taking off our hats in compliment to this noble heroine."[13] Further on, he passed near Rugby School, the school of the late Dr. Thomas Arnold, whom Smith admired immensely. But because the school was on vacation, he did not stop to visit but continued on to Stratford-upon-Avon and visited the house in which "the great Shakespere was born."[14] At Trinity Church, where Shakespeare was buried, Smith copied several inscriptions in Latin and English and included them in his letter to Sarah.

Sunday, July 11th, found the party at Oxford, which was the center of a movement in the Anglican Church that disturbed and dismayed Smith and his fellow Evangelicals. Oxford was the home of the high-church Oxford Movement, also known as the Tractar-

ian Movement and as Puseyism. Led by John Henry Newman, Dr. Edward Pusey, and others, the Oxford Movement attempted to revive many traditional ceremonies and traditions of the early Anglican Church and to bring about a union or reconciliation between the Anglican and Roman Churches. As a good Evangelical Episcopalian, Smith found this attempt anathema. No doubt he was expecting to receive a full dose of Puseyism when he went to St. Mary's Church, Oxford, on that Sunday, but he was surprised and recounted his experience in his letter to Sarah. "Considering that this was Oxford," he wrote, "the Sermon was simpler than I had anticipated . . . . The Service was read in a common way and a sermon appropriate to the occasion was preached . . . free from the peculiar theology of the Oxford School."[15]

The next day, Monday, Smith heard another sermon in Oxford that he described to Sarah as "a thoroughly evangelical discourse, and one that harmonized . . . with your views. . . . "[16]

His visit to London was clearly the highlight of the trip for Smith. He arrived on July 12th and composed a letter to Sarah on the 16th. "My Dearest Wife," he wrote, "I find it difficult to know where to begin in my attempt to describe to you what London is. . . . "[17] And then, characteristically, he began to list for Sarah the population of the city, the number of beef, sheep, calves, pigs, game, and salmon required each year to feed the population; he noted the number of gallons of milk, porter, ale, spirits and wine consumed annually, as well as the number of gas lights, the number of tons of coal required, and the number of tailors, shoemakers, milliners, and servants. And, also characteristically, he reported

that he had started his first day in London by attending church service at St. Mary's Woolnoth, which he described as including "a capital sermon, thoroughly evangelical, and we were all well satisfied we had the privilege of hearing it."[18]

Church service over, Smith and his party began their sightseeing tour of London, highlighted by visits to White Hall, the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, and the British Museum, all described in great detail to Sarah. Throughout his tour of Ireland, Scotland, and England, Smith saw many paintings and sculptures in castles, manor houses, as well as in Westminster Abbey, but artwork didn't move him much, and he had little to say about what he saw.

Music, however, was another matter altogether. Smith seemed to enjoy music greatly, perhaps because music stirred emotions in him similar to the feelings he experienced in his religious life. When in London and later in Paris, Smith went to the opera whenever possible and was familiar with many of the leading singers. In fact, in the evening of his very first day in London he went to the Queen's Theatre and enjoyed the music. The only thing marring the evening was a ballet that followed the opera and which, as Smith made a point of telling Sarah, "was disagreeable to me, as appealing to the taste which shews the diseased condition of public morals."[19] The objection to ballet that Smith voiced was to the exhibition of women's legs on the public stage, an objection that was not uncommon in American society at the time.

While in London, he also attended a reading by Charles

Dickens. "It was a rich treat," he wrote. "His voice is not good—but he reads well."[20]

On several visits to the Houses of Parliament, Smith secured seats in the Strangers' Gallery in the House of Commons and witnessed speeches by Viscount Palmerston, Lord Russell, Benjamin Disraeli, Spencer Walpole, and others. The great issue of the day was the passage of the Jewish disability bill that allowed Jews to hold seats in parliament. "The members sit with their hats on," he wrote to Sarah, "and their mode of speaking is by no means so declamatory, or so much for Buncombe as our speakers."[21] The great diplomatic issue of the day, and one of serious importance to the United States, was the question of the right of the British to stop and search American ships possibly engaged in the slave trade. The issue nearly resulted in war between the two countries. The British had outlawed the slave trade, and both countries honored the abolition, but the United States—some of whose citizens brazenly violated the ban—objected regularly to the British Navy stopping its merchant ships on the high seas to search for contraband slaves from Africa. After lengthy debates in Parliament, the British government concluded in June that no right of search existed in time of peace.

Like many American tourists in London, Smith went to the Crystal Palace, an enormous iron-frame building that had been constructed in Hyde Park for the Great Exhibition of 1851 and had been moved to Sydenham Hill, South London, in 1854. It appears from Smith's letters that his colleague Col. J. T. L. Preston had recently visited the relocated Crystal Palace and had recom-

mended that Smith include it in his travels. Smith was greatly impressed by the dimensions of the immense building, which he meticulously wrote down and sent to Sarah. The structure had been designed by Sir Joseph Paxton, whom Smith later met at a dinner party hosted by his banker, Mr. Peabody.

The official function of the Crystal Palace was to serve as a "great practical school for the study of applied science in Engineering, Architecture, the mechanical Arts, and in the various departments of painting, Sculpture, Natural History, Agriculture, Botany. . . ." This struck a chord with Smith and reinforced an idea that had been forming for some time in his mind to transform VMI into a great practical school of science, engineering, and agriculture. Unlike many Virginians of his generation who longed to restore a society of aristocratic planters, Smith wanted Virginia to become a leader in the new age of progress. Politically, he was a southern Whig, the old party of economic development. Although Smith was nearly fifty in 1858, he shared the ambitions of younger men who were coming of age in the 1850s, with one important exception: While he agreed with the younger generation that progress would improve man's material conditions, he did not share their hope that progress might also improve man's moral condition. For him, science enabled man to tame nature, whereas only religion enabled man to master his inner self.[22]

Smith was especially impressed with a concert he attended at the Crystal Palace that featured eight hundred singers, two hundred musicians, and an audience of over 2,500. For large audiences and amazing auditory feats, however, nothing could surpass the ability

of evangelical preachers then popular in London. None was more popular than Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a British reformed-Baptist preacher who, at the age of only twenty-two, drew audiences so large on weekends, sometimes numbering ten thousand, that he had to preach at the Music Hall at the Royal Surrey Gardens. Smith was skeptical of Spurgeon, whom he considered overly emotional and enthusiastic, but he felt that he had to go hear the famous preacher. "My impression before hearing Mr. Spurgeon was not favorable to him," Smith wrote,

> but I was most agreeably disappointed. He is in no respects an orator, either in voice or manner. He is earnest, although not impassioned, and yet . . . he was [able] to keep his audience numbering yesterday 10,000! in breathless attention during the whole time, not a thing occurred to mar the occasion.[23]

Throughout Smith's trip, the young men who were traveling with him often asked permission to skip some of the planned tours in order to hurry on to the big cities, which were of more interest to them. They arrived in London before Smith, and they were anxious to go to Paris instead of spending time with Smith on the Isle of Wight, where Smith looked forward to visiting the graves of two young girls whose lives of suffering and Christian piety had been made famous among evangelicals by the Rev. Legh Richmond in his *Annals of the Poor*. One was Elizabeth Wallbridge, known as "The Dairyman's Daughter," and the other was known as "Little Jane" Squibb, "The Poor Cottager." Smith made a pilgrimage to both graves and sent home blades of grass plucked there. His emotional description of the cottage in which Elizabeth died and the church-

yard where she lay reveals that he and Sarah had read the story so often that they could recite it from heart. "I cannot express to you what a crowd of emotion came upon me as I gazed upon the scene before me," he wrote.

This was not just a reflection of his evangelical faith. The episode also reveals the unhealed wound from the death of their own dear child, Anna.

Meanwhile, Smith's young traveling companions raced on to Paris. There, they decided to change the hotel reservations from one in a quiet and uninteresting section of the city to a hotel located on the busiest, most fashionable boulevard, the Boulevard des Italiens, an area of swank cafes and restaurants frequented by elegant, elite society people, financiers, and tourists and brilliantly illuminated at night with gas lights. Smith arrived on July 29th in the "City of Lights," recently transformed into a beautiful metropolis by Emperor Napoleon III. The boys explained to him that the new hotel was more comfortable and less expensive, and he did not offer any objections.

In his first letter from Paris, Smith wrote, "Paris is a gay city. Altho' of course I have seen but little of it, yet last night I strolled along the Boulevard des Italiens, the street on which we live, and I never saw a more brilliant exhibition than the numerous cafes presented along the Boulevards."[24] The boys had succeeded, and it was not the last time they would trick Smith into experiencing the lighter side of French life. One evening they talked Smith into going to a dance hall in order, in their words, to get a flavor of French life. "The gardens are most beautifully and artistically ar-

ranged with flowers," he wrote Sarah,

> but it was a place where "any gentleman may ask any lady to dance with him, whether he knows her or not, and then there is a whirl around the ring in a waltz . . . . The dance was vulgar and I cannot conceive how any young man could frequent such a place, and mix with its customs without injury. . . .[25]

In Paris, Smith had business to transact. He sought out the publisher Bossarge et frères to locate and purchase scientific texts to send back to the Institute. He also went a number of times to the U.S. Embassy to see John Young Mason, U.S. Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris, who gave him a detailed account of diplomatic issues troubling England, France, and the United States. On one visit, Mason invited Smith and his companions to a party at his home. This presented a serious problem for Smith because the party was to be held on Sunday, a day, according to Mason and much to Sabbatarian Smith's discomfort, that was routinely filled with entertainments and other activities in Paris. Smith considered the invitation for several days and mentioned the dilemma in his letter to Sarah. He wrote, "I am not sure that I will go, but shall not look upon it as a party of pleasure if I do."[26] In fact, he went, and notwithstanding his vow not to, he enjoyed himself.

Despite a rising tide of secularism in France, the Roman Catholic Church remained a powerful force. On his first Sunday in Paris, Smith attended mass at Notre Dame Cathedral, mainly out of curiosity, but he showed little patience with the religious rituals and ceremonies he witnessed. Thereafter, he made a point of going to the American Chapel, a Protestant chapel near the

Champs Elysées, whose pastor was an American Congregationalist who used the church service of the American Episcopal Church. Like many other Protestants of his day, Smith saw in Catholicism a spiritual deadness and cold unthinking ritual. Commenting to Sarah on his visit to Notre Dame, Smith wrote, "I do thank God my lot is cast in a land with an open Bible, and where the access to a throne of grace is not through the intervention of any other than the Great High Priest."[27] Underlying Smith's criticism of Catholic formalism was a basic moral attitude that shaped his thinking on many levels. In all aspects of life, Smith emphasized the need for individuals to develop an inner sense of right, rather than depending on the dictates of society or some external authority.

Smith was critical of much of what he saw in French society. For example, he was convinced that the French had no real appreciation for family life because they seemed to spend all their time in cafes and on the boulevards. For him, the family was the repository of moral and religious values, and France seemed an overly materialist and secular society. As important as outward appearances might have been to him, the "inner life" was more important. "The French have much that is inoffensive outside," he wrote, "but their inner life is impure and irreligious and the judgment of the passing observer would be greatly in error if he did not look below the surfaces."[28]

Smith made the standard tour of Paris, visiting the Louvre, the Invalides and Tomb of Napoleon, Notre Dame Cathedral, Sainte-Chappelle, the Halls of Justice, the Pantheon, the Champs Élysées and the Arc de Triomphe, the Palais Royale, the Champs

de Mars, the Catacombs, and even the Paris Morgue where, to his disappointment, no bodies were laid out on the day of his visit. He rode through the fashionable Bois de Boulogne, climbed the Vendôme Column in the Place Vendôme, and spent a day at the Palace at Versailles.

Tourism aside, Smith's main business in Paris was to call on the French mathematician Jean-Baptiste Biot and to visit the École Polytechnique. Biot, a member of the first class to study at the École Polytechnique in 1794, was a distinguished physicist and mathematician and a member of the French Academy of Sciences. Smith had translated one of Biot's mathematical textbooks as *An Elementary Treatise on Analytical Geometry* (1846) for the use of the cadets of the Virginia Military Institute and was anxious to meet the great savant. Their meetings—they had two sessions together at Biot's office at the College de France—were warm and cordial, and Biot complimented him highly on the translation of his book.

Smith was very familiar with the famous École Polytechnique, located in the Latin Quarter of Paris, and was anxious to visit it. This school of science and mathematics had been the model for the United States Military Academy at West Point and, to a degree, the Virginia Military Institute. Col. Claudius Crozet, who taught descriptive geometry at West Point and later served as the first president of the VMI Board of Visitors, had graduated from the École in 1807. Many of the mathematics text books written by professors of the École had been translated for the use of cadets at West Point, in addition to the one Smith translated for the use of

cadets at VMI. To his delight, Smith was escorted through the École by the Director of Studies, who, he reported, "took me through the various Halls of the Institution" and the lecture rooms.[29] Of most interest to Smith were the school's wooden and plaster models that demonstrated mathematical principles, and he inquired where he could purchase examples in Paris for use by cadets at VMI.

After making a brief visit to the French military academy at St. Cyr and observing a full day of ceremonies, parades, and performances in honor of Napoleon I, Smith and his party departed Paris for Brussels, stopping at the battlefield of Waterloo on the way. He wrote to Sarah that the route before him was Brussels, Waterloo, Antwerp, back to Brussels, Aix-la-Chapelle, Switzerland, Cologne, and from there by steamer up the Rhine to Mayenne, Frankfort, Heidelburg, and Baden-Baden. We know from other letters and the official report of his trip written when he returned to Lexington that he went to many of these places as well as to Rome and then back to England. Smith presumably covered these in the letters contained in the lost letter book mentioned earlier.

When Smith returned to VMI he immediately set to work on his "Special Report on Scientific Education in Europe" and on an ambitious plan to reorganize VMI into a great school of science, mathematics, engineering, and agriculture. These plans, however, had to be put aside with the outbreak of the Civil War. After the war, with the Institute in ruins (the books and models he pur-

chased in Paris taken or destroyed), Smith tried to revive his dream for VMI, especially because the U.S. Government had passed the Morrill Act, which gave money to states to create "land grant" colleges and universities to do exactly what Smith had envisioned for VMI. But, for obvious reasons, VMI was not chosen as the recipient. Instead, a college was created in Blacksburg to fulfill this function and was named Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

Misfortune and reversal could not keep an Evangelical like Smith down, however. Adversity was considered a test of his faith and a call to redouble his efforts in doing God's work. VMI and Smith would struggle for many decades—nearly a half century—before the Institute began to achieve the mission he proposed for it in 1858.

Understanding Francis Smith is not an easy task, and much work remains to be done by historians, but the availability of these letters has opened a number of windows into his inner life. Through their pages, we see a man broadly educated, intensely curious about the world around him, a proponent of material progress, old-fashioned in certain ways, devoted to family and friends, earnest as any Victorian, and above all deeply religious. The directing role of religion in his life may seem extreme to us. We must remember, however, that religion dominated nineteenth-century American culture, and Smith was very much a man of his times.[30]

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ENDNOTES

[1] Francis H. Smith, *The Virginia Military Institute, Its Building and Rebuilding,* ed. Francis H. Smith Jr. (Lexington, VA: Virginia Military Institute, 1912; repr., Mattituck, NY: Evergreen Press, Inc., n. d.), 149.

[2] Readers interested in the Evangelical Episcopalian movement are referred to Diana Hochstedt Butler, *Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1995). For information on Lee as an Evangelical Episcopalian, I am indebted to the Rev. David Cox, of Lexington, VA, who is a student of Lee's religious faith and who is also a contributor to Volume XIV of the RHS *Proceedings*.

[3] Frank C. Bowen, *A Century of Atlantic Travel, 1830-1930* (London: Sampson Low, n. d.), 81.

[4] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, 18 June 1858.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, 4 July 1858.

[8] Francis Smith to Sally Smith, 29 June 1858.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, 8 July 1858

[11] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, 4 July 1858.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, 9 July 1858.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, 16 July 1858.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] This paragraph owes much to Peter S. Carmichael, *The Last Generation* (Chapel Hill, UNC Press, 2005).

[23] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, 21 July 1858.

[24] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, Letter #24.

[25] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, 6 August 1858.

[26] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, Letter #24.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Francis Smith to Sarah Smith, 6 August 1858.

[30] Col. Alexander Morrison (VMI 1939) kindly made these letter books available to the author to transcribe and annotate. With help from Col. Diane Jacob, VMI Archivist, Dooley placed his transcription on the VMI Archives Department's webpage, where anyone interested can read the letters in their entirety and experience a virtual tour of the places Smith visited. In addition, readers will find illustrations and footnotes for every name, place, and social, religious, and political issue mentioned in the letters.

Go to the VMI Archives Homepage for complete electronic copies of Smith's Travel Journals. The letters composing them are in two parts, and the links to their VMI digital repositories are:

http://digitalcollections.vmi.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15821coll14/id/278

and

http://digitalcollections.vmi.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15821coll14/id/403.

T. C. DeLaney

Speakers at the "Telling Our Stories" Program
(May 2004)

Front row, from left: Margaret Walker, Joseph Mormon, Wanda Early Fitz. Back row, from left: Theodore Carter DeLaney, Peggy Hays, A. Linwood Holton, Rev. Edward T. Burton, William W. Perry[1]

TELLING OUR STORIES: SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN FOUR WESTERN VIRGINIA COUNTIES

THEODORE CARTER DELANEY

During the spring of 2004, people from Augusta, Rockbridge, Botetourt, and Roanoke Counties gathered in Lee Chapel on the Washington and Lee University Campus to share stories about school desegregation. The event commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education.* A generous grant from the Virginia

Foundation for the Humanities made the evening possible as well as much of the subsequent research that followed. Many shared heartfelt stories about segregated schools and desegregation. Some were former students, teachers, and administrators. Their stories were often sentimental and nostalgic; some participants even wept. The most prestigious speaker of the evening, however, was the Honorable A. Linwood Holton, who, as Virginia's newly inaugurated governor in 1970, had voluntarily enrolled his small children in black-majority schools in order to set an example for other citizens of the Commonwealth.

Within a few weeks of this gathering, I began directing three Washington and Lee students in an ambitious oral history project aimed at providing an accurate account of local school desegregation in the independent cities of Lexington and Buena Vista, and the county of Rockbridge, as well as the neighboring jurisdictions to the north and south—Augusta County, Botetourt County, and Roanoke County. These counties were part of the so-called white belt of the state where the black population was less than eleven percent. The City of Roanoke had a significantly larger black population, but I also included it in the study. All of the schools in our survey area had desegregated in 1965 except those in the city of Roanoke, but a federal court order mandated its desegregation in 1970. White citizens had opposed school desegregation in all these jurisdictions, but their actions had been fairly mild. There were no public protests and no violence. Some school districts had very few black residents, and black pupils in those previously all-white schools constituted token integration at best. As a native of

Lexington and a graduate of the all-black Lylburn Downing School that had grades 1 through 12, I knew that the story of desegregation in western Virginia could not rival the trauma of school desegregation at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Yet, the local story needed to be told.

My first set of research assistants were young white women who were in their third year of college. Together we interviewed as many people as possible and asked them all the same questions. Respondents included school administrators, faculty, students, and parents. Most responses were rich, and some were absolutely fascinating. In summary, the interviews suggested that school desegregation had been orderly but far from perfect. There were tensions and ticklish problems; and some have never been resolved. Perhaps the most troubling comments noted the failure of the Rockbridge County School Board to place many black teachers who had been on the faculty of Lylburn Downing School.[2]

Some white and black male respondents credited football with the smooth transition to racial integration. The not-uncommon response was: "Everything was fine after the black guys started winning football games for us." Conversely, the camaraderie of football players was not contagious and certainly did not extend to girls on cheerleading squads. Most often cheering squads lacked faculty advisers and were self-perpetuating cliques that refused to welcome students who were outside their circle of friends. Professors Hank Allen and Jim Dash are former members of the University of Virginia School of Education who assisted school districts across the Commonwealth with school desegregation. According

to them, integrating cheering squads seemed to be a universal problem.[3]

Respondents raised many complex issues that demonstrated the merits and fallacies of oral history. Perhaps one of the most perplexing outcomes was that the only respondents who admittedly opposed school desegregation were black. No whites admitted to having the slightest reservations about mixing white and black students in the same classroom. There could only be three possible explanations: First, whites who opposed desegregation had not spoken with us; second, those who did agree to be interviewed had changed their minds during the last forty years and were unwilling to admit to their earlier views; or third, some of the white respondents had been untruthful. Additionally, many respondents displayed either flawed memory or lacked accurate knowledge of political and legal developments pertaining to civil rights during the 1960s.

In addition to oral history interviews, the students assisted me with research of school board minutes in every school district. Depending on the recording clerks for various school districts, the minutes differed in quality. In some jurisdictions only motions and votes had been recorded; in other jurisdictions clerks included highlights from discussions about issues. Most school board minutes were extremely helpful. Perhaps none were more enlightening than those of Buena Vista. In this case the minutes speak more eloquently than any of the respondents in the survey, as the long excerpt below illustrates:

Buena Vista School Board Meeting
(Including Members of the City Council)

16 June 1955
The Chairman of the School Board . . . welcomed the members of the Council and other guests, and [reported] . . . a request from the Negro P.T.A [Parent-Teacher Association] committee for an early meeting with the School Board . . . set [for] June 27. . . . He then [recognized Superintendent F. W.] Kling, who stated that this meeting had been called for the purpose of discussing the recent non-segregation decision of the Supreme Court and its implications for Buena Vista.[4] He recommended that the Buena Vista School Board advise the State Board of Education, the State Commission on Education, and the Attorney General, that they are in opposition to any move to abolish the public schools and that Buena Vista is ready for integration as soon as the State Board permits it.[5] He further stated that in his opinion it would be very difficult for Buena Vista to comply with any decision that resulted in segregation by sex or in a three-way system—one for white, one for Negro, and one mixed—and that the state authorities should be advised of this position. The recommendation was not adopted.

Mr. White and Mr. Seay recognized that integration is inevitable and were willing for the integration program to go ahead at the proper time.

Mr. McKee was in favor of waiting to hear what the Negro people have in mind before making any decision, and stated that he would be glad to meet with the School Board and the Negro Committee on June 27.

Mr. Floyd invited the members of the City Council, the City Manager, and the City Attorney to meet with the School Board and the Negro Committee on June 27 for the meeting requested by the Committee of the Negro P.T.A., and said that the newly appointed members of the school board would be invited also.

27 June 1955
The president of the Negro P.T.A. Committee, Richard

Spinner, presented five problems for the board's consideration:

1. That playground equipment be provided;
2. Requested highway signs on Route 60 where school children cross, and also the services of a police [officer] for the afternoon;
3. That the grass on the school ground be kept cut;
4. Requested some improvement in the heating facilities;
5. That the Superintendent visit their school more often.

Mr. Jennings, the City Manager, assured Mr. Kling and the committee that his department would take care of the highway signs, the grass cutting, and placing gravel on the road from Waller's to the school, and would do what he could toward having an officer on duty at the crossing.

Mr. Henson suggested that the School Board, as a unit, visit the Negro school.

Mr. Kling recommended that the School Board assure the P.T.A. committee that the four swings would be repaired; two basketball goals would be set up; a jungle gym provided; that necessary heating improvements and repairs to water line would be made; that the superintendent would visit the school once a month. Motion was made by Mrs. Strickler, seconded by Mr. Cunningham, and passed unanimously that the recommendation be adopted.

A. Committee extended an invitation to the superintendent and board members to visit their regular meetings.

If the School Board asked the black PTA for an opinion about desegregating local schools, they must have directed the clerk not to record that part of meeting. Buena Vista had a unique dilemma: Its demography made it impossible for it to afford racially separate

schools that were equal. According to the 1950 census, the total population of Buena Vista was 5,214 citizens; only 216 were black. Operating a separate school system that was truly equal for fifty students or less was neither practical nor possible. Buena Vista operated a two-room school house as a black elementary school; it bused black high school students to the Rockbridge County-owned Lylburn Downing School in Lexington.[6] Yet, the school board minutes above illustrate the leadership of a dynamic and progressive school superintendent, white board members who were politically moderate, and black PTA members who seemed primarily interested in making sure that the facilities at the black elementary school were adequate. Unfortunately, the minutes also demonstrate that the School Board regularly dealt with its black citizens at separate meetings. Ironically, they were unwilling to desegregate their meetings even as they considered desegregating classrooms.

This is a book project (to be completed during the 2016-2017 school year) that will incorporate area school-board minutes and other documentary records with reports and the rich accounts provided by respondents in the oral history phase of the project. The thesis of the final project argues that black citizens such as the members of Buena Vista's Negro PTA were energetic and persistent advocates of equal education of their children. In spite of Jim Crow customs prior to 1965, they often swallowed their pride and practiced incredible restraint as they appeared before all-white school boards to plead for better school facilities. They truly believed that good schooling was the way their children could

achieve good jobs and financial security. Like parents everywhere, these black parents wanted their children to have better lives than they had had.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Margaret Walker's career as school secretary at Lylburn Downing School straddled both its all-black era and its integrated era; Joseph Mormon taught and coached football at the all-black Lylburn Downing School; Wanda Early Fitz graduated from the all-black Lylburn Downing's high school division; Theodore Carter DeLaney, author of this article, is a Washington and Lee University history professor [ed. note: see his biography above]; Peggy Hays taught at Lexington High School when it was all-white and as well as when it was later integrated; A. Linwood Holton Jr. was the 61st governor of Virginia; Rev. Edward T. Burton is a Roanoke pastor; William W. Perry is the former principal of the all-black Rosenwald School in Waynesboro; he was also the associate principal of the integrated Waynesboro High School. The William Perry Elementary School in Waynesboro is named in his honor.

[2] Lylburn Downing School had grades 1 through 12, and the high school division served all of Rockbridge County. At the time of the 1965 school desegregation, there were sixteen teachers at Downing; only seven remained in the school system after that year.

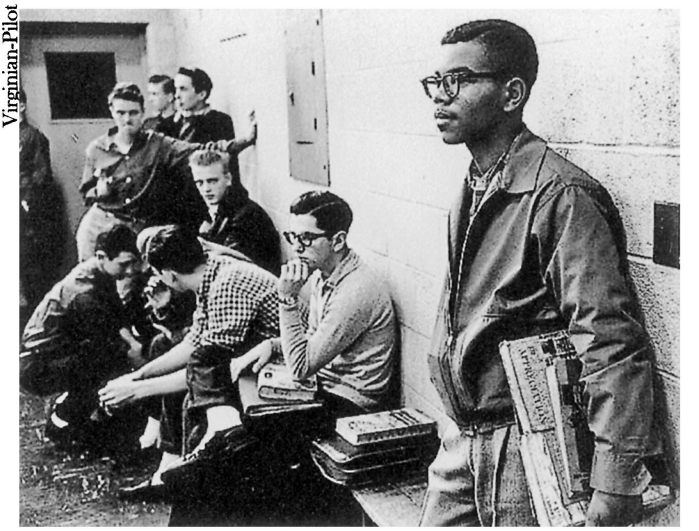
[3] The author's interview with Allen and Dash: These men were retired faculty members of the University of Virginia School of Education who, as experts, assisted school districts all over the Commonwealth with school desegregation. They were extremely helpful, and they told the author that the university had, unfortunately, destroyed all records of their work.

[4] This refers to the second Brown decision that came one year after the Court's first one. This ruling added the phrase "with all deliberate speed." The justices refused to set a mandatory date for school desegregation.

[5] Massive Resistance was the name of the strategy designed to oppose school desegregation and was official state policy in 1955. Its implementation meant that Virginia would close schools rather than desegregate.

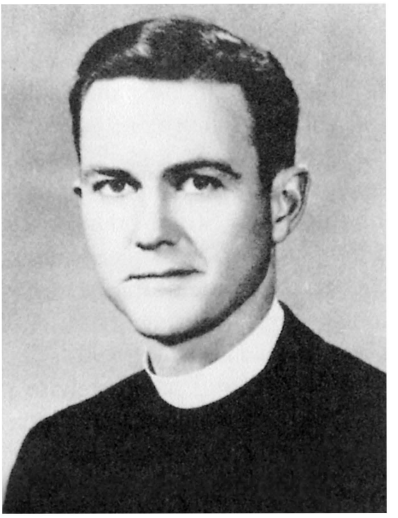
[6] Rockbridge County owned Lylburn Downing School until 1965. When Lexington incorporated as a city, it took control of Lylburn Downing and transformed it into the city's integrated middle school.

*



Lewis (Louis) Cousins
First Student to Enroll after Desegregation at
Matthew Fontaine Maury High School

Norfolk, Virginia
February 2, 1959



The Reverend John C. Fletcher
(Photo from George M. Brooke Jr.'s General Lee's Church*)*

The Reverend John C. Fletcher and Bishop William H. Marmion: The Integration of R. E. Lee Memorial Church and Hemlock Haven

David Coffey

In mid-May of 1960, the Reverend John C. Fletcher (1932-2004) came to Lexington to assume the leadership of R. E. Lee Memorial Church. At age twenty-eight, he was the youngest man ever chosen to be its rector. Fletcher had been raised in Birmingham, Alabama, by deaf parents—his father was also an Episcopal priest, with a special ministry to the deaf in Alabama and elsewhere in the southeast.[1] Fletcher had graduated from Sewanee (The University of the South) and Virginia Theological Seminary

before spending a year in Germany studying the writings of the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) on a Fulbright grant. Upon returning to the States, Fletcher served a few years as an assistant rector at a church in one of the most affluent neighborhoods in his hometown.[2]

As the Civil Rights Movement became more active and vocal in the late 1950s, it proved increasingly difficult for white clergymen in the South such as Fletcher to express openly their support for racial equality and maintain good relationships with their parishioners. Nowhere, perhaps, was this more difficult than in Alabama. While pastors in mainline denominations could generally anticipate sympathy and support from their national hierarchies, this was not the case for liberal Episcopal clergy in Alabama, since their bishop, the Right Reverend C. C. J. Carpenter, stood with the segregationists in his diocese against the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.

Perhaps Fletcher shared his unhappiness about his Alabama posting with friends at Virginia Episcopal Seminary, because when the R. E. Lee search committee asked for recommendations, his name was the one they mentioned. It is also quite possible that Fletcher's scholarly nature was thought a good fit for an academic community like Lexington.[3]

Whatever the case, Fletcher's new position offered prospects of a different racial climate from his former one in Alabama. He was now the rector of one of the larger churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia,[4] whose bishop, the Right Reverend William H. Marmion (1907-2002), was notable among the southern


Marmionfamilytree.com

Bishop William H. Marmion

bishops for the gentle, yet firm, way in which he supported and advocated racial integration both in the Church and in the public sphere. In an odd piece of timing, Marmion, a native of Texas, had been installed as bishop on May 13, 1954, just a few days before the Supreme Court's epochal decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Two years later, a commission appointed by the Virginia General Assembly and headed by State Senator Garland Gray had come up with a plan to provide funding so that white parents could afford to send their children to private academies if their public school was threatened with integration. Making these "tuition grants" legal required an amendment to the state constitution. Bishop Marmion entered the public arena, using the diocesan newsletter to advocate the defeat of the proposed constitutional amendment—whose passage was needed to authorize the tuition-grant scheme necessary to make the plan work. He argued that it was an obvious attempt to subvert the rule of law and the opinion of the Court.[5] In so doing he challenged the powerful political organization of U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd, several of whose members were prominent leaders in his diocese.[6]

The amendment passed, but the Gray Plan was soon superseded by something more extreme—Massive Resistance, which mandated that any white public school under court order to admit even one black student would be deprived of state funds and closed. Massive Resistance went into effect in several Virginia localities in the fall of 1958, but was declared unconstitutional by both a three-judge panel of the federal district and the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals on the same day, January 19, 1959 (Robert E. Lee's birthday).

John Fletcher arrived in Lexington in May of 1960, just in time to serve as host clergyman for the diocese's forty-first Annual Council, a three-day event held from May 12th to the 14th in the church's just-completed parish hall. What transpired there—as a beleaguered Bishop Marmion was faced with a kind of massive resistance on matters of racial integration from a sizeable number of the lay delegates—may have caused Fletcher to wonder if conditions in his new diocese were that much better than in his former one.

Bishop Marmion's problems can be primarily traced to a seemingly innocuous decision he made upon his arrival in the diocese to urge the development of a conference center for adults and a campground for youth (he credited much of his early formation as a Christian to his experience as a teenager at a summer Christian camp in Texas).[7] Although new to the diocese in 1954, he had already been made aware that when youth conferences were held in rented facilities such as hotels, Jim Crow laws unfortunately applied, banning from the gatherings the several dozen youth

from the four black churches in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.[8] In his address to the delegates at the 1954 Council a few days after his installation as bishop, he had called the need for a diocese-owned campground "more urgent because available places for meetings and conferences are restricted for our use by their own policies and program,"[9] a subtle reference to the pervasive Jim Crow policies which probably did not fully register with his audience.

By 1957, a suitable property for a diocesan campground had been found in Smyth County, Virginia, near the North Carolina-Tennessee border and adjacent to Hungry Mother State Park. It was called Hemlock Haven, and, with eight cabins and a lodge, was ready to be put to use immediately. The proximity of the state park offered additional recreational opportunities, such as a lake for swimming (except for the matter of Virginia's Jim Crow code). When the announcement was made that the first camp for all high school youth in the diocese would be held that summer, opposition soon emerged over its non-exclusionary policy. The matter found its way to the Annual Council in May, which after considering various options decided not to hold a youth conference that year, but to study the matter further until the next year.

The years 1958 and 1959 produced the same result. Each year the showdown became more heated, egged on by the political conflicts over the integration of public schools and public facilities and the number of prominent political figures who were delegates to the Diocesan Councils. Continuing stalemates were almost guaranteed by a parliamentary procedure within the council rules

called "voting by orders." Rarely used, voting by orders could be demanded by six delegates and required separate votes by the two "orders," laity and clergy, with a majority in both needed to pass the resolution.[10] With a majority of the clergy supportive of integration and a majority of the laity opposed, gridlock reigned.

The matter of Hemlock Haven proved to be equally intractable at the 1960 Annual Council in Lexington. As had been the case in the past, the Executive Board proposed to conduct integrated youth camps that summer, and the proposal was voted down "by orders." A new development this particular year, however, was that both the Youth Council (by a three-to-one margin) and the Episcopal Churchwomen (by nearly two-to-one) had expressed their support of non-segregated camps as opposed to having, once again, none at all. Motions were made containing all the usual permutations, and all were voted down: camps integrated by race, but segregated by gender; camps segregated by race, but integrated by gender; or integrated camps, with parallel camps for whites only. By-orders voting doomed resolutions to sell Hemlock Haven, or to delete from the budget any money to support the campground or to meet its mortgage payments. (These resolutions were introduced by Francis West of Martinsville, leader of the segregationist camp, and seconded by Baldwin G. Locher of Rockbridge.)

The debate over Hemlock Haven had occupied most of the last day of the three-day Annual Council meeting; 9:00 p.m. passed and no budget had been adopted. Bishop Marmion suggested that, since the clergy had to get home for their Sunday duties, the

council move on to budget approval and adjourn. In the general haste, Hemlock Haven lost $5,000 of its intended funding, and its closure for youth activities was mandated for still another summer.[11]

Decades later, Bishop Marmion still remembered the 1960 Annual Council and recalled that the demeaning and hateful comments about African Americans (mercifully not included in the formal minutes of the proceedings) had brought tears to his eyes. Why, he wondered, would any black person remain faithful to the Episcopal Church after witnessing such a spectacle?[12] The Bishop was, however, cheered by the way in which some in the diocese rallied around him and made special contributions to Hemlock Haven to help compensate for the deletion by the Annual Council of $5000 from the annual budget. A student at Washington and Lee, a native of Pittsburgh, wrote in support of the Bishop's position, noting that "the elderly laymen seemed to have made up their minds that the youth of the Church will be corrupted in some way by an association with a handful of Negro children." At least, he said, by permitting integrated college-age gatherings, "the solid front cracked enough to allow us college students [to] have the opportunity for better understanding and freedom to make up our own minds."[13]

Notably, some of the elderly laywomen were supporting their bishop with contributions and messages of encouragement. Mrs. Forrest Fletcher, a housemother at W&L's ZBT fraternity, sent a check, as did Mrs. Lloyd Craighill, the wife of a retired Episcopal bishop missionary to China who also lived in Lexington.

Bishop Marmion reported to one of the donors that several thousand dollars had been received. He also made contingency plans to borrow the balance from the National Council of the Church should additional funds be needed.[14]

What had unfolded around John Fletcher as his parish's clergy delegate to the 1960 Annual Council must have been unsettling. Race-relations policy in his new diocese was problematic at best, and the prognosis was not promising. A quick look at his new parish would have revealed a similar situation. In 1958, the vestry of R. E. Lee Church had voted eleven to three in favor of a resolution banning integrated youth camps at Hemlock Haven,[15] and many (perhaps most) of the parishioners remained adamantly opposed to any change in the racial status quo.

Nevertheless, Fletcher was determined to integrate the parish. To that goal, Fletcher recalled three decades later, he added two others which also seemed difficult if not impossible to achieve: to de-emphasize the role of fraternity life at Washington and Lee and to bring an end to compulsory church attendance at Virginia Military Institute.[16]

He made only a small, temporary dent in the fraternity scene, banning the VMI alumni chapter of Kappa Alpha fraternity from holding their annual post-graduation initiation ceremony in the church for the duration of his pastorate, and permitting an anti-fraternity group use of the church mimeograph machine to print copies of a weekly alternative student newspaper which was trying to break the hold of the fraternity clique on the campus.[17]

There was a brief moment of possibility on the matter of

VMI's church attendance policy. Fletcher received a phone call one weekday afternoon from an Episcopal cadet, Jonathan Daniels, who would, several years after graduation, be murdered in Alabama while engaged in the Civil Rights Movement. Daniels inquired if it would be OK if he were to bring the entire cadet corps to R. E. Lee the following Sunday for morning worship.

Somewhat nonplused, Fletcher asked why, and Daniels explained his plan of symbolic protest. Cadets, except for atheists and Jews (who had no place in town to go), were required to form up on the Parade Ground and march in formation to the churches of their choice. If they did that, and they all happened to pick the same church, it was hoped they would cause the system to collapse under its own weight. Furthermore, since they had attempted to conform to the rules, they could not be penalized.

The plan was for the cadets to descend en masse on a different church each Sunday until the Institute gave up and rescinded the policy. R. E. Lee Church was a good place to start since VMI's superintendent, Gen. George R. E. Shell, was an active parishioner. Fletcher agreed with Daniels' objective and did not discourage his somewhat improbable scheme. On Sunday, though, nothing happened. Several weeks later, Fletcher nabbed Daniels as he was leaving church and asked why the mob had not come: Daniels' response was, "We chickened out."[18]

As to racially integrating his parish, Fletcher, by his own admission, had naively assumed that there were in Lexington some African Americans whose families (whether enslaved or free) had attended R. E. Lee in the nineteenth century and could be recruit-

ed to return to the church of their ancestors. These folks could not be located (if, in fact, they had existed), but as a godsend a black Episcopalian, Lewis Jones, moved to Lexington to assume a teaching job at the still unintegrated Lylburn Downing High School. Moreover, his wife, Delores Jones, not yet confirmed as an Episcopalian, had a remarkable, operatic-quality mezzo-soprano voice, and would, needless to say, be a marvelous addition to the parish choir. Under Episcopal Church policy, a communicant is urged to affiliate with the nearest Episcopal church upon arriving in a new community. Mr. Jones had been a member of all-black Episcopal parishes in his previous hometowns, but there was just one Episcopal church, seemingly for whites only, available in Lexington.[19]

In early December 1961, the Rev. Mr. Fletcher availed himself of the opportunity provided and took up the challenge. Lewis Jones was welcomed into the parish family by the rector, and Mrs. Jones was confirmed and added her voice to R. E. Lee's choir.

The vestry held its monthly meeting the night before Delores Jones' confirmation, and Fletcher took this opportunity to explain that although the bishop's regular visitations for the purpose of confirming new members would continue to be held on the first Sunday in May, it was thought advisable to have a second annual visit scheduled "at the convenience of the bishop." This was, he explained, because so many new people were being added to the parish rolls. Since the bishop would be passing through town the following evening, such a service had been scheduled for 9:00 p.m.[20]

Local folklore maintained that Delores Jones was confirmed

in a secret, private service and presented to the congregation the following Sunday as a fait accompli. In actual fact, eight other persons were among the confirmands that evening, four college students and four white women (including one named, ironically, Mrs. R. E. Lee).[21] The time arranged for the service was extraordinary, however, if not unprecedented. With the addition of the Joneses to church membership, the parish whose name memorialized Robert E. Lee became the first racially-integrated parish in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia.

The advent of the Joneses, however, had put the church into an uproar. Fletcher recalled that one former trustee of the parish, who was also the town's attorney, threatened to use Virginia's Public Accommodation Law banning integrated public meetings to prevent any blacks from sitting with whites in the nave.[22] In preparation for the storm of controversy and protest he was sure would erupt, a month prior to Mrs. Jones' confirmation, Fletcher had appointed an eight-member committee "to study the position of the Church regarding race-relations, the position of our Parish with regard to the matter, and to serve in some capacity to hear the views of the members of the Parish with regard to the problem."[23]

The rector had stocked the committee with documents from the national Episcopal Church on race relations for their consideration while they deliberated. In effect, he had stacked the deck, not in regard to the members he had appointed, but with the reading material he had provided. A majority of the committee saw no alternative but to agree that "it is contrary to church law

and policy to deny participation in worship, wherever worship is held, to any person because of his race . . . [and that] by extension, the church not only frowns on discouraging persons from attending worship because of their race but welcomes the presence of all Christians."[24] Of more concern were other possible extensions of this basic premise, especially as it applied to social gatherings at the church. Six of the eight remaining members of the study panel conceded, with a palpably begrudging statement, that the rector was, if not always right, the man in charge:

> As interpreted by the Rector in response to the committee's inquiries, no church activity, whether or not held in the church, or parish building may be considered unrelated to the spiritual life of the church family, and thus all such activities may be freely participated in by all members of the church. . . . As interpreted also by the Rector, it is the task of the minister to make decisions and interpretations in such matters as have concerned this committee when the need for decisions are occasioned by differences within the parish.

Having capitulated to their rector, the committee requested that the vestry allow it to "suspend its regular meetings."[25]

For many years Bishop Marmion had provided his diocesan flock with literature from the national church in hopes that through education their minds would gradually be changed. Fletcher had followed a similar strategy with the commission he appointed, but he had combined the lamp of learning with a stubborn insistence that his opinions were to prevail, thus making the group's study effectively moot. Two members of the committee, Henry Foresman, a local lawyer, and his wife, Helen, were not

amused and filed a dissenting minority report in which they asserted that it was the

> integration of activities of the Parish which are primarily social in nature particularly those activities involving young children and teen-age youths, which is of grave concern to many communicants and members of the Parish. By inference, Section 1a of Canon 16 provides that a Negro communicant or baptized member of another charge shall be received by this Parish upon presentation of the proper certificate, but such Canon contains no language which, even by inference, would require such Negro communicant or member be permitted to participate without restriction in all of the activities of the Parish, other than worship services . . . . It is restating the obvious when we direct your attention to the fact that the Episcopal Church rejected the infallibility of the clergy upon its inception, and we submit that it would be no more lacking in logic for the Rector to paint black stripes on a white mule and call the mule a zebra than for the Rector to conclude that a teen-age dance or a Little League baseball game is spiritual in nature.[26]

Almost all the clergymen of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia favored racial equality, but they did not all share the same degree of commitment to the cause. The most pro-active were usually the youngest, who generally were assigned to small mission congregations which depended on the diocese for partial or complete support of their operations, including the salaries of their clergy. These young clergy, called vicars, often served two or more churches, sometimes one white and one black. It was some of these youthful clergy, famously referred to by one of the leading segregationist laymen as "young men who come from we know not where"[27] who would engage in picket-marches, sit-ins,

and the like.

While sharing the principles for which they stood, Bishop Marmion would have preferred that they had remained faithful to his more restrained tactics of gentle persuasion. On the other hand, the young activists could not understand why the Bishop would make it his custom to spend the night in the home of Francis West, his primary opponent in the Hemlock Haven struggle, whenever he paid a pastoral visit to West's hometown of Martinsville. But as Marmion saw it, efforts to maintain Christian fellowship with all sides in the dispute were an essential part of his pastoral duty and, he believed, would eventually yield the desired result.[28]

Bishop Marmion's most "turbulent priest" was the Reverend McRae Werth, a graduate of the Washington and Lee Law School and a great-grandson of Matthew Fontaine Maury. Of the three mission parishes he had been serving, he had given up the two white ones and was now left with just the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, a black mission in Lynchburg. He frequently bombarded the bishop with lengthy manifestos, participated in sit-ins, and made provocative statements to the press, including references to Virginia's senior senator as a "hairy bird." His most egregious act, however, was his introduction in 1961 at the first meeting of the controversial Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU) of a resolution (which passed) endorsing inter-racial marriage.[29] Marmion continued to defend Werth publicly, but his patience was stretched to the breaking point, and he gladly assisted him in finding a position in a more hospitable location as an

associate in the Wilmington, Delaware, parish from whence Marmion had come to be Bishop of Southwestern Virginia.[30]

Though John Fletcher was one of the youngest clergy in the diocese, his situation was quite different from the others in his age group. He had a full-time position as rector in one of the most prestigious churches in the diocese. More cautious and less confrontational by nature than most of his contemporaries, he had managed to be the first rector in the diocese to integrate his parish—doing so patiently but firmly, employing the sort of tactics that Bishop Marmion himself was known to use. He had also put a few small dents in W&L's fraternity ethos, but had gotten nowhere with VMI's intractable, compulsory church-attendance policy.

Looking back three decades after his years in Lexington, Fletcher gave voice to several regrets, indicating a few things that he wished he had had the courage to do while serving as rector at R. E. Lee. One of these involved the first youth camps at Hemlock Haven in 1963, integrated by race, but segregated by gender. Fletcher was serving as the leader for one of these and was under the impression that the camp's activities were being monitored by the Virginia State Police; as a consequence, he decided not to risk an incident by attempting to make use of the recreational facilities at the adjoining Hungry Mother State Park. Fletcher's caution also led him to request that meetings of a biracial women's reading group his wife was organizing be held in the Parish Hall rather than at their residence in the rectory to make them appear less social in nature.[31]

Without a doubt, the most provocative plan which Fletcher regretted not having activated was issuing an invitation to the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. to speak at R. E. Lee. W&L's University Christian Association had planned to ask King to speak, but before a formal invitation could be sent, it was informed that the Board of Trustees would not allow King's appearance on campus. Fletcher thought he had the perfect (if risky) alternative venue, but, as he remembered thirty years later, in the end he did not offer it.[32]

John Fletcher's time in Lexington was relatively brief. After four years as rector at R. E. Lee, he resigned in 1964 to pursue a doctorate in Christian ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He never returned to full-time parish ministry. He would teach ethics at his alma mater, Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, and in 1971 he would found an alternative interfaith seminary in Washington, D.C., whose students learned by doing rather than in formal classrooms. When the seminary closed in 1977, Fletcher became a bioethicist with the National Institute of Health Clinical Center before joining the faculty of the University of Virginia Medical School, where he taught medical ethics. Increasingly depressed and disillusioned, he took his own life in 2004.[33]

The immediate effects of John Fletcher's tenure at R. E. Lee were also short-lived. The fraternity system remained as strong as ever at W&L, though somewhat shaken by the cultural upheaval of the late 1960s. The VMI Beta chapter of Kappa Alpha resumed their tradition of holding their post-graduation initiations in the

nave of the church.

In 1966, Lexington's public schools totally integrated and, as was usually the case in the South, a large proportion of the African American teachers lost their jobs. Such was the case for Lewis and Delores Jones, who left Lexington and R. E. Lee behind for new positions in Baltimore. R. E. Lee's congregation was once again all white, and would remain so for nearly two decades more.

For Bishop Marmion there were still other battles to be fought and won after Hemlock Haven: the battle for the racial integration of the two private schools the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia sponsored, Virginia Episcopal and Stuart Hall; the battle for the racial integration of the Boys' Home for disadvantaged young men; the battle for the ordination of women to the priesthood; and the battle for a new prayer book.

In time, all the parishes in the diocese were at least theoretically integrated racially, and the four small African American missions had been consolidated with nearby white congregations—as had, in fact, many of the non-self-supporting white missions. Ironically though, there were fewer black Episcopalians in the diocese after total integration than before. Hemlock Haven itself, the source of so much contention, had in a strange twist of fate been sold and replaced with another conference center, "Phoebe Needles."

Nevertheless, when Bishop Marmion retired in 1979, he was almost universally lauded. In an unpublished memoir, Marmion included a comment by the Right Reverend John Hines, a fellow Texan who served as Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in

the United States during the last decade of Marmion's service in southwestern Virginia: "I've been sitting up in the balcony watching Bill Marmion preside [at council]. On the surface he appears to be the soul of calm, like the swan gliding smoothly along the surface of the pond, but underneath he's paddling like mad to keep afloat."[34]

One might add that, unlike the typical water fowl, Marmion was swimming purposefully towards a predetermined goal, and that for a few years in the early 1960s, the Reverend John Fletcher was purposefully paddling along behind him.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Biographical information about John C. Fletcher is from George M. Brooke Jr.'s *General Lee's Church: The History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Lexington, Virginia, 1840–1975* (Lexington: *The News-Gazette*, 1984), 127. One of John Fletcher's sisters was the actress Louise Fletcher, best known for her Academy Award-winning role as Nurse Ratched in the 1975 movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.*

[2] Brooke, 130.

[3] Ibid.

[4] The Diocese, headquartered in Roanoke, included all the counties from Augusta south and west of the Blue Ridge Mountains as well as Nelson, Amherst, Bedford, Campbell, Franklin, Floyd, Carroll, Patrick, and Henry.

[5] William H. Marmion, "A Pastoral Letter from Your Bishop," *The Southwestern Episcopalian* 37 (January 1956), 5–6.

[6] Among them was State Del. Baldwin G. Locher, who generally represented St. John's, Glasgow, at Council meetings.

[7] *The Southwestern Episcopalian* 36 (March 1955), 5.

[8] Of the Diocese's fifty-nine parishes, only four were African American, with a total membership combined of 131. They represented slightly more than 1% of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia's 12,442 baptized members.

[9] *Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*: Journal of the Thirty-fifth Annual Council Held at St. John's Church, Bedford, Virginia, May 18-19, 1954, 44.

[10] *Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*: Journal of the Thirty-ninth Annual Council held at St. John's Church, Roanoke, Virginia, May 15, 16, 17 of 1958, 52.

[11] *Diocese of Southwestern Virginia*: Journal of the Forty-First Annual Council Held at R. E. Lee Memorial Church, Lexington, Virginia, May 12, 13, 14, 1960, 63-69. Finally, at the 1962 Council, the Hemlock Haven issue was partially resolved when the body voted in a special September session to allow integrated youth camps, but for boys and girls separately. The regularly scheduled May session had ended in an uproar with no budget adopted for the coming year, which would have had the effect of cutting off the salary of Bishop Marmion and the clergy who were serving mission parishes, including all four of the African American ones. It was the mission clergymen, or vicars, who served at the pleasure of the bishop, who were the most outspoken in the cause of racial equality. (This information about the resolution of the Hemlock Haven issue is from the *Annual Report of the Protestant Episcopal Church and of the Episcopal Churchwomen in the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, 1962*, 49-53.)

[12] Personal interview with the Rt. Rev. William H. Marmion, 22 April 1993.

[13] Henry H. Stross to William H. Marmion (hereafter referred to as WHM), 15 May 1960, Records of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia (MS 86-004), Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, (hereafter referred to as Diocesan Records, VPI).

[14] Mrs. Forrest Fletcher to WHM, 25 May 1960; WHM to Mrs.

Fletcher, 2 June 1960; WHM to Mrs. Lloyd R. Craighill, 27 May 1960; WHM to the Rev. Clifford L. Samuelson, 17 June 1960. Diocesan Records, VPI.

[15] Brooke, 121–122.

[16] Personal interview on tape with Dr. John C. Fletcher, 26 March 1995, in possession of the author.

[17] Fletcher interview. While cadets, VMI students are not allowed to belong to fraternal organizations. However, after graduation, several dozen are selected for membership in the Beta Chapter of Kappa Alpha, and the initiation rites are held in the afternoon following commencement.

The greatest impact of the alternative student newspaper was to aid in the election of Andrew W. McThenia, a law student and non-fraternity member, as student body president.

[18] Fletcher interview.

[19] Fletcher interview.

[20] *Vestry Minutes for January 1942 to December 1962*, 4 December 1961. (Parish office, R. E. Lee Memorial Church, Lexington, Va.); Fletcher interview.

[21] "List of Communicants," vol. 5 (1957-1968), 84. (Parish Office, R. E. Lee Church).

[22] Fletcher interview.

[23] E. Claybrooke Griffith to the Rev. John Fletcher and Col. J. H. C. Mann, Senior Warden, 6 January 1962. (Vestry Minutes, R. E. Lee Church). Half of the committee were college faculty and staff and half were women (one of whom was Mrs. Forrest Fletcher, the Zeta Beta Tau housemother who had supported Bishop Marmion's efforts to integrate Hemlock Haven—see footnote 12).

[24] "Statement of the Committee to Study Race Relations," 6 January 1962. (This record is on file with Vestry Minutes, R. E. Lee Church.)

[25] Ibid.

[26] "Report to Rector and Senior Warden, R. E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church, Lexington, Virginia." Submitted by Helen W. Foresman and Henry J. Foresman, members of the Special Committee Appointed to Study the Racial Problems within the R. E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church Parish, 8 January 1962."

Henry Foresman was a Texas native and an alumnus of VMI who had married a local woman and established his law practice in Lexington. He was very active in the Kappa Alpha Order both locally and nationally and at this time was heavily involved in an effort, which eventually succeeded, to bring the KA's national headquarters to Lexington.

Needless to say, Fletcher's decision to ban the VMI KA's from using the church for their annual initiation rites had not won favor with Foresman.

Lewis and Delores Jones had a daughter of kindergarten age, which may have been an additional worry for the more paranoid members of the parish; the Foresmans had two sons close in age to the Jones' daughter.

[27] Telephone interview with the Rev. Carther Paul Criss, 14 March 1995, quoting Robert Whitehead.

[28] Marmion interview. Noteworthy in this regard was West's donation of $75,000 in 1993 in the Bishop's honor to establish the Bishop Marmion Resource Center, a lending library at diocesan headquarters of printed and audio-visual educational materials for use by the parishes of the Diocese. At the time of his gift, West said, "The bishop not only presided over Council with grace, dignity and absolute fairness, but exhibited the same consideration to me when he came to my parish and my home. Both of us held strong but differing views, but I have long since come to the realization that there was more right on his side than mine" (*The Southwestern Episcopalian* 93 [March 1993], 1, 7).

[29] John L. Keeter Jr., *The Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity and Its Role in the Episcopal Church, 1959-1970* (unpublished PhD dissertation, McGill University, 1973), 27.

Unlike his brother, Gresham, Episcopal Bishop of Kentucky—who was on ESCRU's Board of Directors, William Marmion expressed misgivings about the organization. He wrote that while he was "in accord with the objectives and program of the proposed society,... I think it better strategy to attempt to achieve these objectives by using the ecclesiastical machinery already in existence." WHM to Cornelius Tarplee, 14 August 1959. (ESCRU Papers, King Archives). While not divulging his own opinion in a letter to John Morris, one of ESCRU's founders, the Rev. Thomas V. Barrett (who had preceded Fletcher as rector at R. E. Lee), indicated that he was sure that there were communicants "in Southwestern Virginia and Lexington who might be interested" (Thomas V. Barrett to John Morris, 10 September 1959. ESCRU Records, King Archives).

[30] Marmion had candidly sized up Werth's strengths and weaknesses in a letter of recommendation he had sent to the Bishop of Western Massachusetts, where Werth (unsuccessfully) had expressed interest in a vacancy: "He champions the cause of the Negro people as he should, but with little imagination, no humor, and an alarming sense of bitterness which definitely vitiates his witness and jeopardizes our whole cause. Mr. Werth has much to give but will not be heard by the white people because he makes an issue of everything and apparently has no sense of strategy" (WHM to the Rev. Robert McConnell Hatch, 23 January 1959. Diocesan Records, VPI).

[31] Fletcher interview.

[32] Fletcher interview. The matter of King's potential invitation to W&L remains somewhat murky to this day. For a good discussion of it see Charles A. Bodie, *Remarkable Rockbridge: The Story of Rockbridge County, Virginia* (Lexington: Rockbridge Historical Society, 2011), 319.

[33] Adam Bernstein, "John C. Fletcher; Biomedical Ethicist, Former Episcopal Priest, *Washington Post* (2 June 2004) B:07.

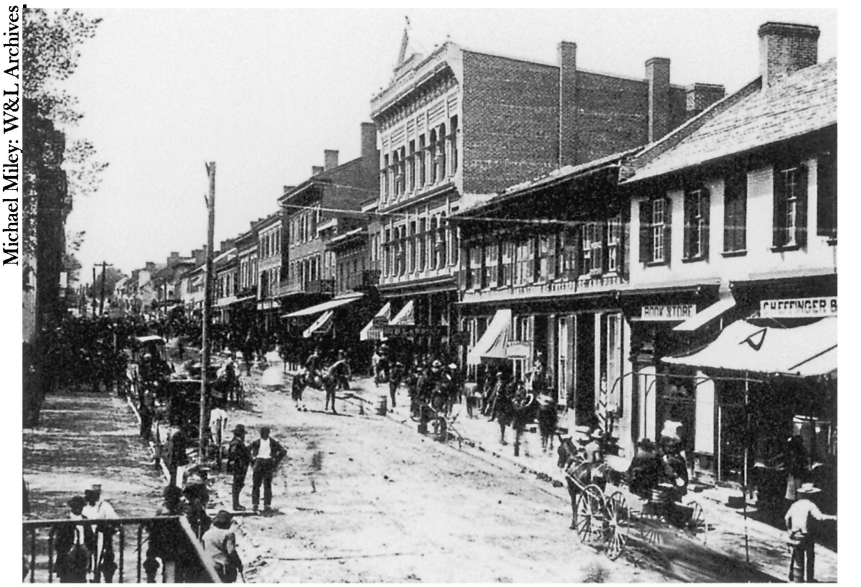
[34] William H. Marmion, "Reflections of 40 Years as a Bishop," William H. Marmion Personal Papers (MS 1986–013), Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Library, Blacksburg, Virginia.

✣

R. E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church

On the Steps of R. E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church

Front Row: (l-r) Rev. John Fletcher, Deacon Brewster Ford, Crucifer Wally Carson, and Bishop William H. Marmion (1960)



Michael Miley: W&L Archives

Lexington, Virginia
(ca. 1880)

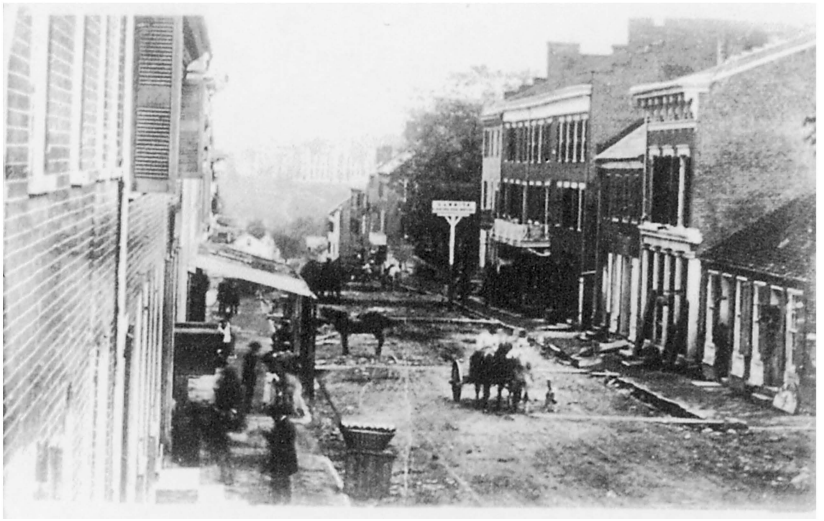
A Snapshot of Lexington in 1870

Edwin L. Dooley Jr.

With roots extending back to the period of the American Revolution, and beyond, the town of Lexington and its inhabitants have experienced all the momentous events, developments, and movements of the nation's history. Of all these events, the most dramatic was the Civil War, for not only did hundreds of local men and boys go off to be soldiers—and many either did not return or came home wounded physically and psychologically—but the war came to this place in the form of Gen. David Hunter's raid in June of 1864. We have many vivid accounts of life in Lexington and Rockbridge County during the war years, so that story

is well known. But after the fighting had ended, to what extent had this community been changed?

There are many dimensions to this question, and all of them are important. To uncover the full effects of the war, the period would have to be examined in economic terms, in the direction of politics, in the life of the town's institutions, in changing social dynamics, in the psychology of those who fought and those who had to endure at home, and in the changing appearance of the town. These are just some of the issues that would have to be considered. In addition, a wide variety of sources would have to be examined, such as diaries, memoirs, family papers, newspapers, bank records, government records, church records, birth and death registers, and many more.



VMI Archives

Lexington, Virginia
(ca. 1865-1866)

My aim is not to attempt to cover all those aspects of Lexington history, which have been documented masterfully in Dr. Charles Bodie's book, *Remarkable Rockbridge* (Lexington: Rockbridge Historical Society, 2011), but to offer instead a snapshot of Lexington after the war as well as some general conclusions about the effects of the war. Unlike Dr. Bodie's comprehensive study, my research has depended primarily on two sources: the 1860 and the 1870 United States Federal Censuses, each of which represents only a moment frozen in time, one from the eve of the war, in 1860, and the other from five years after the war, in 1870. But I have been able to compare these two census schedules in order to arrive at some conclusions about the effects of the turbulent decade they cover.

Although the results of this research speak only to the immediate effects of the war and not to its long-term effects—which is another story—they provide a start at answering our question.

First, a few words about the census in the mid-nineteenth century, or more specifically about the schedules or questionnaires that were used in collecting demographic and other information. Each census involved a variety of questionnaires aimed at capturing different aspects of the economic and demographic makeup of the nation. My research has focused only on the population schedules: lists of inhabitants and households. The 1850 census was the first to ask—for all but slaves—each person's name, age, occupation, place of birth, and value of real estate. The 1860 census required the same information and added a column for the value of personal property. Separate Slave Schedules for

1850 and 1860 named the slave owners and the number of slaves they owned, including sex, but they did not contain the names of the slaves. The 1870 census additionally asked if a person's parents were foreign born and if he or she had been denied the right to vote in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment.[1]

Census takers, or two enumerators, were appointed to go through a community in a designated time period—usually late June and early July—recording the required information about each inhabitant and household. These enumerators, if the local example was typical, had no set route to follow. How they would know if they had recorded everyone is something I have not discovered, except that the enumerators were probably very familiar with the community and its inhabitants. Moreover, in the case of Lexington, they had a relatively small population to survey. Nevertheless, the enumerators must have missed some, they surely made mistakes, and they had no way to know for sure when they were being misled by those they questioned. All of which is to say that the United States Federal Census is an important and useful source for demographic history, but it must be used with caution.

In June of 1860, when the enumerators began to make their rounds for the comprehensive census that year, the population of Rockbridge County and Lexington was 17,248 persons—free and slave.[2] Of this number, 74%, or 12,843, were whites; 3%, or 428, were free blacks; 23%, or 3,977, were slaves. Statewide, 65% of the population was free and 35% was slave, making Rockbridge County and Lexington about 10% higher that the average in the category of free and about 10% lower than the average in the cat-

egory of slave. By 1870, the overall population of Rockbridge County had fallen to 16,058, with most of the decline—675 to be exact—having taken place in the county. And, of course, there were no more slaves.

Of the free inhabitants included in the 1860 Rockbridge census, only 10%, or 1,276 free whites and free blacks, male and female, lived in Lexington. (I am not counting 161 Virginia Military Institute—VMI—cadets or 91 Washington College students or 537 slaves, who would bring the total population to 2065.) In 1860, the census included 602 white males, or 47% of the town's population, 587 white females, or 46%, 45 free black males, or a little over 3%, and 42 free black females, or 3%. In addition, there were 269 male slaves and 268 female slaves who we only assume lived in Lexington, because we cannot know for sure that a slave actually lived in the house of his or her owner. With this caveat in mind, we can say that the total of men, women, and children, of both races—free and slave, but excluding transient VMI cadets and Washington College students—living in Lexington in June 1860 was 1813.

Historians generally agree that the people of the United States during the nineteenth century were a people on the move. What historians refer to as "population persistence" was low. But this does not seem to have been the case for the town of Lexington in the years after the war: people stayed around or returned from wherever they had gone during the war. In addition, the population of Lexington had grown. In 1870, the number of persons living in Lexington had risen from 1,813 in 1860 to 2,192, or

a gain of about 21 percent. (Again, I am not counting 301 VMI cadets and 351 Washington College students, whose numbers had also swelled dramatically. If we count them, then the total population in 1870 was 2,844.) Compared with the year 1860, in 1870 there were more white males, 633 compared with 602 in 1860; there were more white females, 681 compared with 587 in 1860; there were more black males, 413 compared with 314 in 1860; and there were more black females, 465 compared with 310 in 1860.

From where did these additional 379 persons come? We have to guess at that, but surely many blacks, now free, left the drudgery of the farm work they had known in the county to seek new opportunities in town. Despite the fact that the Union general David Hunter had raided Lexington in 1864 and had caused some damage, mainly to the Institute, Lexington was spared the kind of devastation that places like Fredericksburg and Richmond suffered.

Reflecting the increase in the number, some Virginians from other areas may have come to Lexington to seek a new life. Some families had fled to Lexington from farther north in the Valley during the war, like Cornelia McDonald, of Winchester, who decided to stay in Lexington after the war, and whose stepson, Marshall, became a VMI professor.[3] Some individuals, who would become quite well known in the history of this town, arrived after the war seeking financial opportunity, for example, Benjamin H. Gorrell,[4] the druggist, who came to Lexington with his wife Sarah. And then there was the photographer Michael Miley, who came to Lexington in 1866 from his family's farm north of Fairfield.[5]

Other newcomers included men who came to teach and work at VMI and the students and cadets; the number of professors at the two colleges rose from 18 in 1860 to 30 in 1870, despite extremely poor pay and difficult living conditions.

When we compare the average age of adults (people 20 years of age and older) included in the 1860 and 1870 census schedules, we find that some aging took place over the decade. Although the average age of white females over the age of 20 was 37 years in both 1860 and in 1870, in 1860, the average age of white males over the age of 20 was 37 years, but in 1870 the average age was 40 years. In 1860, the average age of free black males was 20, while in 1870—when the former slaves were counted—the average age had jumped to 36 years. The average age of free black females in 1860 was 25, while the average age in 1870 had risen to 35. In both time periods, the overwhelming majority of men and women in Lexington were under the age of 50. For example, in 1860 there were 249 white males between the ages of 20 and 50 and only 61 above the age of 50. In 1870, there were 261 white males between the ages of 20 and 50, and there were 89 above the age of 50. A few persons, whites and blacks, males and females, lived into their 80s, but there were none above the age of 84 in either census. If we add to these groups the local inhabitants under the age of 20 and Washington College students and VMI cadets under the age of 20, the result is a youthful community.

With a permanent population of 1,813 (including slaves) in Lexington in 1860, the housing situation was tight. Along with private homes, there were four boarding houses, three hotels, and

36 persons supposedly living alone, comprising 269 households. These Lexington people and their families (which tended to be large) and their boarders (who tended to be numerous) occupied a mere 225 dwelling houses within the limits of the town. The resulting average of slightly more than 8 people per dwelling house, suggests a high population density, perhaps a housing shortage.

As the population of Lexington rose after the war to 2,192 in 1870, we need to ask where these people found a place to live. Can we use the 1870 census schedule to determine how many dwelling houses were located in the town of Lexington? The answer is "no"; we can only approximate the number, because, although there are two columns on the left side of the 1870 Enumeration Form, one for "Dwelling Houses numbered in order of visitation" and the other for "Families numbered in order of visitation," our enumerator only filled in the second column, the families column, leaving the dwelling houses column blank. In some cases it is clear that the enumerator's listing of a family group or household coincided with a single dwelling house, but often we just cannot tell.

Adding to the difficulty is the fact that the concept of a family in the mid-nineteenth century was much broader than our own. Thus, you will often find listed not only the members of the immediate family, but also extended family, servants, boarders, and even visitors. It was common practice in the United States for dwelling houses to be shared by two or more households, and Lexington was no exception.

So what can we say about the number of dwelling houses in

Lexington in 1870? The best that can be achieved using the census record is an estimate. Given that 356 individual households are listed in the 1870 census and eliminating ten boarding houses, two hotels, and 8 individuals supposedly living alone, we are left with an estimate of around 335 dwelling houses, which seems a little high. The difficulty is in accepting the idea that the number of dwelling houses grew from around 225 to around 335 in the turbulent decade from 1860 to 1870. But perhaps it did.

What can we say about household size? If we take the actual households counted, we can offer an estimate of the average size of a household: 6.69 persons in 1860 and 6.16 in 1870, both of which were in line with the national average at the time. Our average for 1860 may be a little high, however, because perhaps many of the slaves included in the 1860 households did not actually reside in the dwelling houses of their owners but in their own quarters nearby. Lacking more precise information, we must accept these figures only as approximations.

Despite these uncertainties, clearly the increase in population referred to earlier—from 1,813 individuals in 1860 to 2,192 individuals in 1870—required some expansion of housing. If we tum to the pages of the census, we can see what looks like evidence of stepped-up activity in the building trades: an increase in carpenters from 24 in 1860 to 31 in 1870; an increase in brick layers and masons from 4 to 8; an increase in house painters from 3 to 8; and an increase of plasterers from 3 to 8. So, perhaps an estimate of 335 dwelling houses in Lexington in 1870 may not be too far off. By comparison, according to the 2010 census, there were approxi-

mately 2,125 single family and multiple family dwellings in Lexington for a population of about 7,050.

Let's turn next to the question of occupations. How did these men and women ln Lexington make their living? The economy of the area was still poor, and post-war conditions were difficult everywhere, but by 1870 Lexington seems to have regained some of its previous vigor and drive, if not its earlier optimism. The 1860 Lexington census includes 405 people, whites and free blacks, males and females, who claimed to have an occupation. We need to remember that this concept is a fluid one, as men and women changed their occupations with regularity. If we look at some standard socioeconomic categories that historians use to establish hierarchies in communities, we may get a glimpse of the socioeconomic structure of Lexington in 1860 and 1870.

In 1860, there were 54 people listed in the unskilled category (which includes laborers, maids, mattress makers, servants, house keepers, and washers and ironers), of which blacks made up 89%. In 1870 the number of unskilled people had jumped to 217, probably reflecting the fact that many former slaves were now in the job market. We cannot compare this number of unskilled people with the total number of slaves in Lexington in 1860, which is 537, because we do not know how many of the slaves were not old enough to work, too old to work, or worked elsewhere. The loss of slave labor is further reflected in 1870 by the fact that whereas no free house servants or housekeepers were listed in the 1860 census, there were 106 of them in 1870, and the number of cooks jumped from 2 to 21. The old pattern was reasserting itself,

as we might expect, but now with paid labor.

Under the heading of semi-skilled and service workers, 30 were listed in 1860 and 38 in 1870. Under the heading of petty proprietors, managers and minor officials, were 31 in 1860 and 40 in 1870. Among skilled workers, always the largest group in town because skilled artisans congregated to population centers, the number dropped slightly from 175 in 1860 to 170 in 1870. The number of merchants, always an important segment in Lexington and among some of the wealthiest citizens, doubled from 13 to 26. As for clerical workers and sales people, there were 20 in 1860 and 21 in 1870. Of semiprofessionals, the number declined from 20 to 13. Among professionals (dentists, druggists, engineers, judges, lawyers, ministers, physicians, professors, newspaper editors, and military officers), the number jumped from 54 in 1860 to 75 in 1870, the largest increase being among professors at the colleges. In the category of miscellaneous, there were 10 in 1860 and 11 in 1870. So, except for the not surprising rise in unskilled and a rise in the number of professionals, the two periods look very much alike.

There was some manufacturing in Lexington, especially shoe and hat making, and the town was an academic center, of course, but mainly Lexington was what social historians call a "center village," a settlement of merchants and artisans, a place where farmers came to trade and find services. These services were performed by skilled artisans and craftsmen, of which there were many in the town, including bakers, blacksmiths, brick layers, cabinet makers, carpenters, chair makers, coach and wagon makers, con-

fectioners, coopers, gunsmiths, harness makers, hatters, jewelers, mantua-makers, stone masons, milliners, millwrights, founders, house painters, paper hangers, photographers, plasterers, printers, saddlers, seamstresses, shoemakers, silversmiths, tailors, tanners, tinners, turners, and tobacco manufacturers. The number of blacksmiths increased from 4 to 10; as I have mentioned, the number of bricklayers rose from 4 to 8; carpenters increased from 24 to 31; and house painters increased from 3 to 8. In 1860 there were 16 shoemakers; in 1870 there were 20. Hatters, on the other hand, declined from 3 in 1860 to 1 in 1870. One surprising finding was that there were 35 seamstresses in 1860, but there was not one person calling herself a seamstress in 1870. What sewing being done for hire is being done, perhaps, by tailors, of which there were 12 in 1870, and by women calling themselves mantua-makers, using a term for seamstresses more popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Rich or poor, male or female, black or white, all these people have one thing in common: They are all dead. They died of infectious diseases, accidents, and a few of old age. Estimating birth rates and mortality rates for the nineteenth century is difficult, even for the expert historical demographers, who don't all agree on methods to use or the reliability of the data.[6] However, historians generally accept the estimate of between 40 and 43 years as the average lifespan from birth in the mid-nineteenth century. But that statistic is a little misleading. A clearer statement is found in the U.S. Census Bureau report of 1872, which shows that a person who reached the age of 20 might expect to live another 38

years, a person who reached the age of 40 might expect to live another 26 years, and a person who reached the age of 80 might expect to live another six years.[7] So, although the average life expectancy at birth was only about 40 years, those who survived the early years had a good chance of living a long life.

In Virginia in 1860, with a total population of 1,596,318, there were 22,474 reported deaths from all causes, which amounts to 1.5% or one in 71 persons. In 1870, with a population of 1,225,163 in Virginia, there were 15,183 reported deaths from all causes, which amounts to about 1.25% or 1 in 81. We have no reason to believe that birth and death rates, or the projected life span, were significantly different for Lexington than for the state as a whole, except that the death rate was higher and life span lower in the large urban centers. (The current death rate in the United States is 8.15 deaths per 1000 persons.)[8]

Unlike our world today, death had a very visible presence in the nineteenth century. The mortality rate was high compared with our time, and infant mortality rates were especially high. The census schedules under examination here do not deal directly with mortality rates, but we can find a few hints. For example, of the 67 children one year old or younger listed in the 1860 census, eight had not been given a name and were referred to simply as "infant." In the nineteenth century, naming a child often did not take place for weeks, sometimes for months, because of the real possibility of its death. In the 1870 census, all children were named, but a number under the age of one year were listed only with their initials.

Surprisingly, despite the constant presence of death in those

years, there are no individuals in either the 1860 or 1870 census who claimed the profession of undertaker, casket-maker, or even gravedigger. It was cabinetmakers who normally made caskets, and they also offered the service of carrying the casket to the graveyard and even digging or opening the grave.[9] The nineteenth century was still a time when relatives and friends of the deceased performed the funerary duties of laying out the deceased, washing the body, and holding vigil through the night. Dying usually took place at home.

The demographic data cited in this paper tell us much about Lexington's overall population and about the makeup of household units in 1870. The census places individuals into the context of their families, their neighborhoods, and their work, and it places many of them in a certain place at a certain time in history. But additional research is necessary to fill in the personal details that can transform the census from a mere list or snapshot into something closer to a colorful portrait of a living community. If you go to the online 1860 and 1870 census records located at the Virginia Military Institute Archives or the Washington and Lee Archives websites (see endnote 1 on page 219), you will find that many of the names have been annotated with biographical information from other historical resources.

Following is an example of what happens when you link the census data with supporting biographical information. For this example, we'll join the enumerator as he makes some of his visitations.

We'll begin on June 16, 1870, a Thursday, as the enumerator

visits a household to which he has assigned the number 39. It is a brick house located on Main Street in the open space where the city parking lot now is located.[10] There, the enumerator begins by interviewing the head of the household, a 68-year-old woman named Mary C. McChesney White. Mary is the widow of Matthew White Sr., who was born in Ireland, came to Lexington as a young man, went to work as a merchant, and eventually became the wealthiest man in town with real estate valued in the 1860 census at $71,475 and personal property valued at $79,343. This is a fortune far beyond that of the second wealthiest man in town, the well-known builder John W. Jordan, whose real estate is valued at only $40,000. Matthew Sr. died in 1864 at the age of 80. Matthew and Mary's son, Capt. Matthew X. White, was the center of a drama played out at the time of Hunter's raid on Lexington in June 1864. The young man was overheard by a Union soldier to say that he had shot a man who had allegedly shown Hunter's troops where to ford the North River (now the Maury River) as they approached Lexington. Consequently, Matthew was arrested and summarily executed north of town on Hunter's orders. So Mary lost her husband and her son in the same year.

Living with Mary White is her daughter Elizabeth H. White Paxton, known as "Lizzie," who has had her own share of tragedy during the war. Her husband—they were married in 1854—was Elisha "Bull" Franklin Paxton, a prominent lawyer in Lexington and Commonwealth's attorney before the war. On the eve of the war, Bull Paxton traded his town property on the west side of Main Street, near the cemetery, to Judge John White Brockenbrough in

Library of Congress

Taking the Census
Thomas Wroth
(Harper's Weekly, *November 19, 1870, p. 749)*

exchange for Thom Hill Estate, just south of town in the county. Bull Paxton joined the Stonewall Brigade and soon rose to the rank of brigadier general in command of the brigade. He was killed at Fairview Heights, near Chancellorsville, on Sunday, May 3, 1863—the day after Stonewall Jackson was mortally wounded on that same battlefield.

When the war over, Lizzie could no longer afford to keep up Thorn Hill Estate, so she sold it and moved in with her widowed mother. With her are her three sons, Matthew White, age 13 (who later became editor of the *Lexington Gazette*), John Gallatin, age 10, and Frank, age 8. Lizzie will die in 1882.

Also living in Mary White's home is another daughter, also a widow, Mary L. White Newman. Mary's husband, Lt. Wilson T. Newman, has been killed in the war. With her is her daughter

Lilley Newman, age 9. In 1871, Mary Newman will marry James Baldwin Dorman, a prominent lawyer, an 1843 graduate of VMI, veteran of the Mexican War, teacher, and representative of Rockbridge County at the Virginia Secession Convention in 1861 as a Union man. He, Mary, and Lilley will then move to his home, The Pines, at 111 Lee Avenue.

Rounding out household number 39 are two black men, both 70, John A. R. Varner and Tom White. Here is a case where at least one person who was neither a member of the family nor resident in the house is included in a household. We know from other evidence that John Varner is living in one section of the first story of Franklin Hall, at the corner of Jefferson and Nelson Streets, and that he is assisting John Fuller, librarian of the Franklin Society.[11] Apparently, he also works for Mrs. White.

The next household, number 40, most likely is not a house but the cabinet-making shop of the late Milton Key. There the enumerator encounters Archibald Amos Senseney, age 41, a cabinetmaker. Amos had worked for Milton Key, a master cabinetmaker before he died in 1860, and Amos continues to work in that establishment for Andrew Wallace Varner, who became the agent for Milton Key's widow, Rebecca. Varner, in fact, is Rebecca's brother. Amos Senseney's specialty is turning: He turns table legs, bedposts, newel posts, and even hat blocks for the hatter Jacob Ruff, but he also builds tables, bureaus, chairs, wardrobes, desks, cribs, and coffins.[12] In the same household are Amos' wife Judith Ann Matheny[13] and their seven children: Ann, 10, John, 9, Ophelia, 7, McCrum, 6, Alice, 4, Mary, 1, and James, 3 months (some by

a previous marriage). Also living in the house is a girl by the name of Willey Reid, 16.

The next household on the census schedule is number 41, but in fact the enumerator most likely is still in the cabinet shop where he encountered Amos Senseney. He directs his questions now to Charles Van Buren Varner, age 32, another brother of Mrs. Key and a cabinetmaker who also worked for Milton Key. Charles gives the enumerator information about his wife Augusta G. Campbell, age 28, and their two sons, Charles, 7, and Wallace, 2.

The next house the enumerator approaches on Main Street, heading north, is the brick home of Joseph White, 45, a reputed merchant, and his family. Apparently no one is at home at the time so he moves along. The enumerator also passes by the next building where "Old Man Fuller" (this is Jacob Fuller) once kept a saddle and harness making shop.[14]

Michael Miley; VMI Archives

Charles Van Buren Varner
(ca. 1880)

The next building on Main Street is household number 42, occupied by Sarah A. Fuller Kahle, age 61. Sarah is the widow of Matthew Saltzer Kahle, a cabinetmaker who died in 1869, and the daughter of Jacob Fuller Sr., or "Old Man Fuller." Her husband, Matthew Kahle, made furniture, cabinets, chairs, and coffins, but he will be best known to posterity for his carving of the Washing-

ton Statue for the Center Hall at Washington College. Living with the widow Sarah is her daughter, Elizabeth W. Kahle Sparrow, age 42, who is herself a widow (her husband was the tobacconist Joseph Sparrow), and her son John William, age 14.[15] Also living in the household are Sarah's other unmarried children, Mary V. Kahle, 34, Jacob P. Kahle, 23 (a cabinet maker), Emma Blanche Kahle, 17, and George A. Kahle, 16. Hetty McKeever (relation unknown) also lives in the house. The total number of residents, therefore, is 8.

Either in the Kahle house or in "Old Man Fuller's" shop next door, the enumerator next interviews for household number 43. He directs his questions to Joseph S. Robertson, 40, a saddler, who has married Fuller's granddaughter, Sarah Ann Kahle, who is, like her husband, age 40. They have one child, Thomas, who is listed as being "at school." Evidently, Robertson is carrying on "Old Man Fuller's" saddle-making business.

At this point in the census, it is unclear where the enumerator is located, except that he has evidently entered a tailor shop, perhaps on Main Street. There he lists the members of household number 44: Robinson L. Northern, 28, and his wife Sarah Jennie Burgess, 17. They have been married just one year and apparently have moved to town from the county. Also in the group are two men, W. G. Hazlewood, 38, and F. McNamara, 27, from England. Probably in the same location, the enumerator encounters household number 45, made up of two women, E. J. Robertson, 48, and Margaret Robertson, 27, both mantua-makers.

The next house the enumerator visits is known as the Rob-

erson-Phalen House.[16] This is the location of household number 46, headed by Edward Nicholas Boogher, 40, a carpenter, and his wife Mary Ann Vanderslice, 36. The house is actually owned by Mary's father, Samuel Vanderslice, 68, a tailor, and he and his wife Ann, 60, continue to live there. (Samuel died in 1873.) The house contains not only Edward, Mary, Samuel, and Ann, but also the young couple's five children: Charles, 12, Mary, 10, Emily, 8, Edward, 3, and Anna, 1. In addition, it is also home to Mary's unmarried sister Emma, 23, and includes Ophelia Humphries, 40, two black women and two black men: Maria Porter, 37, Jane Green, 19, William Hatcher, 26, and James Wright, 36. This makes a total of 15 people included in the household.

The last house our enumerator visits is the Hopkins House on Nelson Street, household number 47. This is the home of Frances Louisa Wade Hopkins, age 36, known as "Lou." Her husband David Lawrence Hopkins was a wealthy merchant before the war, and he was listed in the 1860 census as a "gentleman." During the war, he served as a clerk in the Quartermaster Corps of the Stonewall Brigade. Hopkins died of typhoid fever in September 1865, just short of his 39th year. The 1860 census indicates that Lou and David had two children: Annie Scott Hopkins, 2, and an unnamed male infant of 9 months. The little boy lived and was eventually named William Stevens Hopkins, but Annie Scott died in 1863.

The 1870 census shows Lou with two additional children, Mary Louise, 7, and Catherine or "Kate," 4, who was born after the death of her father. Here our little story makes a complete circle. Lou's daughter Mary Louise Hopkins will later marry Matthew White

Paxton, one of the sons of Lizzie Paxton, mentioned earlier. The Hopkins House and property will pass into the Paxton family.

This, however, is not all of the story of the Hopkins House. Lou's mother Mary Wade, 66, is also living there, as are John W. Fuller, 73, and his wife Ann, 77. John was once the long-time librarian of the Franklin Society, but in 1870 he identifies himself as a saddler, which had been his father's occupation. Apparently he is still active in the Franklin Society, because, as we saw earlier, he is assisted by John A. R. Varner, who is listed in Mary White's household but lives on the first floor of the Franklin Hall building. Fuller also has a small two-room building (where Hopkins Green is later located). There he mends glassware of all kinds, dishes, and earthenware.

And if that were not enough, the Hopkins household also includes a black family of seven members headed by Ella (Ellen) Downing, age 39, sometimes referred to as "Virginia." From birth records, we know that Ella is a former slave of David Hopkins.[17] (How many former slaves remained in the employment of their former owners in Lexington and Rockbridge County is a question probably impossible to answer, but it would be interesting to know the number.) Three of Ella Downing's children are listed as being "at school": R. Garland, 15, Henry Clay, 13, and William, 11. The other three children are Charles, 2, Sherman, 7, and "Lilburn" (Lylburn) Liggan, 9. Lylburn was born in April, 1862, five months before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, so he was born a slave. After the war he attended what was still called "General Jackson's Colored Sunday School." He will later earn a

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Rev. Lylburn L. Downing
Born a slave . . .

degree in theology and serve as pastor of the 5th Avenue Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, Virginia, for forty-two years. The Lylburn Downing Middle School in Lexington is named after him.

What can be learned from this 1870 census concerning the immediate effects of the war on Lexington? The population had increased since 1860 and was a little older, but it is hard to link this entirely to the war. Slavery had been abolished, and a familiar way of life—for some whites and most blacks—was gone. Surely, as we found with Mary White and Frances Hopkins, there were many widows in town. Some of the old familiar faces were gone—Jackson and Paxton, for example—but many who had gone to the war returned and took up their lives again. There were also newcomers who soon became Lexingtonians: Benjamin H. Gorrell, Michael Miley, Marshall McDonald, Thomas H. Deaver, and T. E. McCorkle, for example.

Gen. Robert E. Lee, the new president of Washington College, was now a leading citizen of Lexington and the focus of many visitors, but his health was failing when the census was taken, and he died in September.

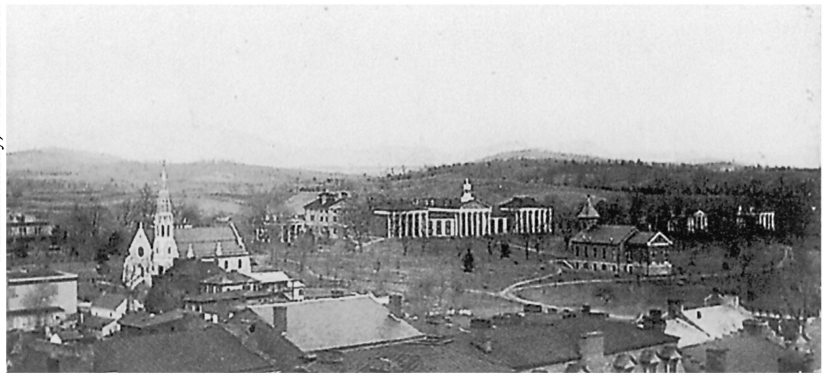
The standard of living in 1870 was probably lower than it had been in 1860, but perhaps it was improving—if the increase in the number of merchants seen on the 1870 census is any indication.

There appears to have been much building activity in town. A close look at the financial history and an analysis of personal wealth between 1860 and 1870 no doubt would tell a clearer story.

VMI and Washington College, the former destroyed and the latter severely vandalized during the war, had been rehabilitated and were back in operation, and, altogether, had 400 more students than in 1860. There were many more professors in town. There were more ministers, but there were also more barkeepers.

In brief, on the surface it does not appear that Lexington had changed substantially from 1860 to 1870. It was still a busy mer-

Michael Miley, W&L Archives



Washington College in the Distance in the Late-Nineteenth Century
(R. E. Lee Memorial Church is on the left and Lee Chapel is on the right.)

chant center serving its own population and farm families in the county, but for some years, and especially during the economically depressed 1870s, the town's recovery and progress were slow. A large number of former slaves now made up a new segment of the community and had to be integrated into the economy. The social hierarchy of the town remained pretty much intact, but families and the social fabric of the town had been disrupted by the war,

and it was no longer the tight-knit little community it had been before 1860. If we listen to the Rev. William White, the suffering and depredations of the war years had seriously undermined the morals and behavior of all, and of the young people in particular.

The town remained deeply tied to its heritage, but now that feeling was amplified by a reverence for the "Lost Cause" and a nostalgia on the part of some for the romanticized antebellum days. For many people, Lexington became "the Shrine of the South," the place where Lee and Jackson and other well-known Confederates lay. And all the while, below the surface, economic, political, social, and technological changes were taking place that would soon overtake the town and set it moving at a faster pace as the new century drew near.

When the next census was taken, in 1880, the railroad had come to town, and Lexington was never quite the same thereafter.

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ENDNOTES

[1] See the 1860 and 1870 census schedules. The author's "Annotated Town of Lexington 1860 Census" can be found online at the VMI Archives website at http://digitalcollections.vmi.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15821coll11/id/2247 and at Washington & Lee's University Library Special Collections and Archives: Coll. 0409—Edwin Dooley Jr. Collection at: http//hdl.handle.net/27329.

The author's "Annotated Town of Lexington 1870 Census" can be found at the VMI Archives website at: http://digitalcollections.vmi.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15821coll11/d/2367 and at W&L's Special Collections and Archives: Coll. 0409—Edwin L. Dooley Jr. Collection: http//hdl.handle.net/11021/27330.

[2] Oren F. Morton, *A History of Rockbridge County, Virginia* (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1973), 561.

[3] Cornelia Peake McDonald, *A Woman's Civil War: A Diary with Reminiscences of the War, from March 1862*, ed. Minrose C. Gwin (University of Wisconsin Press, 1992); 1870 Census, Nos. 806 and 2202.

[4] 1870 Census No. 524.

[5] Marshall Fishwick, *General Lee's Photographer, The Life and Work of Michael Miley* (Virginia Historical Society: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 24; 1870 Census No. 748.

[6] Peter McClelland and Richard Zeckhauser, *Demographic Dimensions of the New Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 10-14.

[7] Bureau of the Census, *The Vital Statistics of the United States embracing the tables of deaths, births, sex, and age . . . from the original returns of the ninth census*, Ninth Census, Vol. II (Washington: Government Printing Office. 1872), Table 3, xii.

[8] Bureau of the Census, *The Vital Statistics of the United States embracing the tables of deaths, births, sex, and age . . . from the original returns of the ninth census*, Ninth Census, Vol. II (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), Table 1, p. 3; *Atlas of United States Mortality.*

[9] Edwin Dooley, "Lexington Ledgers: A Source for Social History," *Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society*, 10 (1990–1989), 236-44.

[10] William A. Ruff, "Reminiscences of Lexington 65 and 70 Years Ago," *Rockbridge County News* 13, March 1902:2.

[11] John R. Senseney, "Reminiscence of Lexington During 1870–1882,b v Life as Seen in Lexington by a Boy of 68 Years Ago," *Lexington Gazette* (Special Edition, 1938), Section 4: 10.

[12] Dooley, "Ledgers," 236–44; Barbara Crawford and Royster Lyle Jr., *Rockbridge County Artists and Artisans* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 221.

[13] Louise M. Perkins, *Rockbridge County Marriages*, 1851–1885 (Signal Mountain, Tennessee: Mountain Press, 1989), 347.

[14] Ruff, "Reminiscences," 27 February 1902:2.

[15] Perkins, *Marriages*, 368.

[16] The Roberson-Phalen House is now owned by the Historic Foundation. The house is on Jefferson Street in Lexington, Virginia.

[17] Dorthie and Edwin Kirkpatrick, *Rockbridge County Births*, 1853 –1977 (Athens, GA: Iberian Publishing Co., 1988), 1:288.

VMI Archives

Matthew Fontaine Maury
(1806-1873)

"All Is Well": The Life of Matthew Fontaine Maury

Keith E. Gibson

Early on the morning of May 2, 1863, "Stonewall" Jackson was rapidly moving his troops along a narrow dirt road in order to turn the Union right flank engaged in the Battle of Chancellorsville. It is almost certain he did not notice the old brick farmhouse to the right of the road as he passed by. If it had been pointed out to him that he was passing the birthplace of Matthew Fontaine Maury, Jackson, Professor of Natural Philosophy at the Virginia Military Institute, would have immediately recognized the name as one of the leading men of science of his time.

I first discovered the location years ago while following the route of Jackson's famous flank march. As I stood there, reflecting on the periwinkle-covered brick ruins, I thought how close the course of these two great lives came—but never crossed—here along a dirt road in Spotsylvania County, or in the physics lecture room of VMI.

Thomas Jefferson was in his second term as president when Matthew Maury was born near Fredericksburg, Virginia, on January 14, 1806. Four years later his father relocated the family to Tennessee. At the age of twelve the small boy fell forty-five feet from the top of a tree, nearly biting off his tongue and severely injuring his back. The doctor instructed the family that a full recovery would require complete rest for perhaps several years. Mr. Maury had preferred that his son learn the back-breaking work of a farmer, but now he arranged to send young Matt to school. This unexpected opportunity opened up the worlds of mathematics, astronomy and geography to the convalescing boy. His back would heal, but for the rest of his life Maury would blame his diminutive 5' 6" stature on the fall.

Perhaps inspired to seek a life at sea by the stories told by his older brother John, who had become a midshipman at age thirteen, the headstrong Maury secretly arranged an appointment as a midshipman himself. When the devastating news arrived that his older brother had died of disease while on duty, Matthew determined to take his brother's place in the Navy.

Richard Maury would never agree to this decision made by his nineteen-year-old son. Riding a borrowed horse, Matt left home

and with the help of Congressman Sam Houston went to New York to become a midshipman and to find his path in life. On the way he visited his cousins in Spotsylvania, Virginia, one of them being thirteen-old Ann Herndon, whom he would marry nine years later.

In New York, in August of 1825, the new midshipman boarded his training ship, the U.S.S. *Brandywine*. Both the ship and Maury were new to naval service—this was the *Brandywine's* maiden voyage. She was carrying the Marquis de Lafayette back to France after his celebrated last visit to America. The *Brandywine* was named for the first Revolutionary War battle in which Lafayette had participated.

One year later Maury found himself on another historic cruise when the U.S.S. *Vincennes* became the first U.S. Navy vessel to circumnavigate the globe. He was aware that he had entered the world traveled by Magellan, Drake, Vasco de Gama and Diaz. However, unlike these earlier explorers the young sailor would leave his mark not by discovering a new sea or landmass, but by discovering the relationship between the two. His keen observations and unquenchable curiosity are revealed in his descriptive writings about the voyage aboard the *Vincennes*:

> If you stand in the public square of the city of Quito [Peru] you can see eleven snowcapped volcanoes all at once. One of these, Chimborazo, is so lofty that it can be seen by moonlight at a distance of ninety miles. Cotopaxi, a near neighbor, is the grandest of all volcanoes. Its terrific eruptions sound like the discharge of the largest cannons, and have been heard at a distance of 100 miles.

It was at this time that Maury first realized the disadvantage that officers in the American Navy suffered by not having a school from which to learn the rudiments of their craft. The Army had established the United States Military Academy twenty-five years earlier in 1802.

Maury began to lobby the tradition-bound Navy to change its training methods. The opinionated young officer did not always find a welcome ear. Maury's outspoken positions coupled with the international praise for this relatively junior officer created jealousy and contempt from some high-placed Washington associates, including Congressman Stephen Mallory, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, and the Smithsonian Institution's Superintendent Joseph Henry.

Lt. Matthew Maury returned to Spotsylvania County in 1834 to wed his cousin Ann. The next year Maury published his first book: *A New Theoretical and Practical Treatise on Navigation.* When the U.S. Naval Academy was finally established ten years later, Maury's volume would be one of the first textbooks.

As Maury's scientific mind began to attract attention and recognition, for the second time a near-fatal accident changed the course of his life. In 1839, he was riding atop a crowded stagecoach in the middle of the night when the coach overturned, crushing Maury's right leg. The Secretary of the Navy found him unfit for further sea duty. In 1842, the young officer was appointed Superintendent of the Depot of Charts and Records in Washington. It was a disappointing turn of events; as far as Maury was concerned his career had ended. He was thirty-six years old.

Maury discovered a wealth of neglected information in the ship's logs stored at the Observatory. In 1843 he presented his first findings from these logs concerning the Gulf Stream:

> There are rivers in the sea. They are of such magnitude that the mightiest streams of the land are rivulets compared to them. They are of either warm or cold water while their banks and beds are water of the opposite temperature. For thousands of miles they move through their liquid channels unmixed with the confining waters. They are the horizontal movements called currents.

With the logs as his starting point, Maury directed that every Navy vessel be equipped with special charts and logs with which to record information in a standardized way. As information began to flow into Maury's Washington office, it became clear that the "paths in the sea" could be located, charted and mastered.

By 1855, when his *Physical Geography of the Sea* was published, Maury's charts were in general use. His work was quickly adopted by the captains of new clipper ships designed for speed. Voyages from New York to San Francisco that had previously taken 180 days could now be made in as few as 100 days. The impact on international commerce was immediate. Maury was praised by every seafaring nation on the globe. He had become the "Pathfinder of the Seas."

While his team of assistants worked on charting the oceans, Maury started in a new direction: the heavens. He now set out to record a standardized base knowledge of every visible star, with particular emphasis on those used for navigation. Of course, navigators had used stars for centuries. Maury's contribution was to

create a uniform record. This project, by its nature, would never be completed (it continues today), but over the next ten years, Maury would catalog over 100,000 stars.

Already well known for his work with currents, winds, and star catalogs, Maury's curiosity now turned to the ocean floor. He became convinced that a practical route could be found on which to lay a telegraph cable connecting the Old World with the New. In 1849 Congress approved a project to explore such a route.

Maury solicited the aid of a young naval officer named John Mercer Brooke, who had invented a deep-sea sounding device. (Years later the two men would share a lecture room at the Virginia Military Institute.) Maury and Brooke charted the ocean floor from Newfoundland to Ireland on what Maury called the Telegraphic Plateau—a relatively shallow and flat section of ocean floor. It was here that Cyrus Fields would lay the transoceanic cable twenty years later. In a second way, Matthew Maury's genius had made the globe smaller.

The Pathfinder of the Seas never forgot that he came from a family of planters and reapers. As early as 1851 he became an advocate for farmers, calling for standardized global weather observations to aid them in their planting and harvesting. "The ocean of air," he said, "like the ocean of water, is never at rest." And, like the ocean currents, weather patterns did not recognize national borders. With this in mind, in 1855 Maury helped organize a conference in Brussels to discuss an international effort toward standardized weather observations. It took the United States government forty more years before the National Weather Bureau was

created.

Near the end of May 1861, Maury dressed in his finest uniform (complete with his almost never-used sword) and called upon President Lincoln at the White House. The Virginian felt compelled to express his strong opinion that a general request for troops such as President Lincoln was contemplating would push Virginia into the Confederacy. After the cordial but brief meeting, Maury returned to the Observatory, removed his sword and placed it in the corner of the room. A few days later, seated at his well-worn desk, he wrote his letter of resignation from the U.S. Navy. The date was April 20, 1861, three days after his native state had left the Union and five days after Lincoln asked for the troops. Maury left the office in which he had revolutionized the way we view the natural world. He left his sword resting in the corner.*

The Grand Duke of Russia sent an invitation to Maury asking him to come to his country to be the head of scientific research. Maury responded with an explanation not unlike that shared by many Virginians of the time: "The path of duty and of honor is plain. . . ." he wrote. "The state of Virginia gave me birth; within her borders . . . my children are planting their vine and fig trees. In her bosom are the graves of my fathers." Maury, like Lee and Jackson, cast his lot with his native state.

By the time the Civil War began, the American sailing trade had been using Maury's charts and sailing instructions for fourteen years. American trade ships had eclipsed the merchant fleets

* *Maury's sword, part of his United States Navy uniform, can be seen today in the VMI Museum.*

of Great Britain. During those fourteen years, worldwide trade had increased three hundred percent—and seventy percent of that went into American holds. The Confederacy and Great Britain found a common interest in seeing the Union fleet removed from the seas.

Two of Maury's old Washington enemies now served as high Confederate officials: Jefferson Davis was president of the new country and Stephen Mallory was secretary of its navy. Tendering his services to the Confederate States Navy, Maury was frustrated when Secretary Mallory was slow to appoint him to a post that Maury felt was commensurate with his talents.

True to his character, Maury remained as outspoken as ever. He publically insisted that the resources of the Confederacy did not allow it to build a navy comparable to that of the Union. The renowned scientist recommended a defense technically demanding and socially questionable: Maury called for harbor defenses based upon electrically detonated submerged mines, or "torpedoes," as he called them. While many around him declared that mines constituted "ineffectual and unlawful warfare," Maury led the research and early development efforts in the first offensive and defensive deployment of mines. One of his early experiments took place in the family bathtub of the Maurys' Richmond home. A surprise detonation left the bathtub and the room in shambles. Mrs. Maury forbade any further testing in the house.

Maury arranged a full-scale test of his device in the James River in view of the capital of the Confederacy. The governor, Secretary of the Navy Mallory and the Congressional Committee

of Naval Affairs gathered along the bank on a sultry mid-June day and waited. Maury and his oldest son rowed out into the center of the river, placed the torpedo near the target ship, the C.S.S. *Patrick Henry*, unrolled a rope lanyard and backed off. Reaching a safe distance, Maury gave the order to his son to pull the rope. "Up went a column of water . . . twenty feet," remembered the ecstatic young boy. The officials on the bank exploded with applause. At last the Pathfinder of the Seas was appointed Chief of Sea-Coast and Harbor Defenses.

Maury immediately began to plan to detonate his torpedo under an enemy target. Five likely candidates lay at anchor in Hampton Roads. On Friday, July 5, 1861, Maury and a small crew arrived at the Roads in view of the U.S.S. *Minnesota* and the U.S.S. *Roanoke*. On Sunday, under cover of darkness, Maury led a tiny flotilla of five skiffs into the still waters. Each boat carried a torpedo and 180 feet of lanyard. The plan was to connect two torpedoes with a length of line and allow the tide to carry them across the enemy's bow. The current would sweep the torpedoes into the sides of the ship and the resulting strain on the joining line would trigger the detonation.

"The night was still, clear, calm and lovely," Maury recorded.

> Thatcher's Comet was flaming in the sky. We steered by it, pulling along in the plan of its splendid trail. All the noise and turmoil of the enemy's camp and fleet was hushed. They had no guard boast of any sort, and as with muffled oars we began to near them, we heard "seven bells" strike.

The little fleet of skiffs had rowed three miles. After placing

the torpedoes, they pulled away and waited for the explosions. The torpedoes did not detonate. Only the ship's bells disturbed the silence of the night. When the mines were discovered two weeks later and examined, it was discovered that the powder was completely wet. The wooden casks had leaked. Maury took some solace from the fact that they had successfully placed the mines without detection. Once the technical issues were resolved, the mines would prove their efficacy.

Maury realized that floating mechanically detonated torpedoes was not efficient. His real interest was in developing electrically detonated "submerged batteries" of torpedoes. This technique would allow observers from the river bank to detonate certain or all mines in a battery at the precise time to do maximum damage to an approaching vessel.

Ultimately, more Union ships would be sent to the bottom by Confederate torpedoes than by all the Confederate warships combined. Fifty ships were sunk by mines during the course of the war— including four monitors.

Secretary Mallory realized that the South could not build the steam-powered cruisers needed by his navy—but Great Britain could. Sensing that English merchantmen might welcome the prospects of reducing their Union competition, Mallory sent Commander James Bulloch to Liverpool in 1861 to arrange for the construction of what would become the C.S.S. *Alabama* and C.S.S. *Florida*.

Of course, England's declaration of neutrality prohibited it from building ships for either the Confederacy or the Union. The

work must proceed in secret.

Maury grew increasingly frustrated and depressed with what he considered the wasting of his significant talents. Secretary Mallory decided that everyone might be happier with Maury out of the country, so he arranged to send him to London. Maury was to supplement the efforts of Bullock in getting ships built for Confederate service. Ostensibly, Maury would be on a mission to further the study of submerged torpedoes and procure supplies for building the mines.

Maury left his family in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and sailed with his thirteen-year-old son on the curiously named steamer *Harold* out of Charleston harbor on the rainy night of October 9, 1862. The captain of the vessel lost his bearings during a gale. On the sixth day of what should have been a three-day cruise, the befuddled captain came to Maury and stated that a most curious event had occurred: He had sailed right over the spot in the ocean where Bermuda should be, but the island was no longer there! Maury told the embarrassed captain that once night fell he would shoot the stars and provide correct navigation. By 11:00 p.m. the great navigator handed the captain a set of directions with the proclamation that they should see Port Hamilton Light by 2:00 a.m. Everyone except a confident Maury remained on deck to see if the prediction came to pass. Just after 2:00 a.m. the harbor light was spotted exactly where Maury said it should be.

Arriving in Liverpool on November 23, 1862, Maury went directly to London to take up residence at 10 Sackville Street. He quickly found that living in London on his Confederate salary

would be a challenge. The frugal scientist left his street-level apartment and moved to the cheaper third floor.

Within a month of his arrival, a lengthy letter written by Maury was published in the *London Times*. The letter was the first of a series of writings assuring the English people of ultimate Confederate independence. The letter revealed another reason for Maury's dispatch to England: The internationally renowned and respected scientist was to pursue quiet diplomatic efforts to have the Confederacy officially recognized. Writing to his wife on his fifty-seventh birthday, January, 14, 1863, Maury noted: "I have been in conversation for the last two hours with an M.P. about recognition. He came to talk about it."

Maury, however, was not optimistic regarding British recognition:

> Many of our friends here [in London] have mistaken British admiration of Southern "pluck" and newspaper spite at Yankee insolence as Southern sympathy. No such thing. There is no love for the South here. In its American policy the British government fairly represents the British people.

Maury went on to point out three major factors mitigating against British recognition: 1) the very real Union threat of dire consequences in the event of recognition; 2) war speculators, of whom Maury thought there were too many, had nothing to gain with the return of peace; and 3) over 1.5 million Brits had immigrated to the United States in the decade preceding the war—mainly into what were Union States.

Maury concluded that "the sympathy here for us is mostly confined to the upper classes and this sympathy is in the main

more apparent than real. . . . We are gaining ground here . . . but before we can expect any aid or comfort, we must show our ability to get along without it."

In March 1863, Maury attempted to demonstrate the prowess of the South by clandestinely arranging the purchase of a cruiser. The 550-ton ship was launched under the name *Japan*. A crew of about fifty British sailors was signed on from Liverpool with the understanding that the maiden voyage would be to Singapore. *Japan* steamed across the English Channel to the French port of Ushant, where she was outfitted as a Confederate man-of-war. Renamed the C.S.S. *Georgia*, she captured nine merchant prizes worth over $400,000. In addition, Maury purchased the aging five -hundred-ton *Victor* from the Royal Navy. U.S. officials in France forced a neutral hand, and the ship, re-named the C.S.S. *Rappahannock*, was not allowed to be outfitted.

Maury continued his diplomatic work through the Southern Independence Association of Manchester and the London Society for Promoting the Cessation of Hostilities in America. This latter organization put together a petition to present to Prime Minister Palmerston encouraging Great Britain to play a role in bringing to an end the hostilities in America. Lord Palmerston received Maury and the Society's committee in July of 1864 but gave no hope for intervention.

Maury now turned renewed attention to refining his electric torpedoes. Conferring with Professor Charles Wheatstone, Maury sent several shipments of supplies and instructions for the use of torpedoes back to the failing Confederacy.

As the end neared, Maury must have reflected on the irony of his life's work. For almost two decades prior to the war he had charted the oceans and plotted international sea lanes. All his work had been done to improve the safety and efficiency of sea travel—to save the lives of seamen and to preserve the cargo they carried. But over the last four years his charts had been used to destroy over 237 American vessels of commerce with untold loss of life.

On the first day of May 1865, Maury was informed that General Lee had surrendered three weeks earlier. The following day the Pathfinder boarded a ship bound for his native Virginia. It was not until he reached Havana on May 22nd that he learned of Lincoln's assassination and the complete end of the Confederacy. Maury had good reason to think he would not receive the same surrender terms offered Lee and other top Confederate officials. He had served the Confederacy in a quasi-diplomatic role on foreign soil, a category exempt from amnesty. It seemed prudent not to return to Virginia, at least for now.

Instead, Maury accepted a position offered to him by the Emperor of Mexico, Maximilian. The Emperor appointed Maury as the Imperial Commissioner of Colonization and Director of the Astronomical Observatory. It was not a good sign for the future of the colonization effort when Mrs. Maury refused to leave Virginia and head south to Mexico City! The best efforts of the skillful wordsmith could not persuade his beloved Ann from her native soil. Indeed, Maury's stay in Mexico would last only nine months as the fragile French Colonial government unraveled.

Mrs. Maury was persuaded to bring the family to England, and Maury left Mexico in March 1866 for a reunion with his wife and children after four years of separation. The family moved into a house at 30 Harley Street, Cavendish Square, London. Maury noted that Ann's hair was still a beautiful auburn while his had turned white since their last embrace. "This is not my papa!" exclaimed the youngest daughter, "This is an old man with a white beard!"

The next two years were happily spent in London. Maury began work on a geography text for school children. He briefly offered an international school for the study of the use of marine and land torpedoes. He particularly enjoyed demonstrating his electric torpedoes, much to Mrs. Maury's dismay.

All of Maury's research and discovery had been done while serving in the U.S. Navy, that is, as a federal employee. He had not financially benefited from his work that had made great fortunes for those engaged in commerce and communication. It was appropriate, then, that on June 5, 1866, several European nations and foreign businessmen held a banquet in his honor at the Willis Rooms in London. In attendance were former Confederate Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard, physicist John Tyndall, royal geographer Alexander Johnston, shipbuilder and MP John Laird, and MP A. J. B. Beresford-Hope. During the evening, Maury was presented a gift of $15,000.00 [just under $217,790 in the United States' economy of 2017 —Eds.].

By 1868 the family could finally begin to make plans to return to their native Virginia. Considering numerous offers from

universities around the country (and several foreign positions), Maury accepted an offer from the Virginia Military Institute to be Professor of Physics and Superintendent of the Physical Survey of Virginia.

One last honor remained for Maury in the country that had become his second home: On May 28, 1868, Maury received a Doctor of Laws Degree from Cambridge University. Three days later the Maury family sailed for Virginia.

The next four years brought peace for the Maury family after so many years of struggle and uncertainty. Maury sent two of his daughters to New York to buy a Steinway piano for their new home facing the VMI Parade Ground. The house and the piano remain in Lexington today.

Professor Maury used his cadet students to help compile the data for the state physical survey, a project never before undertaken. Once completed, the survey became the document by which the state developed its natural resources in the post-war economy. It was a particularly gratifying and important undertaking for which Maury was uniquely suited.

Maury continued an amazing and exhausting public speaking schedule which took him on long journeys throughout the country. Offers continued to come in from other universities: The University of Virginia attempted to lure him away from VMI; St. John's College offered $3,000; the University of Alabama offered $5,000. But the Maury family was at home in Lexington.

By 1871, the geography textbooks Maury had started writing while living in London were being used in more than five thousand

schools in the United States. In that year alone, his book royalties exceeded $30,000 [approximately worth $572, 090 in the economy of the United States in 2017 —Eds.].

The leaves had turned golden in the fall of 1872 when Maury returned from one of his speaking trips to his VMI home. In his matter-of-fact way, Maury met Ann at the front door and quietly stated, "My Dear, I am come home to die." As he had been correct in so many predictions in the past, so he was correct this time. Over the next four months he prepared for the end. By late January 1873, death was closing in on the old sailor. He told his physician not to call on him anymore. "Leave me to the Great Physician," he said.

Maury's bed was positioned so that he could watch the stars from his window. One evening, as Venus ascended the heavens, Maury called his wife of thirty-eight years to his side. Pointing to the bright planet, Maury said, "You see Venus? I have always wanted to go there. When I leave you here, that is the first place I'm going to visit!"

A light snow covered the Parade Ground as the Maury children came to say goodbye to their father. At his request, they gathered around his bed and sang "How Firm a Foundation."

"Do I seem to drag my anchors?" the old seaman asked his son Richard.

"They are sure and steadfast," came the reply. It was Saturday, half past twelve, the first day of February 1873.

Then the man who had revolutionized international travel and changed the way we view the world spoke his final words,

words of an old seaman turning over the watch to his relief: "All is well. All is well. All is well."

Maury had arranged every detail of his funeral—he was to be buried in Richmond's famed Hollywood Cemetery overlooking the James River, and his body was to be carried through the mountain pass of the North River known as Goshen while the rhododendron was in bloom. He planned every detail—except for the date of death. He died in mid-winter, and the rhododendron does not bloom until June. So, on February 5, 1873, Matthew Fontaine Maury's body was temporarily placed in a crypt only fifteen feet from the grave of "Stonewall" Jackson. Their paths in life complete, these two great Virginians once again drew close in death.

Maury was one of the most brilliant scientists of the nineteenth century. His accomplishments brought worldwide acclaim in a way seldom enjoyed by an American of his time. The Czar of Russia knighted him; gold medals honoring him were struck in Austria, Sweden, Holland, France and Germany. Over twenty honorary degrees were conferred upon him. He had attained the rank of Commodore, U.S. Navy. Of all these worldwide accolades and titles, one captures the long and productive life better that any other. You see, in the Maury house everyone had a nickname. Maury gave each child a pet name: "Sit Sing," "Brave," "Tots," "Davy Jones," "Nannie Curley." It was the children who gave their papa the name for which even today we remember him, *Pathfinder of the Seas."*

***Col. Keith Gibson** is Executive Director of the Museum System at the Virginia Military Institute and the Architectural Preservation Officer for VMI, responsible for the operation and development of the VMI Museum, the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park and the Stonewall Jackson House. He graduated from VMI in 1977, and after a tour as a Naval fficer he returned to VMI as Curator of Exhibits for the VMI Museum. He furthered his education at James Madison and George Washington Universities.*

Gibson has authored numerous works and has been a consultant on a number of documentary films, made-for-television films, and feature films. He served two terms as president of the Rockbridge Historical Society. Col. Gibson presented his paper on Matthew Fontaine Maury in July 2006.

Maury's Memorial Monument
Goshen Pass, Rockbridge County, Virginia
(1923 Photo)

AN OVERVIEW OF THE *PROCEEDINGS* OF THE ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2006-2016

Pro-ceed.ings: plural noun, a published report of a set of meetings . . .
(*Oxford Dictionary*)

Through the years since 1941—the year the Rockbridge Historical Society began publishing its journal called *Proceedings*—the definition of "proceedings" has been variously interpreted and applied by its editors: While Volume I of the *Proceedings* (1939-1941), contained the unannotated texts of the presented papers, Volume II (1941-1946)—affected by "the limitations" of World War II—consisted only of titles and abstracts; Volume III (1946–1948) and Volume IV (1949–1954) published synopses and extensive summaries; Volume V (1954–1960) contained the read papers published as part of the minutes, taken down by the recording secretary.

Volume VI (1961–1965) reintroduced finished articles, Volume VII (1966–1969) advertised "footnotes, bibliography, and index", and VIII (1970–1974) introduced illustrations. A pattern for the contents of the *Proceedings* was thus established, one that was to endure for more than four decades: papers taken from a presentation and reworked for publication by the creators—fully written, usually annotated and frequently illustrated.

Variables remained: the size of each volume and the number of years of presentations and programs covered in each one. Volume X heroically and effectively covered the years 1980–1989, and it is in-

teresting that the result was, as its preface noted, a volume "roughly the same size as the first seven volumes combined." Volume XIII (2003–2005), the beautiful seventieth-anniversary edition, covered the same number of years as Volume I. Another variable has been the length of the intervals between volumes. In addition to world war, this varied depending on the time it took the editors to gather and prepare the papers for publication.

Unfortunately, these intervals have lengthened over time, and none has done so as significantly as that between Volume XIII and the present Volume XIV, which covers presentations to the Rockbridge Historical Society made from 2006 through 2010, and yet is being published in 2017. Timely issues of the *Proceedings* are difficult if not impossible to produce under such a schedule, and it is challenging to retain the interest of authors in seeing their work through over such a long number of years.

Perhaps most seriously impacting the *Proceedings* is an issue addressed in both Stephen Beck's "A New Era" and Eric Wilson's "Crossroads" at the front of this volume, where they point out that with the coming of such easily accessible technology as projectors and slides, speakers have discovered new, more entertaining and thus potentially more effective ways of informing and entertaining audiences than simply presenting written papers. Audiences, raised with computers and television sets in the house, and now, especially, with all kinds of other electronic devices that offer visual information, naturally expect more than the kind of presented paper that was so much a staple of early RHS programs and the resultant issues of the *Proceedings*.

RHS has been fortunate that its speakers and program facilitators have recognized this for some time—and frequently offer digitally-illustrated presentations. These popular enhanced presentations will continue.

Not unexpectedly, presentations that employ visual technology do so at the expense of the written word; in the end the result is that there are fewer papers ready for publication. Most take time and effort to make ready, and an editor cannot blame a presenter for not being eager to sit down at some point in a very busy life (either before or after the presentation) and mold a visual presentation into a publishable paper for a journal. We suspect, therefore, that in the future many RHS digital presentations will be more often and more properly archived online.

Since there is an important role for printed historical papers, RHS is excited to plan a place for them as the *Proceedings* continues to evolve as a publication. Exactly what it will be is not known, but what is known is that—at least for the foreseeable future—Volume XIV will be the last issue of a traditionally-formatted *Proceedings*. This means wonderful changes full of opportunity—for what will not change for all concerned are the enormous resources and the seemingly unlimited talent available for RHS presentations, both written and digitally offered, in Rockbridge County, Virginia.

PRESENTATIONS TO THE ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2006–2016

Below is a list of RHS presentations made from January 2006 through December of 2016. For all of the years covered in this volume of the Proceedings *(2006-2010) and for many of those following that are covered in this list (2011-2016), RHS Trustee David Coffey was the knowledgeable and imaginative program chair who planned and made possible these interesting and varied presentations. Even a quick glance at the overview below will attest to the enormity of this task and, especially, to David Coffey's dedication to the history of Rockbridge County and to the Rockbridge Historical Society.*

*As in the past, the venues for the presentations were many—and as varied as the topics. Among these program sites were VMI's Preston Library, the Marshall Museum, the Effinger Firehouse, Washington and Lee's concert hall and Hillel House, small county churches, the American Legion Hall in Buena Vista, the Old Courthouse in Lexington, and Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park at Natural Bridge Station.**

2006

In January James M. Morgan Jr. presented a paper called "A History of the Horse and Cavalry at VMI," which appears as a paper in this volume under the title "The Horse and VMI." Edwin L. Dooley Jr. presented a paper in March called "A Snapshot of Lexington in 1870," also appearing in this volume. In May a panel of speakers consisting of Pamela Simpson, Matt Paxton, Mary Stuart Gilliam, Marjorie Cooper and Frank Parsons

**Other informative program notes offering more detail about past events as well as information on upcoming programs and presentations can be found at the Society's website: www.rockbridgehistoricalsociety.com.*

spoke on the topic "Preserving the Past: A History of Historic Preservation in Lexington," and in July Keith E. Gibson presented a paper on "The Life and Times of Matthew Fontaine Maury," which appears in this issue of the *Proceedings* as "'All Is Well': The Life of Matthew Fontaine Maury." In September George A. Tolley presented a program called "Prehistoric Settlement in Rockbridge County." In November, J. Holt Merchant finished out the year with "The South, Slavery, the Church, and the Civil War."

2007

In January Frank E. Grizzard Jr. spoke on "The Lee Family Archives." In March VMI first-class (senior) Cadet Lucas Gordon presented a talk in the auditorium of Nichols Engineering Hall at VMI; his talk was titled "Racial Integration at W&L and VMI: A Comparative Study." In June David Kroenfeld, a graduating senior from Washington and Lee University, presented a paper at Concert Hall, Wilson Hall, W&L, with the title "Waddell School: An Architectural and Cultural History." In July Theodore Carter DeLaney spoke on school desegregation in western Virginia in a talk titled, "Telling Our Stories: School Desegregation in Four Western Virginia Counties." His presentation took place at the Randolph Street Methodist Church; his great grandfather was the architect, contractor, and builder of this church. Readers will find DeLaney's article in this volume. In September Bob Deans, author and national correspondent for Cox Newspapers, spoke about his book *The River Where America Began: A Journey along the James.* Deans' talk was given at a picnic program in Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park, Natural Bridge Station, Virginia. In November, in the Nichols Hall at VMI, Charles C. Bodie presented a talk titled "A New History of Rockbridge County" that would evolve into a comprehensive history of the county that the Rockbridge Historical Society would publish as *Remarkable Rockbridge: The Story of Rockbridge County, Virginia* (still available for purchase).

2008

In January another student presentation took place at the Rockbridge Regional Library when Joel Enterline, a senior cadet from the Virginia Military Institute gave his paper, "The World War II Homefront in Lex-

ington & Rockbridge County." A dinner in March at the Old Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Steeles Tavern, Virginia, was followed by a talk by Kenneth Koons, "Kith, Kin, and Community: Patterns of Social Experience in the Valley of Virginia During the Age of Grain," which appears in this volume as a paper titled "Bonds of Community: Social Life and Leisure in the Nineteenth-Century Valley of Virginia." In May Keith E. Gibson, at Nichols Hall, VMI, presented "Sir Moses Ezekiel," which is in this volume as a paper titled "Moses Ezekiel." In July a program titled "Looking Back: Childhood in Rockbridge" was given after a reception at the Campbell House in the Old Courthouse in Lexington. Speakers were David Coffey, Mary Frances Cummings, Theodore C. DeLaney, Ruth Ann Herring, Katie Letcher Lyle, Edlow Morrison, and Barbara Dod Whittle. The moderator for this event was Pam Simpson. In September Daniel Morrow gave a talk at the Lexington Presbyterian Church titled "The Blackburn Murder: Death at the Churchyard." In November David Coffey gave a talk at the R. E. Lee Memorial (Episcopal) Church titled "Integration of the Episcopal Church in Lexington and Southwest Virginia." The paper that resulted from this talk is included in this volume of the *Proceedings* under the title "The Reverend John C. Fletcher and Bishop William H. Marmion: The Integration of R. E. Lee Memorial Church and Hemlock Haven."

2009

In January Richard Halseth gave a PowerPoint presentation, fittingly at the Preston Library at VMI: His subject was the Institute's founder John Thomas Lewis (J. T. L.) Preston. Halseth's talk was titled "The Life of Preston" and was an overview of Preston and his life in Lexington, enhanced by slide illustrations. In March the program was "Rockbridge County Log Structures." The speakers were Anne McClung, Ellen Martin, and Don Hasfurther, and the event took place in Kendal Auditorium (in Anderson Hall) at Kendal at Lexington Retirement Community. In May a presentation was given at Nichols Hall, VMI, by J. Daniel Pezzoni titled "Secret Lives of Rockbridge Cemeteries." His paper is in this volume. In July the program was given by Nancy Sorrells and Katherine Brown, historians and authors. The topic was "Whiskey Distilling in Rockbridge and Augusta Counties, 1730-1860." The September presenta-

tion was "Forgotten Heroes From the Buffalo Side of Rockbridge," and the speaker was Horace Douty. This talk was given at the Old Oxford Presbyterian Church and appears as a paper in this volume; it is part of a book Douty authored called *Rockbridge, Virginia: History Lessons from a Country Church.* Finally, in November the speaker was L. Henry Dowell, who portrayed the life of Dr. Ephraim McDowell in a living history presentation called "The Life of Dr. Ephraim McDowell, Pioneer Surgeon" which took place at Nichols Hall, VMI.

2010

The January program, "VMI Superintendent Francis H. Smith's 1858 European Tour," was given by Ed Dooley at Nichols Hall, VMI. His paper appears in this volume titled "Francis H. Smith's European Trip in 1858." In March the speaker was Lisa Tracy, author of numerous books, who spoke at Nichols Hall, VMI; the title of her presentation was "Objects of Our Affection: Revealing Family History Amongst Pistols and Pickle Forks," taken from research for her book *Objects of Our Affection.* The Timber Ridge Community Center was the location of the July talk, given by N. Turk McCleskey and titled "18th Century Life at Timber Ridge." The September presentation, "The Horse in Virginia," was given at the Virginia Horse Center by the author of the book *The Horse in Virginia: An Illustrated History*, Julie Campbell. The November program, "Three Decisions of Lee," was given by author and theologian David Cox. The talk, which appears as a paper in this volume, was given in the Parish Hall, R. E. Lee Memorial Church.

2011

In January Keith Gibson spoke in Pogue Auditorium at the George C. Marshall Museum at VMI on "Images of the Institute—A Pictorial History of VMI." In March the subject of a panel discussion in Nichols Hall at VMI was "Rev. William M. Morrison—Pioneer International Human Rights Crusader"; panel members were Christian Jennings, Lauren Bohdan, Jay Kozak, and Ruchira Ray. The September presentation, also at Nichols Hall, was given by Ed Dooley. He called his talk "Mrs. Francis H. Smith's Account of Hunter's Raid in 1864."

2012

February's Rockbridge Historical Society's presentation was "The History of Washington & Lee's Mock Convention," presented by David Coffey at Washington and Lee's Hillel House Center for Jewish Life. March boasted two programs: On the 22nd, at Nichols Hall, VMI, Bill Malone discussed the work of musician Mike Seeger called "Music from the True Vibe—Mike Seeger's Life and Musical Journey; and on the 26th Ingrid Sinclair-Day gave a talk at the Lexington Presbyterian Church called "The History of the Lexington's Woman's Club" at Nichols Hall, VMI. In May a discussion called "Growing Up on Diamond Hill" was held at the Lyburn Downing Community Center adjacent to the Lyburn Downing Middle School in the Diamond Hill neighborhood in Lexington. Moderators were Theodore C. DeLaney, Tammy Dunn, and Leslie Cauthren. The July program was presented by Greg Crawford, held at the Old Courthouse in Lexington, and was called "A Searchable Online Database of Rockbridge's Chancery Records." September's program featured an exhibit at the Brownsburg Museum titled *Sentimental Attachments* and a talk by Sascha Goluboff—also called "Sentimental Attachments"—given at the Asbury United Methodist Church. In November Ed Dooley offered a presentation called "A Virtual Tour of Lexington, 1867" at Nichols Hall, VMI.

2013

In January Nancy Sorrells and Katharine Brown presented a talk at the Lexington Presbyterian Church called "Presbyterian Churches in Rockbridge"; their talk was based on their research for their book *Shenandoah Presbytery: A Heritage of Service*. March's program took place in the Brady Chapel of the Lexington Presbyterian Church and was a talk by Kurt Russ called "Virginia Pie Safes." In May Keith Gibson presented "Gothic Revival Architecture at VMI" in Pogue Auditorium at the Marshall Museum. In July Richard G. Williams Jr. gave an illustrated talk at W&L's Hillel House called "Civil War Effects in Lexington Civilian Life," based on his book *Lexington, Virginia, and the Civil War*. September's talk was "History of Education in SW Rockbridge County," given by Clinton Anderson at the Effinger Firehouse in Collierstown. In December Bill White presented the first of a three-part series on artists who once lived in Lexington and Rockbridge. His talk was "The Life and Works of Jean Hélion"; it was held at Nichols Hall, VMI.

2014

January's program was the second in the three-part artists series mentioned above. It was called "Cy Twombly in Lexington," and the speaker was Sally Mann. The venue was W&L's Hillel House. In March Barbara Rothermell made the last presentation in this artists' series at Turman Auditorium at VMI's Preston Library; she called her talk "From Barcelona to Rockbridge Baths: The Life and Art of Pierre Daura." Cash Koeniger gave May's program at the New Providence Church in Brownsburg: "The Stones and their Stories: A Stroll through [Brownsburg's] Old New Providence Cemetery." In July, at the Old Courthouse in Lexington, a presentation on the newly-installed "Righteous and Rascals of Rockbridge" historic street pavers was followed by a walking tour with first-person impersonations by Mark Cline. September's presentation was "Lexington's Other Woman Poet: Sara Henderson Smith," by Ed Dooley; the venue was the Turman Auditorium, Preston Library. November's program was the "RHS 75th Anniversary Gala," held in the ballroom of the historic, newly-renovated Robert E. Lee Hotel in downtown Lexington. The Keynote, "Local History and Citizen-Stewards," was given by RHS' Executive Director Eric Wilson, and a presentation, "History of the Rockbridge Historical Society," was given by Tom Camden, Head of Special Collections at Washington and Lee University.

2015

February's program was a group presentation at W&L's Hillel House called "History Through Accounting." Stephan Fafatas and undergraduate research students in his seminar at Washington and Lee, Bereket Mechale and Catherine Roach, told about discoveries they made in the W&L Archives. In April Eric Wilson's talk at the Old Courthouse in Lexington was called "A History of Main Street Lexington." In June Neely Young presented a paper he called "Rockbridge in Liberia, and the 19th Century Colonization Movement" at the First Baptist Church in Lexington. September's RHS program, presented by Jurretta Heckscher and Jefferson Looney, was called "Visiting Natural Bridge—Four Centuries of Visitors"; it was held in the Jefferson Room at the Natural Bridge Hotel. In December, at the House Mountain Inn, Sarah Clayton and Jennifer Law Young presented "The Haunts of House Mountain: Oral Histories, Hollows, and Homes."

2016

In March "The Legacy of the Civil War" was Ron Heinemann's topic; he spoke at the Lexington Presbyterian Church. In April, at Kerr's Creek Baptist Church in Denmark, Virginia, Reed Belden presented "Denmark, at the Foot of House Mountain: A Rockbridge Village in Time." In May Tom Edom spoke at the Old Courthouse on "The C&O Railroad in Rockbridge." Anne McClung spoke in September on "The Histories of Alone Mill" at the Bethany Lutheran Church in Alone Mill. In December Francis W. Lynn and Horace Douty presented "Beyond the Boom: Histories of Buena Vista" at the American Legion Hall in Buena Vista.

GRATITUDE

Rockbridge County is fortunate to have an abundance of resources for historical research, including the archives of local newspapers, courthouse records, local church records, the Family History Library of the Church of Latter Day Saints, as well as the holdings of local libraries—including the Rockbridge Regional Library, George C. Marshall research Library, the Preston Library at the Virginia Military Institute, and the Leyburn Library at Washington and Lee University.*

These last two mentioned magnificent repositories offer seemingly unlimited research opportunities for both local and distant historians—especially those interested in Colonial and American history in general and Virginia history in particular.

Especially useful for researchers interested in the history of Rockbridge County are the Virginia Military Institute's Museum and Archives and Washington and Lee's Special Collections and Archives. The editors of this volume of the *Proceedings* have relied especially on the members of the archive staff of both W&L and VMI.

At the W&L Special Collections and Archives, these professionals are: Tom Camden, Head of Special Collections and Archives; Byron Faidley, Special Collections Assistant; Seth McCormick-Goodhart, Senior Special Collections Assistant; and Lisa

**Since at least 1945, Washington and Lee has provided space to store "material of historical interest" belonging to the Rockbridge Historical Society, and since 1978 has permanently housed, maintained, and indexed RHS's collections in W&L's Special Collections and Archives, where they are available to visitors.*

McCown, Senior Special Collections Assistant. Their contact information can be found at http://library.wlu.edu/specialcollections/.

At VMI the staff are Diane B. Jacob, Head of Archives and Records Management, and Mary Laura Kludy, the Archives & Records Management Specialist, and they can be found at http://www.vmi.edu/archives/.

The Rockbridge Historical Society and its *Proceedings* are fortunate to have these rich—and very often rare—resources available to our presenters, authors, and editors. And we are all grateful for the extremely knowledgeable and willing help of their staffs.

We would also like it noted that the authors of the presented papers represented in Volume XIV were gracious and generous with their time, patient with editorial queries, and conscientious about responding as the volume went through the editing process. The editors cannot adequately express their thanks to these fine people who love history and love sharing it in writing. Their work reflects this. What might have been a pretty heavy task has been made wonderfully lighter because we have had the privilege of working with them.

—The Editors
Rockbridge Baths
February 2017

SELECTED INDEX

(An italicized number indicates an illustration, an "n." refers to a page containing one or more endnotes; "passim" indicates references scattered through the pages listed.)