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Shot Tower At Jackson's Ferry

By F. B. Kegley

High above a scenic stretch of New River at the community of Jackson's Ferry in eastern Wythe County stands an old shot tower, a limestone memorial to the business enterprise of an Englishman who came into Virginia's mountains soon after 1800.

Rising above the Galax line of the Norfolk and Western Railway and the nearby New River bridge of U. S. 52, *eight miles south of Fort Chiswell, the old tower has taken on new life in the* 1960's. *After years of promotion and planning in Wythe County, it has become a state park.*

Tales are told of the manufacture of bullets here for many wars—the French and Indian, Revolution, War of 1812, *the Indian wars and the Civil War. But they aren't supported by the records which indicate that Thomas Jackson built the tower about* 1815-1820 *and manufactured commercial shot there until around* 1830.

The stories probably are inspired by the proximity of the mines nearby on the river where lead, discovered in 1756, *was later used for ammunition in the Revolution. The tower is said to be one of only two or three of its kind remaining in the nation today.*

Through the century and a half, the shot tower remained in the Jackson family until the late M. H. Jackson, a great-nephew of the builder and a member of the General Assembly, donated the land to the Stuart Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, in Wytheville. It later was held by the Lead Mines Ruritan Club when Wythe Countians began talking about preserving the tower in a state park.

The campaign gathered steam in 1964 *when the local people raised* $5,000 *to buy the land and legislation in the Virginia Assembly provided an appropriation of* $15,000 *to establish a park. Its masonry needed little attention but new stairs and a new roof have been built. An attractive entrance and other improvements soon will draw travelers to the tower on the river bluff. Interstate* 77, *the north-south highway through the mountains, is designed to pass just west of the park.*

The story of the tower and the community is told by F. B. Kegley, authoritative Southwest Virginia historian. His manuscript was written in 1926-27 *when the nearby Jackson's Ferry was still in operation.*

* * *

Whoever crosses the New River at Jackson's Ferry in Wythe County, Virginia, is traveling on historic ground, and there are landmarks which serve as reminders of this fact.

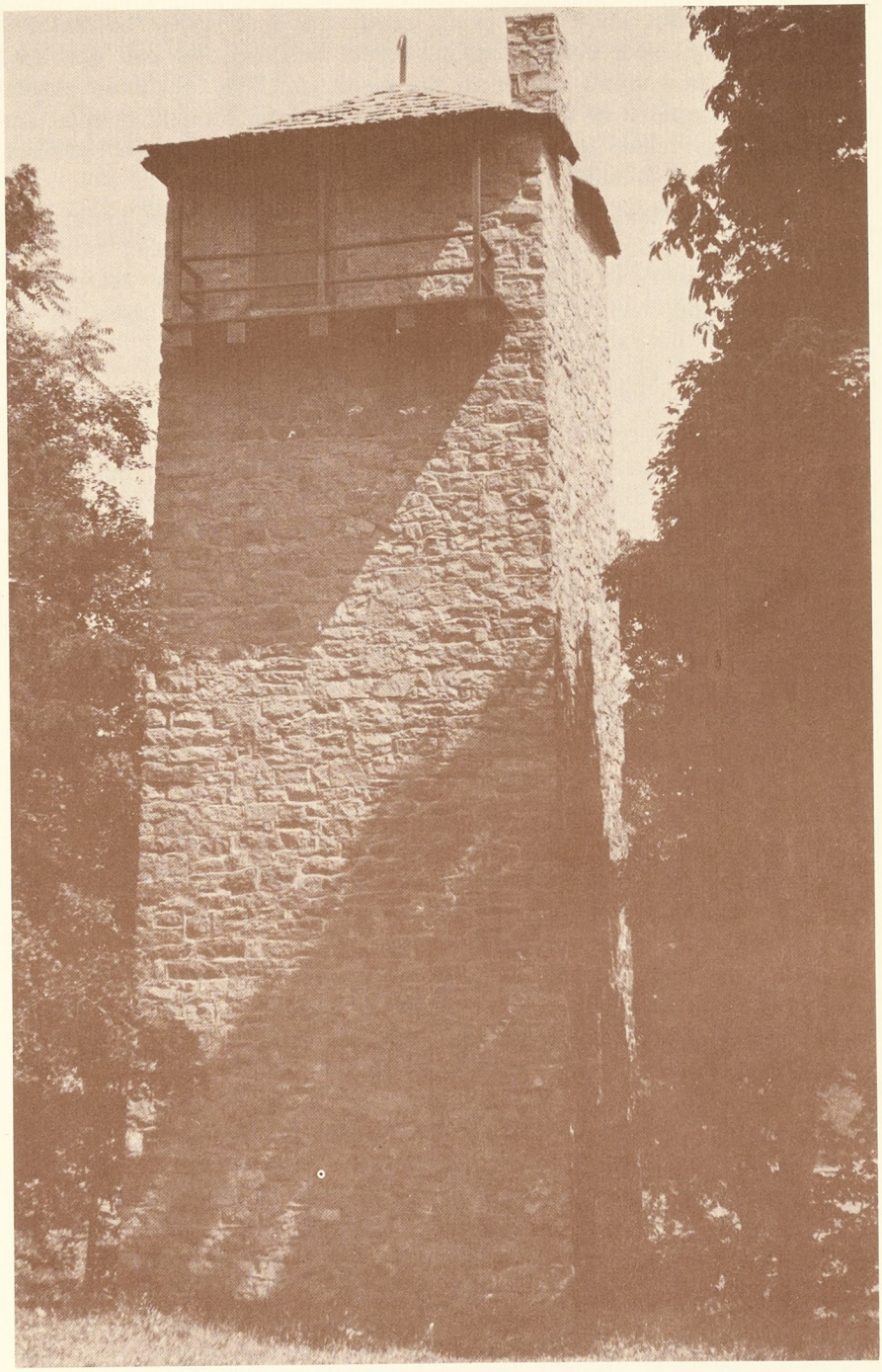
As you approach the river from the north, you turn front face toward a picturesque tower standing on a bluff above the opposite shore, looking down on the crowded ferry boat as if wondering what

changes may yet come in its long life history. The ferryman will tell you that this ferry was established before the Revolutionary War and that, even before lead was discovered on this river a few miles above, men crossed at this place and made their homes in the beautiful little valley that leads to Carolina. This place is known as Poplar Camp, and the creek as Poplar Camp Creek. That structure up there is the Old Shot Tower. It is a hundred and eighty-five feet from the top to the water level below. They melted lead up there and dropped it into the water at the bottom, taking it out ready to haul away. The man who built it used to own the Lead Mines and also the farm you will pass through. He hit on this way to get more money for his lead. They quit using it a long time ago, but it's there yet and will stay until it is torn down.

The first man to make an improvement in this immediate territory was John Bingeman, who secured patents for a number of tracts at different places on the river and entered other tracts even as far west as the forks of Cripple Creek. This main tract of 460 acres and the place where he probably lived was "on a branch of Wood's River at a place called Poplar Camp." Another tract taken was 100 acres on both sides of the mouth of Poplar Camp Creek; another was a tract of 150 acres on both sides of "ye Great Falls"; and still another 184 acres called Bingeman's Bottom. The date of this first grant is 1753. This means that the land was selected and staked off not later than 1751, and it is in this year that the name Poplar Camp is first mentioned in two surveys for Colonel Patton containing 86 acres below Poplar Camp and 63 acres above. So even at this early date the name was fixed.

In July, 1775, a week or two before the massacre at Draper's Meadows, a number of people along New River were killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. Among them were John Bingeman, killed; Mrs. Bingeman, killed; Adam Bingeman, killed; Mrs. Bingeman, Jr., wounded; Bingeman's son and daughter and a stranger, wounded. Just where this happened we do not know. John Bingeman owned at the same time 100 acres at the crossing of New River, later known as Pepper's Ferry. The fact that to this day a neighboring tract of land is called Bingeman's Bottom gives credence to the tradition that the massacre occurred in the Poplar Camp section near by the Old Shot Tower.

In the spring of 1756 John Bingeman, Jr., of Augusta County, qualified as administrator of his father's estate, and in 1762 he sold their holdings on New River to Thomas Stanton, Jr., of Culpeper. The Stantons in turn sold their lands to William Herbert, an Englishman, who appears first in this country in the year 1766. The deed to Herbert for the Poplar Camp land was made March 28, 1767. There was little going on in this region at that time. Colonel Chiswell, of Hanover County, had discovered lead in the hills on the south side of the



THE OLD SHOT TOWER AS IT STANDS TODAY

river a few miles above the camp about the year 1756. He entered 2000 acres and had 1000 acres surveyed in 1760 and had operated mines there in a small way until his death in 1766. So undeveloped was the community in this period that provisions for the men at the mines were procured from the Moravian settlement in North Carolina, Colonel Chiswell himself making the trips when necessary.

William Herbert appears to have been more interested in farming lands than in mineral rights. To his Poplar Camp homestead he added land on both sides of the river for several miles up. He established a ferry over the river, and by his will in 1776 provided a home on the north side for his father and mother, who were still living. His lands at Poplar Camp about the ferry and up the river he left to his son William Herbert, Jr., who sold the tract, 387 acres on the north side adjacent to the ferry, to William Carter, and his home place at Poplar Camp to his brother, Thomas Herbert. William Herbert, Sr., was a prominent man in those days. As captain of the militia for his division of Fincastle County, he went with his company to Point Pleasant in the expedition of 1774. He also had the unusual distinction of being the only man to serve as justice in the three counties of Augusta, Botetourt, and Fincastle while living at one and the same place. Herbert kept this land in possession for more than forty years, and then Thomas Herbert sold out to Jesse Evans, another hero of the frontier.

When George Rogers Clarke was planning his expedition against the British forces in the Northwest, Jesse Evans was one of a group of men of Montgomery County (at or about Fort Chiswell) who volunteered for the service. He went with Colonel John Montgomery down the Tennessee and was with Clarke at Kaskaskia and Vincennes. After the Revolution he lived at Bowling Green on Cove Creek until he came to Poplar Camp. In 1815 he sold his property to Thomas Jackson and went to Missouri, where he died in 1843.

When William Herbert, Jr., sold the land on the north side of the river to William Carter, he reserved for a landing at the ferry a strip of land one rod wide and forty rods long centering at the public road. Thus the ferry right went to Thomas Herbert with the land on the south side. The ferry was recognized as legally established by the Virginia Code of 1792. When Evans purchased the land with the ferry from Thomas Herbert, he took deeds from both Herbert and Carter and so felt secure in his possession of the ferry privileges. But Carter sold his land to Stephen Sanders, Jr., who obtained from the County Court a ferry right from his land on the north side to Evans' land on the opposite shore. This led to litigation and an injunction proceeding, the outcome of which resulted in Sanders' favor. Whereupon, the two parties entered into an agreement by which each withdrew the trespass suit he had instituted, and Evans agreed to pay Sanders three hun-

dred dollars for his ferry, with the provision that Sanders claim no other ferry right and that Evans furnish free transportation over the ferry to Sanders' family.

The sum of three hundred dollars was to be paid: "in horses not old or broken down, one to be paid immediately of the price of between sixty and one hundred dollars, the balance to be paid in one year from this date, the valuation to be made by two disinterested men, mutually chosen, who on disagreement are to choose an umpire, the price to be paid in proportion to him at six dollars for one hundred pounds weight." Signed and witnessed October 15, 1813. Two years later, in the spring of 1815, Evans sold his plantation and the ferry to Thomas Jackson, the price being 11,000 silver dollars. The Sanders and Jacksons are still owners of the respective plantations on the north and south sides of the river, and the ferry is still being operated from the south side according to agreement.

After Colonel Chiswell's death in 1766, the lead mines were operated until the opening of the Revolution for the benefit of his own estate, the estate of his son-in-law, John Robinson, the defaulted treasurer of the colony, and Colonel William Byrd, all of whom claimed interests in the property, although the land had never been granted to any one. Through the Revolution they were operated for the benefit of the state, which had taken over Robinson's interests. Bar lead, not bullets, was manufactured and distributed to the troops in all parts of the state, to other states, and to the Continental Army.

From 1783 to 1792 they were in charge of the Lead Mine Company under the management of Colonel Charles Lynch of Lynch Law fame, who secured for the company in 1791 a patent for 1400 acres of land on the south or east side of New River, including the lead mines. Moses Austin of Connecticut and Richmond came to the mines in 1790, entered into an arrangement with the state to work its share, and bought out the interests of the Lead Mine Company. He and his brother, Stephen, were in charge until 1800, when they dissolved partnership. Stephen's son, Charles, then took charge and leased the property to James Howell who kept the industry going for about four years when the state's interest was purchased by Thomas Jackson who had come to the mines from Westmoreland County, England, at the suggestion of the Austins, and served as an expert mining smith.

To secure the purchase money for the mines, Jackson entered into an arrangement with Daniel Sheffey and David Pierce to go on his bond. As an outcome of this arrangement and lawsuits following, all three had a hand in the ownership and operation of the mines. Jackson and Pierce became the final tenants, Jackson holding eleven twenty-fourths of the property and Pierce thirteen twenty-fourths. Each mined, washed, and smelted ore to suit himself, irrespective of the

other's wishes, and both prospered at the game. Even before this, Jackson had purchased the Sayers farm of 660 acres, situated up the river from the mines, where he lived, and added a number of the best farms in the neighborhood to his possessions. Among these was the Poplar Camp-Ferry Tract on the Carolina Road below. As we have stated, this was in 1815.

Thomas Jackson was then a skilled mechanic, an experienced miner and mine operator, a well-to-do-farmer, and owner of the main public ferry over New River. There were then no wars to claim a part of the products of his mine, and since the expense of marketing bar lead was great, taking as much as one hundred dollars to transport a load to Baltimore, he turned his attention to the erection of a tower for the manufacture of shot. This process demanded a certain elevation, by convenient water, close to the road. The ideal location was found on his lower place on the bluff over the river close by the ferry, near the mouth of Poplar Camp Creek.

Here the tower was built from 1815 to 1820, and commercial shot was manufactured there until about 1830, when the Jacksons sold their interest in the mines and had no further use for the tower. No one of the present generation has talked with anyone who had seen or known anything about the tower in actual use. It has had nothing to do with the ammunition used in any of our wars and represents nothing but the vision and enterprise of an alert business man. It stands, however, as a monument to the industry of a bygone day, and a relic that should be preserved to embellish the history of the country.

Thomas Jackson himself was a bachelor and lived and died at the Sayers place, many miles away, and was buried at the Mines graveyard on New River. I looked for his grave in the shadow of the tower and was disappointed not to find it there.

The tower was built of gray limestone, and the work was done by a good mason. It has stood for more than a hundred years, and only the mortar in the crevices on the outside walls had worn away. The joists for the floor of the furnace room at the top are still sound and strong enough to hold a weight of lead. In the construction a perpendicular shaft about six feet in diameter was cut from the surface of the rock cliff to a depth of about fifty feet, and another shaft or tunnel, high enough for a man to walk through, was cut from the bank of the river at an average high water mark straight into the bottom of the perpendicular shaft, where a large kettle was placed to hold water carried in from the river, into which the lead was to be dropped. From the surface of the cliff, the walls of the tower were erected, slightly leaning, to the height of seventy-five feet. At the base the tower is twenty feet square; at the top it is fifteen. The walls are two feet thick. There are no windows or openings in the walls, except an en-

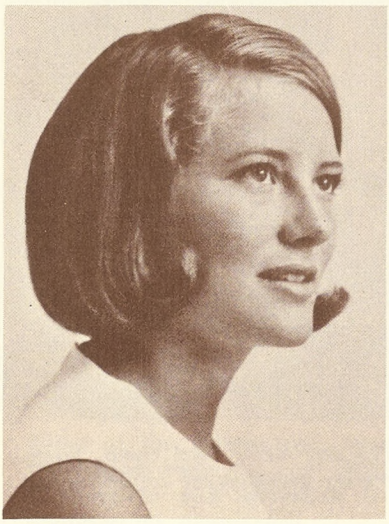
trance at the bottom, through which one entered to carry the lead to the top. The ascent is made by a stairway winding around the sides of the walls. At the top there is a room thirteen feet square, in the center of which there is a circular colander about three feet in diameter, standing waist high, through which the molten lead was poured for its one hundred and twenty-five foot drop. The furnace was close by on the east side of the room, and an opening leading to a balcony is found on the south side. The whole was covered with shingles.

The irregular particles of lead were taken from the kettle through the entrance from the river, graded, rolled, and polished in a shot house near by. The finished product was thus close by the road at the ferry, convenient for loading or for delivery to passing purchasers.

The furnace has been dismantled, and the entrance from the river bank has been closed by the railroad. The kettle was left inside, and for many years the shaft was used as a dump for farm garbage.

In sight of the tower on the south side in a bend of the road stands the old Poplar Camp mansion house, well preserved and still in use. It has served many families for many generations and housed many heroic individuals. Farther on at the edge of the mountain is the site of the old Poplar Camp furnace and mill, where lived and toiled David Pierce, an unrivaled captain of pioneer industry. A little west of the road and the Jackson farm is the last home and the final resting place of Colonel Walter Crockett, whose career as soldier and statesman in the Southwest is matched only by General William Campbell, himself.

New Executive Director Named



Anna Logan Lawson has been named executive director of the Roanoke Historical Society to succeed J. R. Hildebrand, according to an announcement by Mrs. English Showalter, new president.

A native of Salem, she is a 1965 graduate of Hollins College where she was associate editor of the newspaper and a columnist for Hollins Alumnae Magazine.

She and her husband, Thomas T. Lawson, live near Daleville in Botetourt County. Her mother, Mrs. J. M. B. Lewis, Jr., is an active member of the society.

Here is part of the bedroom exhibit showing maple button bed with appliqued quilt in red, green and white tulip pattern. Chest, hatbox, cradle, washstand with pitcher and bowl and chair also are in view.

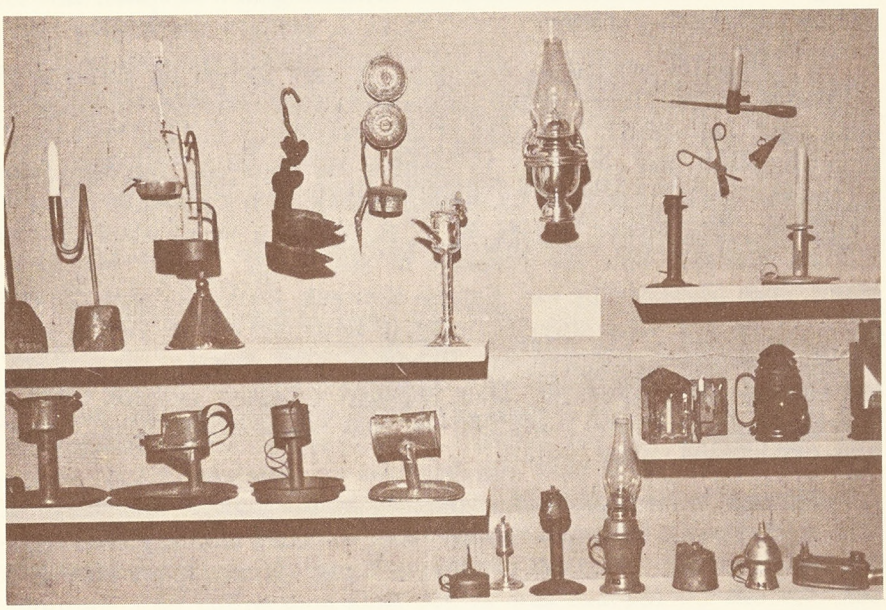
The kitchen is dominated by large hearth and heavy old chest. Some of the large number of cooking and serving implements collected can be seen.

Homelife In Virginia: 1776-1835

"Homelife in Virginia Between the Wars: 1776-1835"—an ambitious exhibition sponsored by the Roanoke Fine Arts Center, drew throngs to the Roanoke Public Library during a month-long spring showing.

And those who came—school groups, serious students of the past, or casual passersby—viewed a soundly-conceived presentation of western Virginia antifacts of a century and a half ago. It was the Center's most successful exhibit. Articles ranging from beds to betty lamps were traced down and borrowed from scores of owners. This Society's museum was well represented.

A complete drawing room, bedroom and kitchen were created. Additional exhibits depicted hand tools of the era, weapons and the evolution of lighting devices. The last, mostly owned by Mrs. Roger Winborne, Jr., was perhaps the most popular portion of the display, particularly among youngsters who previously hadn't considered that the electric light bulb—or even the kerosene lantern were not fixtures in great-greatgranddaddy's house.



Some of the simple and not-so-simple household lighting devices of the period from the wall display which attracted much interest. Their construction and operation were described to visitors by Fine Arts members in attendance.

The children learned that their ancestors used scant artificial light in summer—for living was literally by daylight—but that they employed great ingenuity in creating illumination when the sun set early. Tallow was usually available only once a year and there was never enough; whale oil was scarce and expensive, so light of a sort was created from burning cattails soaked in tallow, from simple wicks floating in hog fat, from beeswax and from a variety of other devices. The collection included crude lamps enclosed in isinglass, and brackets and other devices for holding the fixtures. They were made of tin, iron, pewter, brass or silver. And its viewing brought to most onlookers a certain happiness that they lived in the Twentieth Century.

The parlor, complete with pictures, books, a tea service, a sampler and a hooked rug, included a fine cherry lowboy, a slant-top desk with writing materials of the time and mahogany hepplewhite chairs. The bedroom featured a maple button bed and several articles of children's furniture—a tiny dropleaf table, miniature bureau, two cradles and small fry clothing of the early 1800s. There was a pair of 200-year-old ice skates.

Biggest item in the kitchen was a huge hutch cupboard loaded with pewter cups, plates, pitchers, pots and pans. A hunting rifle hung along the wooden mantel and utensils included a hearth crane, kettles, gourds and stirring spoons.

A committee headed by Mrs. John D. Carr turned up all sorts of unusual household items of the period owned by residents of the Roanoke area. The exhibit was insured and everything on loan was carefully described and evaluated by owners. Of particular interest were a captain's chair once used by John Marshall in his Fauquier County plantation office, owned by Mrs. W. W. S. Butler; a sword worn by Col. William Fleming, now the property of the D.A.R., and a full dress sword, once possessed by Col. George Hancock, loaned by Mrs. George Ellis. On the bed was a coverlet woven of Botetourt county flax in 1815 for the great-grandmother of Mrs. Hobart L. Scott. Some of the artisans' implements were ingenuous. They included a header tool for forging nail heads, draw knives, a holding dog and rabbit gauge, tongs, auger and evil-looking broad axes.

Interest in the exhibit was enhanced by the general knowledge of Mrs. B. B. Bivens, Fine Arts hostess, who was able to parry such questions as "How did they wash the dishes?" and "Where is the television set?"

—B.B.D.

Big Lick Home Front: 1861-65

By Mary S. Terry

Born Mary Susan Trout in December, 1839, the author had been married for less than four years to Peyton Leftwich Terry when war broke out in 1861. They lived at "Elmwood," then a country estate a mile from the village of Big Lick, now Elmwood Park in downtown Roanoke. She wrote this narrative in 1894 and lived through many more "wonderful changes" until her death in May 1910. It has never been printed before in its entirety. Two of Mrs. Terry's grandchildren are members of this Society: Mrs. Dirk A. Kuyk and Edmund P. Goodwin.

My father and husband were Union men until after Lincoln's call for troops, then there was only one thing to do, and that was to go with the State. We were raised with slavery, and thought it right, but we were not fighting for our slaves, but for our rights as we thought, and every true hearted woman wanted her husband, her brothers, her lover, her friends to do their duty bravely. Filled with hope and courage, feeling our cause to be just and right, we never thought defeat possible, that a few months would decide the trouble in our favor. And after the great victory gained by the Confederates at the Battle of Manassas, we thought there was little more to do—but experience soon proved the reverse.

Our men were brave, there were none braver, but as time passed, the ranks of the volunteers were thinned by battle, sickness, and death. Their places must be filled by conscripts, the first call was from twenty to thirty years old, then to thirty-five, to forty, to forty-five and then to fifty. The older men were organized into Home Guards. I remember well when my father, Mr. Word, Mr. Ben Tinsly, Mr. Ferguson, Col. Tayloe and others from fifty upwards were hurried to Saltville to defend the Saltworks.

We were dependent upon our home productions for the necessities as well as the luxuries of life—I ought not to say luxuries, for those who did not pass through the war can have no idea how plainly we lived. Each person in a family was allowed 1½ lbs. of salt a month, it required careful management to make it last at that rate the year round. If we carelessly or extravagantly used it, we had to do without, for our neighbors were as badly off as ourselves. The difficulty was, that salt had been so plentiful and cheap before the war that we could not make the servants realize the strict economy that was required. Our coffee soon gave out, or was hoarded for the very old, and the sick, and for special occasions. It seems almost impossible to realize now the different drinks we used; rye, wheat, chestnuts, sweet potatoes were all used in making coffee. Chestnuts and sweet potatoes,

parboiled and baked, made a preparation somewhat like chocolate, but as these were obtainable only a certain portion of the year, we were compelled to use rye and wheat chiefly. The wheat and rye were prepared by first washing carefully, then scalding in boiling water, after which it was thoroughly dried and then parched like coffee. It was a healthful drink, very much like the Postum Cereal of later years. We used herb and root teas, camomile, boneset, balm, sage, raspberry leaf, sassafras, etc., but all these being known for their medicinal qualities savored too much of medicine to be popular as a drink for the table; they were invaluable in their proper place.

We had difficulty in obtaining wheat and rye at all times, so we cultivated temperance principles, and appreciated pure, fresh water as a healthful and convenient table beverage. As time passed we could get only heavy, brown sugar used before the war for plantation and factory hands, and in curing hams and corning beef. At one time I was entirely without sugar, and company in the house, I couldn't buy any, I was afraid to borrow, and consequently was doing without. One of my neighbors learning of my destitution said she would ask her husband to let me have fifty pounds if I would not tell. Her husband was a tobacco manufacturer and had some barrels of sugar stored for that purpose, and she knew of it; were it known that I had bought sugar from him it would be almost impossible to keep any on hand for manufacturing purposes. I paid fifty cents a pound and was so thankful to get it. We used it only for tea and coffee, but while we could not afford sugar for cooking purposes, we were not without sweet desserts. Sorghum was raised in great quantities and used in a variety of ways, in cakes, custards, pies, puddings, sauces, sweet pickles, and as a syrup for the table. In fact there was a kind of rivalry among housekeepers as to who could make the best and greatest variety of good things from sorghum.

What we had, we had to do with, for while the supplies were limited, the money with soldiers' families was still more limited. My oldest daughter says she remembers Mama always had a nice print of butter on the table, but the rule was "you must not eat butter" unless we had an extra print. We had to keep prepared for company, and anyone dropping in unexpectedly at lunch time would not have known the circumstances, besides we had a greater feeling of comfort and respectability when we could see a sufficiency.

The most discouraging time I experienced was the Christmas before the surrender, we felt our cause was well nigh hopeless, we were discouraged, despondent, heartsick, almost destitute of clothing and provisions. For our Christmas dinner we had sorghum cakes, pumpkin custards made with sorghum, without eggs and a small piece of spare rib. I had filled my two little children's stockings and small chairs

with apples, walnuts, hickory nuts, sweet potatoes and sorghum candy. I did what I could to make them happy, for I dreaded what another Christmas might bring forth. Let no one think we complained of our deprivations, it was the growing conviction of the helplessness of our cause that was destroying our courage. Until the last months we gladly and hopefully endured hardships, we were cheerful and hospitable, always welcoming our guests to our table with its scanty fare, feeling that they knew we were giving our best. The social gatherings were called "starvation parties" and were apparently much enjoyed, taffy pullings were quite common. The refreshments would be walnuts, hickory nuts, apples, cider, sorghum cakes, taffy and often sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes roasted. To have had all these at one time would have been inexcusable extravagance, what I have named would have been sufficient variety for at least three times. At one of the largest parties around here the refreshments were sweet and Irish potatoes roasted, served with butter and with cider and milk for a beverage. When my brother was home on furlough, I had some friends in one evening to be with him, and for refreshments we had brown sugar and sorghum cakes, blackberry wine and apples, another evening he and a cousin made cream out of snow, sorghum, and rich cream and all thought it delicious.

The women of the South were heroic, self-denying, never a murmur from those whose hearts were in the cause. We had only the usual amount of clothing at the beginning of the war, we never thought of purchasing for the future, for we expected the war to last only a short while. Our bedding we divided with the hospitals in the beginning of the war, sheets were needed, not only for the beds of the sick and wounded, but for bandages for the wounded; so not only our clothes, but our bedding, our table linen, our china and kitchen utensils all became very scarce. For table linen we sewed two widths of Osnaburg cotton together, fringed the ends (to take away the sheet-like look). But for ourselves and families the question was no longer "what to wear and how to make it," but "what can we get and how shall we pay for it."

But necessity has always been the mother of invention, and in this case the results were wonderful. The sheep were sheared, the wool washed, carded, spun, and dyed, and raw cotton bought by the bale, carded, spun and woven into beautiful cotton and linsy. This was all done in the homes—the factories were engaged in making clothes and blankets for the soldiers. They could not furnish a sufficient quantity, for we had few factories in the South, and as the machinery wore out we could not replace it. My stepmother excelled in making cloth, and kindly supplied my small family. We used red oak bark, cedar tops, sumac, walnut hulls and everything we could gather for coloring mat-

ter. I regret so much I did not save samples of our home productions to show my children and grandchildren. We had to exercise a good deal of ingenuity to keep supplied with buttons, it was impossible to buy them, so we used hard scraps of leather, pasteboard, and gourds cut into the right sizes and covered with the material of the dresses. Needles and pins were very precious and we could not get hooks and eyes. We knit woolen stockings in solid colors, stripes and checks, and stockings of fine spun cotton in railroad, shell and fence rail patterns. The railroad stockings were knit with a long, narrow leg, and when sufficiently long, every other stitch was dropped and raveled out. The stocking was perfectly straight and easily adjusted to the foot. I suppose they were named because of the speed with which they were made. We had great difficulty in keeping supplied with shoes. My children and all of my friends' children went barefooted in the summer, their winter shoes were made of natural colored leather by the colored shoemakers on the farms, we used leather strings and were very thankful to be able to protect the feet. We had so few tanneries south, and the government took charge of what we had; the soldiers must have shoes if possible to obtain them.

I was almost barefooted one summer, Mr. Dillon (a white shoemaker) had made me promise after promise to make my shoes "next week," and after patiently and persistently going each week, would be told that he had no leather, but would be sure to get some the "next week." I had to walk a mile each time I went, and went each time with a hopeless feeling, but I could not afford to let him alone. I was in despair, for winter was coming on and I must have shoes. At last he made a pair for a lady who wore number sixes, and made them too small. He told me if I could wear them to take them, at that time I wore fours, but I took them thankfully and used them until they wore out. They were a comfort in one sense, and a terrible mortification in another, for our homewoven dresses would shrink when laundered and the shoes could not be concealed.

I have told you about the difficulty of covering our feet, now I will tell you how we managed to cover our heads. We plaited wheat and rye straw, and sewed the braids into hats of different styles and shapes according to the taste and skill of the maker. They were dyed brown, drab or black, pressed into shape and varnished. We always managed to get some kind of material for trimming, when ribbons failed we used old silk skirts for bands, bindings and rosettes, and friends would always divide their little store with each other. The prettiest hats were made of white shucks, cut into narrow strips and braided, then sewed into shape. My little girls had beautiful hats made by Miss Sowers. A cousin of mine married during the war had her bridal hat made of white shucks and trimmed with horsehair flowers. Mrs. London made

the hat and trimmed it. For the wreath of flowers she obtained long hairs from the tails of different colored horses, and for white used the long fluffy hair of her little dog's tail.

Oh! how glad we were to get "store clothes" once more, and especially "store shoes." They were so comfortable, and looked so pretty and neat that I no longer had a desire to hide my feet. With our rough shoes we did not even have blacking, except a poor substitute made of elderberries, lampblack and brown sugar which we used sparingly for fear of injuring the leather. We had to use tallow with lard to soften the leather as well as to keep down the rusty look. Long cloaks called Beauregardes were another fashion improvised by necessity. We wore them in summer made of light material, I had one made of black silk from one of my wedding silks for summer wear.

I remember well a bride who wanted to make a Beauregarde of black silk, she asked the dressmaker to lend her pattern, which she very kindly did, but newspapers being scarce, the pattern was fully three feet shorter than it should have been. She neglected to tell her to lengthen it, thinking as a matter of course she would do so. She said to me, "Just imagine my surprise and dismay when I saw the bride at church with a short black silk sack instead of a long Beauregarde."

The Yankees made a raid through here about the middle of the war, burned the depot and carried off all the silver, firearms, horses and cattle they could find, killing some of the hogs that were too fat to drive. I remained at home that night with only my two small children and two young servants, I was afraid to undress, but we passed safely through the night, no one came to the house. The next morning my little daughter saw them at a neighbor's on the opposite hill. I told her to look at the Yankees, she said "Are they Yankees, why they look like men." This reminds me of a colored boy of my father's, the servants found four Yankees hiding in an outhouse in extremely cold weather. My father made them come in the house and sit by the fire until they were comfortable, then gave them a good meal. While they were in the room the boy came in to bring wood, my father told the boy "These are Yankees"; he stared at them in open-mouthed astonishment, then said "I didn't know Yankees looked like folks, I allus thought they looked more like cows." Another time a detachment of Yankees came galloping by my house to stop a train of provisions, without halting they broke down two plank fences with their guns, and reached the depot just as the train was passing from sight. We felt so thankful they failed to reach the train, for our soldiers were fed with great difficulty, and those full cars would have furnished many nations, we knew too that the flour and meat had been taken from homes that could ill spare them.

Mr. Ferguson, who owned a large tobacco factory on the way, made

the servants roll out two barrels of brandy, knock the heads out and let the brandy waste. He was afraid that after their failure at the depot, on their return they might search the factory, find the brandy and get drunk and do a great deal of damage. It hurt the factory hands so much to see the good brandy wasting on the ground. I remember seeing old Uncle Jordon (one of Mr. Ferguson's slaves) trying to get some, but it poured too fast. They went to Mr. Ferguson's smoke-house and carried off nearly all of his meat. His wife sent the old colored woman to beg for some, she said to them "What you reckon me and my chilluns going to eat if you take all dat meat, whar we going to git more from, no more meat around." They laughed at her, but left part of it. Another neighbor packed hers in ash barrels leaving one piece in the house. When they searched her house they asked if that piece was all she had, she said "Yes, except what is packed in ashes." Her husband used to laugh at her about losing it "because she could not tell a lie."

We laughed so much at Mrs. Mitchell, who was very brave until the trial came. She boasted that she was not afraid of the Yankees, that she would tell them plainly what she thought of them, but when they came and one of the officers galloped up to the house where she was boarding, she went out to meet him, answered his questions very politely, ending by asking him, "Won't you have something more, Won't you have some water?" He replied "No, I thank you, the branch is out here." My stepmother said she would not be afraid of them (we had heard such dreadful reports of the way the soldiers treated the women), but when they galloped into the barn lot and with their guns broke the slats of the corn crib to let the corn run out on the ground for their horses, she went to bed sick with the silver concealed in the bed under her. There was no pretense about her sickness, excitement and anxiety had really made her sick.

I had some pieces of old silver from my husband's grandfather, and a dozen table spoons that had been made out of a silver sword presented to Capt. Granville Leftwich, U. S. A. (my husband's uncle) for an act of special bravery in the Seminole War, I was very anxious to save them and put them and a revolver up the chimney. My little daughter saw me, and kept me very anxious by continually asserting "I won't tell the Yankees where Mama hid her silver spoons." I put what little bacon I had under the mattress of my bed and slept on it several nights.

But all our hardships were as nothing compared to the terrible suspense and anxiety we endured when we know that battles were raging, the feeling that our dear ones might then be lying dead or seriously wounded on the battlefield; the two most trying times of suspense were the battle of Gettysburg and the seven days fighting

around Richmond. I hope the severe experience of our late war will protect us from another Civil War. I am thankful that we are an almost isolated people, we have but two close neighbors, Canada and Mexico, and I feel sure that Great Britain after her experience of 1776 and 1812 will be content with our present friendly relations.

Another trial that I omitted mentioning was the difficulty of getting medical attention, our physicians were needed in the army, and in the hospitals, so that the number at home was very limited and they had great difficulty in obtaining medicine. There was a good deal of fever one summer, I was aching terribly and felt very much depressed. I was young and inexperienced, with two small children and two young servants, I know I could not get the proper attention necessary for recovering from fever. A kind neighbor with a good deal of experience in sickness came to see me, she inquired into the matter. I told her I felt sure I was taking typhoid fever, she said she thought I was very bilious and needed blue-mass, that she would send me some and if I would take two pills I would be relieved. She sent me a piece about the size of a partridge egg, I made it into two pills and took them. I was so sick I thought the fever was developing rapidly and sent for Mrs. Ferguson (who had given me the blue-mass); she asked me how much I had taken, I told her all of it, she said "No wonder you are sick, but I think you will be better soon." She was right and I have had a great respect for heroic treatment ever since, as well as a great respect for blue-mass.

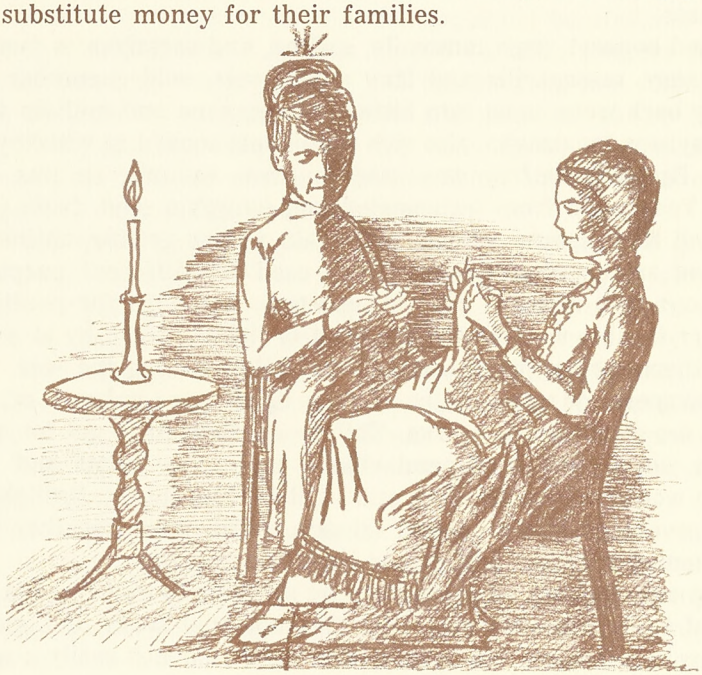
We used boneset, sage camomile, saffron, and sassafras as medical teas, and tansy, sassaparilla and May apple roots, wild cucumber and wild cherry bark were made into bitters, elecampane and mullein were made into syrups for coughs, also rich pine knots soaked in whiskey for the same. Bruised comfrey was used to dress wounds, sprains, dog bites, etc. Teas made from watermelon and pumpkin seed, from parsley roots had their special values. We could always get turpentine for plasters, and spirits of turpentine were used for different purposes. We raised our own mustard seed for plasters, and hops for poultices.

Another trouble we had was the want of light to work by at night, for we southern women were certainly not idlers during the war. We could get no sperm or wax candles, electric lights were unheard of, our village was too small for gas works. Tallow was difficult to get for making candles, so we had to depend chiefly upon pine knots and wax tapers. We would economize time and light by knitting by firelight in the winter evenings, often several friends would meet together and pass the evening together knitting as rapidly as possible.

We not only had our own families and servants to knit for, but our soldiers had to be provided also. We knit not only socks, but gloves and wristlets in numbers. We made a wax taper that was really a work

of ingenuity, we first melted equal quantities of rosin and beeswax in a skillet, then taking a piece of candlewick several yards long would pass it slowly through the melted wax, one person with a short forked stick would hold it down in the melted wax, while two others would slowly draw it back and forth until it was the right thickness. It was pliable enough to wrap around a high candlestick, yet stiff enough to stand upright as it was burned.

My husband and only brother went as volunteers in the first company that left our county. My father was a man of means, had only two children, and he not only willingly consented but wanted both son and son-in-law to do their duty (as he expressed it). It was Henry's second session at Roanoke College, he left college in April and the first of May left home as a soldier, he was only nineteen. They belonged to Co. 1, 28th Virginia Regiment, Philip St. George Cocke's Brigade, Pickett's Division. Their first officers were Capt. Mat. Deyerle, Maj. William Watts, Lieut. Col. Robert Allen, Col. Robert Preston, Brig. Gen. Philip St. George Cocke, Maj. Gen. Pickett. Dr. Edward Rives was surgeon, and Rev. Peter Tinsly, Chaplain. Rev. Peter Tinsly was known as the fighting parson, was always in the midst of the battles to care for the wounded. My father said he didn't believe in substitutes, that soldiers who fought for money would not fight as those who fought from principle. But many of our substitutes were brave men and true patriots, men who wanted to help their country, but being poor needed the substitute money for their families.



Mr. Terry and Henry served the four years, Henry never missed a battle in which Pickett's Division was engaged, was slightly wounded at the battles of Gettysburg and Malvern Hill, had one spell of typhoid fever while his command was in winter quarters. After he was taken ill, he was brought home. Both were taken prisoners April 6, at Sailor's Creek, three days before the surrender. Henry was confined at Fort Johnson, Lake Erie, my husband at Point Lookout, Md. As the prisoners were released alphabetically, they were detained some time. Mr. Terry came home the 20th of June, but had stopped ten days with a friend in Baltimore to gain strength for the trip home. He had been very ill in prison, and as the soldiers were brought home, packed and jammed together in box cars, on open flats, etc. he knew he would not be able to bear the trip home.

I must speak words of praise for the slaves of the South during the war. They have a noble record for faithful service, while the husbands and fathers were in the army their families were entrusted to the care of the servants, often on country farms there would be no white person, except the mother and small children. It is no wonder that Southerners have a tender regard for the colored people that our Northern neighbors cannot understand. When the surrender had taken place and their emancipation proclaimed they hardly knew what to do, they could not well realize their freedom without changing homes.

Two colored blacksmiths had been hired by their master to Mr. Raines who had a blacksmith shop, they quit work and as it was impossible for the farmers to make good crops without them, their former master wrote to the Yankees who were in authority in Lynchburg for power to enable him to fill his contract with Mr. Raines. They sent thirty men here to spend the summer, and their first act was to tie these men up by their thumbs, this struck the others with terror, so that there was little difficulty about making the crops. The Yankees decided the ex-slaves must fill the contracts made by their masters at the beginning of the year, and that they should have the wages for which they had been hired. In looking back I feel a great sympathy for them, and can well understand their restlessness, for we had no money to pay wages, or buy clothes until after the wheat crop was made. It was difficult for them to realize they were free, living in the same homes, without wages, scarce of clothing, often their families scattered, some living one place, some in other places. When the time for payment came it was difficult to settle the wages, they had been hired for Confederate money, and although this was well nigh valueless the last year of the Confederacy, yet it had a big sound and the greenbacks, gold or silver in which their wages must be paid seemed so little in proportion to the number of dollars for which they had been hired.

Money was so difficult to obtain, there was nothing to sell, and

everything to buy, the cattle and hogs had been killed to feed the soldiers, the horses had been taken for the army, wearing apparel, bed and table linen almost worn out, table-ware broken, kitchen utensils worn and broken, all farming implements in the last stages of usefulness; it was more trying financially the year of the surrender than during the war.

One of the Yankees came to my house to trade coffee, candles and laundry soap for milk and vegetables. At that time I didn't feel that it was right to have any dealings with them, but I was desperately in need of U. S. postage stamps, I could not write to my husband or brother in prison without them. I told him I would give him anything to eat I had if he would get me some stamps, he said he had stamps, but no paper, so we exchanged. He seemed a nice, kind man, but I couldn't bear to have him in my house, I felt like a traitor making friends with the enemy while my dear ones were still in prison. I have often felt when thinking over the terrible ordeal through which we passed, that I could not bear a like experience, but I know when our greatest trials come we are mercifully strengthened to bear them, but war is dreadful, especially Civil War, where all the suffering falls on one people.

When passing through trying experiences of the war we never thought it possible if defeat should come, that we would live to thank God for it; yet it is so. The South rejoices today over the downfall of the Confederacy, and realizes that our defeat was not only a national blessing, but a special blessing to the South. The war was a necessity, for legislation could never have settled the sectional differences so effectually as has been done, and I do feel that the lives of our soldiers were sacrificed in vain. Each true hearted soldier slain in our war fills a patriot's grave, and his memory deserves a grateful and loyal tribute from all Southerners. The greatest blessing to us was the abolishment of slavery, we were raised believing the institution right, we thought it sanctioned by Divine law, as well as by the laws of our State, and that the sad things resulting from it were great misfortunes, and not the necesssary results of the institution.

Time was required for our old prejudices to pass away, but sectional differences are now unknown. Northern capital has developed our resources, and many northern people (among them real Yankees) are among our most intimate friends, and marriages frequently taking place between the extremes of the Union. One thing we are proud of is that we were overpowered by our own people, no foreign enemy has ever been able to gain a victory over us. Our war was a family affair and settled among ourselves, we required no foreign arbitration to bring us to terms.

I was born December, 1839, and feel that I have lived through an eventful age. Among my first recollections of national events was

the Mexican War, the first hairless dog and horned frog I ever saw were brought by the returning soldiers. I delighted in listening to their descriptions of the country and battles, and was familiar as a child with the details of the battles. I remember the excitement caused by the discovery of gold in California, and have heard many wonderful experiences from the Forty-Niners. I read and heard discussed the political arguments on the slavery question, becoming more bitter as each new state or territory was admitted into the Union, and saw the bitterness and strife increase between the contending until the Civil War was the result, the war ending with our defeat, our surrender and the emancipation of the slaves.

I have seen suffrage given to the freedmen, and public schools established for white and colored children alike in the South, and I have seen former slaves elected to the state legislature and to Congress, my father and brother serving in the state legislature with them. I have seen railroads made through our state and cities and towns spring up as if by magic. I remember when there were only three houses where the city of Roanoke now is. My own country home with its yard and garden is now a city residence, and forms a square of eight acres in the central part of the city. I had always felt I would not willingly live in the city, but the city came to us and enclosed us in its circumference and now I would not willingly go to the country again.

I was in New York very soon after the Elevated Railroad began running, and I saw there the first public exhibition of electric lights; two immense globes were in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral in which a large festival was being carried on every evening. In our state I have seen cellars of the earth opened and rich stores of coal brought forth by the quantity, and kerosene brought from the storehouses of the earth to make our light. I have seen the sewing machine, the telephone, the typewriter, the phonograph, the cigarette, all made and patented. I have seen the mowers, cradles, binders and rakers all turned into machinery; my father purchased the first mower and reaper that were brought to Roanoke County. I have seen the six horsepower threshing machine turned into steam threshers that measure and bag wheat and stack the straw. I have seen ice cream frozen by steam and butter churned by steam, and artificial ice made. I have seen chickens hatched by artificial heat, and hovered by artificial mothers.

Truly, the fifty-four years of my life have been the time of wonderful changes in my country and if six more years be added to my life, I shall see the close of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth century.

The Society Circles Franklin County

Entrance to the Lovelace home built in Red Valley about 1850.

Franklin was a well-covered county when almost 200 members of this Society and friends completed their 85-mile circle tour of homes and historic spots on May 21.

It was the fourth annual similar expedition—the others had visited Botetourt, Montgomery and Bedford—and by far the best attended. Five busloads made the seven-hour trip, and travelers not only saw old and beautiful residences but caught the flavor of Franklin's past and present by viewing smaller homes, a blacksmith shop, sites of forts and pioneer trails, a 200-year-old iron furnace, Booker T. Washington's restored birthplace, early churches and schools, and new and shining Smith Mountain Lake.

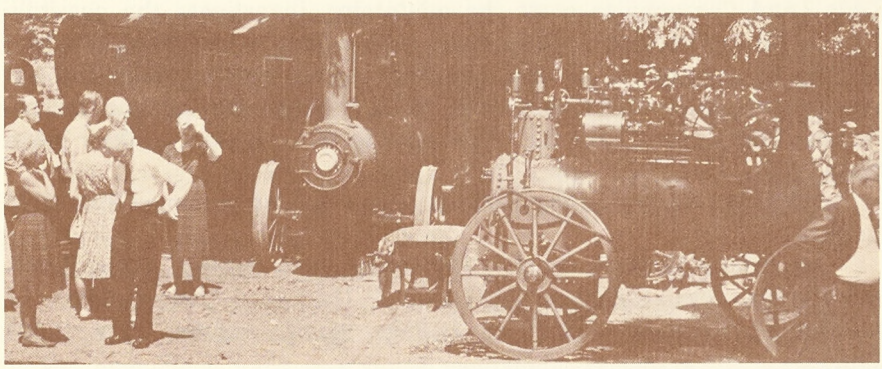
The day was full of contrasts: A once abandoned brick ruin dating to the 1830s in a pleasant valley north of Boones Mill restored to comfort and beauty by Calvin Nelson, Roanoke architect, compared with the oldest brick house in the county, now a country slum but not yet irreparably lost. Staunch remains of the Washington Iron Works in the yard of a Rocky Mount home near the modern factories of the county seat. The county's new school and the pitiful remnant of Hales Ford Academy—one small room where fortunate children received a classical "education" in 1870.

It was an interesting day made much fuller by a comprehensive

Some of the group of nearly 200 enter "The Grove," fine old home in Rocky Mount owned by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Keister Greer.

guidebook and map prepared by George Kegley and J. R. Hildebrand, plus additional notes provided member-guides who manned each bus. With the help of Gertrude Mann and others from the Franklin County Historical Society they came up with a short history of the county plus a large assortment of often unusual facts concerning everything from tombstones to forgotten railroads and stage lines. Perhaps the gem, a note to be recited at Hales Ford Bridge, was "The late Jasper Hundley, who lived in the white frame house over to your left, officially opened the last three bridges, he claimed, by riding a mule across."

In addition to visits at the Nelson home, the Iron Works and the Booker T. Washington National Monument, major stops were made at The Grove, home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Keister Greer, and the homes of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Angle and of R. G. and Miss Sallie Lovelace. Luncheon was served on the grounds of the Red Valley Methodist Church.



Members received a bonus when the tour stopped at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Angle and nearby blacksmith shop. These two classic steam engines were fired and ready to saw or thresh.

Mountain Lake

By Lula P. Givens

High in the mountains of Giles County, Mountain Lake, crystal cup of the Alleghenies, moves and murmurs in the breeze.

Mountain Lake is about three-fourths of a mile long and one-half mile in width, with an elevation of 3,874 feet. Virginia Geological Survey soundings show the head of the Lake to be shallow, the depth gradually increasing until it reaches 100 feet. This greatest depth was discovered about 75 yards from the outlet and it decreases rapidly until the outlet is reached.

Topping the divide between the Atlantic and Mississippi watershed, the Lake's outlet forms a small branch which eventually flows into the Mississippi by the way of New River. John's Creek, rising directly under Bald Knob, flows east into the James and thence to the Atlantic.

Mountain Lake may be reached by two roads leading from U. S. 460. One, Virginia 700, about two miles northwest of Newport, is hard-surfaced. It crosses Sinking Creek over a new bridge which has replaced the picturesque old Red Bridge nearby, built in 1912 and one of the few remaining covered bridges in Virginia.

The other road, not hard-surfaced, leaves U. S. 460 at Hoge's Chapel, one mile southeast of Pembroke. Locally known as the Doe Creek Road, it was once the main road up the mountain.

Christopher Gist, surveyor for the Ohio Land Company, surveyed the lake on Salt Pond Mountain in 1751. With entries in his journal Gist described the lake much as it is today.

Gist was an important frontiersman and fur-trader. Friendly with and adept at handling the Indians, he had been hired by the great Ohio Land Company to cross the mountains, investigate the possibilities of fur trade, search out arable valleys that were likely sites for settlements, report on the best mountain passes, and the strengths and moods of the various Indian tribes. With a Negro servant and several horses, Gist plunged into the wilderness to find answers to their questions.

It was on his return the following May that he surveyed Mountain Lake.

An article in the autumn 1949 *Ironworker* entitled, "The Western Waters—Then and Now," by Daniel A. Cannaday, then professor of English and history at Radford College, quotes entries from Gist's Journal.

"Set out E 10 mi. to the big Conhaway or New River and got over half of it to a large island where we lodged that night.

Mountain Lake viewed from lower end.

"Wednesday 8. Made a raft of Loggs and crossed the River, the other half, and went up it S about 2 m. The Conhaway or New River (by some called Wood's River) where I crossed it, which was about 8 miles above the mouth of the Blue Stone, is better than 200 yards wide, and pretty deep, but full of rocks and falls. The bottoms upon it and the Blue Stone River are very rich but narrow and high land broken.

"Thursday 9. Set out E. 13 m. to a large Indian Warriors Camp, where we killed a bear and stayed all night.

"Friday 10. Set out E 4 mi. S. E. 3 M., through mountains covered with Laurel and Ivy thickets.

"Saturday 11. Set out 2 M, S E 5 M to a creek and a meadow where we let our Horses feed, then S E 2 M, S 1 M, S E 2 M, to a very high mountain, upon top of which was a Lake or Pond about 3/4 of a mile long N E and S W and 1/4 of a mile wide, the water fresh and clear, and a clean gravelly shore about 10 yards wide with a fine meadow and six fine Springs in it, then S about 4 M, to a branch of the Conhaway called Sinking Creek."

Gist brought back to Lawrence Washington, President of the Ohio Land Company, a pleasing report and a comprehensive summation of the French threat in the Ohio Valley.

Summers said in his *History of Southwest Virginia*:

"From this description, (that of Gist's quoted in Mr. Cannaday's article) it is evident that Gist visited Salt Lake Mountain, in Giles County, Va., as early as 1751, and found the lake as it now is.

"It is evident from this journal that the traditions that we so often hear repeated about this lake are nothing more than mythical, and that

this lake existed as it now is at the time of the earliest explorations of the white man."

Mr. Cannaday, now deceased, was a native of Southwest Virginia and a recognized authority on its history. He evidently believed in the authenticity of Gist's Journal or he would not have quoted the entries in his article in the *Ironworker.*

Geologists think the Lake today is as Gist said it was, and that it has been like this substantially since pre-historic times.

Other authorities differ. According to Pendleton's *History of Tazewell County and Southwest Virginia,* John Chapman, moving from the Shenandoah Valley, had settled at the mouth of Walker's Creek in what is now Giles County in 1768. His son, Henley Chapman, once owned the place where Mountain Lake is. He said that he and other settlers ranged cattle in the mountains using the basin as a salting ground for them.

In his *History of the Middle New River Settlements,* Judge David E. Johnston asserted that the earliest settlers in the vicinity of the Lake remembered the place as a deep depression into which flowed several springs. This depression was a favorite salting ground for cattle. Their continuous trampling filled the crevices through which the water escaped and the depression then began to fill with water.

Many families in Giles have legendary stories which agree with these historians.

Andrew Williams, the writer's maternal grandfather, was one of those who said he carried salt to his mountain-ranging cattle and that only a pond was there. He was born in the early part of the Nineteenth Century and was a reliable person owning a large farm on Sinking Creek four miles from the Lake.

Col. Benjamin B. Albert, USA Ret., of Roanoke, tells in his family history that his great-grandmother, Mrs. Elizabeth Williams Albert, related in an interview:

"I was born near the town of Pearisburg in Giles County, April 7, 1803. Mountain Lake as it is now called was then only a small pond in the center of a deep hollow, which later filled with water, and now forms the "Beautiful Lake of the Mountains." Near there lived the family of Jacob Albert who had a son James (whom he married in 1827) who came to see me often and told me how he followed the cattle trail down into the hollow near a small pond, for the purpose of salting his family's cattle that came there to water. This is how the mountain got its name, 'Salt Pond Mountain.' "

Today among local people the Lake is sometimes referred to as the "Salt Pond." The mountain on which it is located still bears that name—which could bear out the authenticity of the Pond theory. Gist wrote of coming "S about 4 M, to a branch of the Conhaway called

Sinking Creek." This stream had acquired the name because it sank before reaching the New. It still has the same characteristic and the name Sinking Creek. So what shall one believe?

On one side are the entries in the Journal of Christopher Gist in 1751, and as it has been pointed out, he was a reliable frontiersman trusted with important missions. Geologists agree with Gist as did Mr. Summers and Mr. Cannaday.

On the other side Mr. Pendleton believed Henley Chapman. Mr. Chapman was an important man, too, the first commonwealth's attorney of Giles and a member of the convention that framed the Virginia Constitution in 1829.

Mr. Chapman and Judge Johnson's version of the Lake's formation is corroborated by our grandfathers whom we have no cause to doubt.

Is it possible that both Gist and the grandfathers were correct? Is it possible that in the first half of the 19th century when our grandfathers remembered it the waters flowed out in a subterranean passage which later closed leaving the Lake as formerly seen by Gist and as it now is?

This is an interesting thought. Could the same thing happen again?

Both sides may have been correct. There seems no reason why Gist or reliable persons in Giles should have extended or elaborated the truth. No one was to get any personal acclaim.

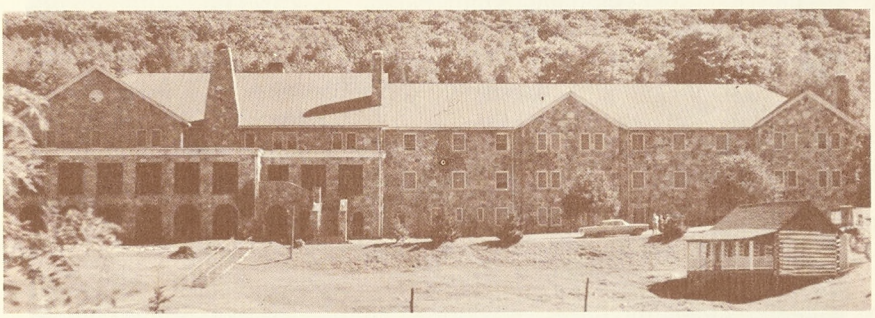
Currently, Fred Marland, of the Biology Department at V.P.I. and working on a Ph.D. there, is studying the sediments of the Lake in an attempt to construct geological history which may establish that at times the waters did recede or drain out.

* * * *

Mountain Lake has been a pleasure resort for many years.

Henley Chapman, previously spoken of in this article, once owned the property. His heirs sold it to General Haupt of Pennsylvania about 1859.

During the Haupt management, and prior to the building of the



Mountain Lake Hotel today.

New River Branch of the Norfolk and Western Railroad in March of 1883, passengers for Mountain Lake got off the train at Christiansburg.

The stagecoach brought them to Mountain Lake up the Doe Creek Road and stopped overnight. The next morning with fresh horses and refreshed passengers, the stage continued to Salt Sulphur Springs in West Virginia. On the following day, it would return to Mountain Lake and Christiansburg carrying passengers from Salt Sulphur.

It was not the heyday of the Virginia Springs, but people—wealthy, beautiful, and ailing—still fled the heat of the lowlands for the coolness of the mountains.

Having purchased the property from the Mountain Lake Land Company, which had acquired it in 1891, Gordon T. Porterfield operated the resort and 2500 acres surrounding it. He himself was manager for a time. An able lawyer with a lucrative, time-demanding practice as well as commonwealth's attorney for Giles County, he later turned the management over to his son, Gilbert.

T. Gilbert Porterfield, of Newport, Virginia, born in 1876, became manager in the early years of the twentieth century. For 25 years he was in charge, and perhaps knows more about the Lake than any other living person. Under his direction the Lake Resort's cuisine and hospitality lived up to the best Southern tradition. Many guests returned season after season.

In his early years there, the guests came by train and were met at Pembroke or Eggleston by three-seated hacks. Four horses were required to draw the carriage full of people up the mountain. The main road then was the one extending along Doe Creek which is entered at Hoge's Chapel. Gathering on the verandas at hack time, guests would welcome relatives and friends, or meet new arrivals.

A four-horse wagon was sent for the baggage of the guests, making a round trip everyday from the Lake to Pembroke or Eggleston, both stations having been used at various times.

T. Gilbert Porterfield who managed the hotel for 25 years.

About this time a plan was offered allowing individuals to build a cottage for themselves and families, to be furnished as they wished. A liberal discount from the regular rates on meals and maid service was given. Those who did this were given a lease for a period of 15 years . . . after which the cottage and contents reverted to the Lake Resort.

Among those availing themselves of this offer were well-known Virginia authors, James Branch Cabell and Edna Lee Turpin.

Mr. Cabell and his wife, Priscilla Bradley Cabell, spent many summers at "Cayford Cottage," their rustic retreat at the Lake. They gave up their cottage in the summer of 1936 because of the ill-health of Mrs. Cabell, an arthritic who died in St. Augustine, Florida, in 1949.

Mr. Cabell, a Richmond native, who died in 1958, had found the quietness and isolation of "Cayford Cottage" and its glass-enclosed porch where he wrote much to his liking. But he had used Rockbridge Alum Springs for the setting of *Jurgen* (1919), whose main character, a poetic, middle-aged pawnbroker, sought to regain his youth through colorful affairs in the fantastic country of Poictesme.

Attempts to suppress *Jurgen* increased its popularity and Cabell had his greatest vogue in the twenties particularly among college students. He was then spending the summers at Mountain Lake.

During this period many letters passed between Mr. Cabell and Mr. Porterfield. These are to be found in the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia, donated by Dr. Paul Farrier, retired VPI director of admissions.

Popular local legend has it that Mountain Lake and its surrounding area had been used by Miss Turpin for the setting of her book, *Treasure Mountain.* The book's lakeside summer camp, the wide-verandahed hotel, the rustic cottages nearby, and the hacks coming in with passengers and mail, are suggestive of the Lake. Tawney's Cave at the foot of the mountain could well have been the one where the rising water trapped the exploring children.

A former resident of Christiansburg where she had attended Montgomery Female Academy, Miss Turpin returned many times from Echo Hill in Mecklenberg County to her cottage at the Lake and to visit her former classmate and dear friend, Mrs. Agnes Wade Ellett, wife of Guy French Ellett, a lawyer of Christiansburg. Mr. Ellett's sisters, Misses Mary and Sadie, retired teachers, remember Miss Turpin, deceased since 1952, with loyalty and affection.

She dedicated a child's book, *Zickle's Luck* (1938), to Guy French Ellett, II, and to his grandfather, Guy French Ellett, using their photographs for the frontispiece.

Following Virginia 700 to the Lake, one may see on a slope of the foothills on the right side of the road a small white church, its sim-

Sherry Memorial Christian Church

ple beauty bespeaking the quiet charm of a bygone era. Lewis F. Porterfield gave the land for the church site and much of the money required for its building in memory of his son, James Sheridan Porterfield, who died in a tragic accident in 1902. Sherry Memorial Christian Church was built in 1903. It is the center of an isolated community which extends along the foot of the mountain.

Long ago excursions were made to the Lake by people on horseback carrying picnic lunches. The natural wonder still attracts them. The clear water is fine for swimming and boating, and despite heat and humidity in the valleys below the breeze which dimples the Lake is cool and invigorating.

Bald Knob, highest peak in the vicinity at 4,000 feet, offers a panoramic display of blue mountains and hills, and of snug homes in small valleys. At the foot of Bald Knob, the historic James has a beginning in the source of John's Creek.

Five miles from the Lake are the Cascades on Little Stoney Creek. When the summer is dry, the water is low and the flow over the falls is not great but viewed during a wet season, the Cascades falling in a pristine mist are a sight to behold—a 90-foot drop to the pool below. Behind the Cascades between the rocks and the falling water is a path which courageous persons like to walk.

The Cascades now are privately owned—a part of the estate of the late Mr. John B. Laing who had purchased the entire tract of land originally owned by the Mountain Lake Land Company. They are worth extra time and trouble to see.

Among colorful events formerly held at the Lake, the tournaments were the most popular. They were organized with care and riders from miles around came to participate. An aura of glamour, and the romantic charm of an earlier age seemed cast over participants and onlookers alike.

The meadow near the Lake which was used for the tourney was several hundred yards long and about as wide. It was mowed free of grass and weeds. Ropes extended along the sides to provide a clear track.

Substantial poles were set up firmly in the ground. An arm extended from each pole, and from this arm was suspended a ring larger than a silver dollar. Three poles were spaced at regular intervals. To put a lance through the ring approaching it on a walking horse was difficult—to take it from a galloping horse was an admirable feat indeed.

Riding in the tournament required a good seat, a steady arm and hand, and a keen eye. Those who could take the rings on the lance had been practicing on a list of their own in a father's mountain meadow or creek bottom.

Entering the joust, the rider's name was announced by a herald, a kind of master-of-ceremonies. The rider pounded down the track, lance atilt. The herald repeated the rider's name after each tilt as he cantered back, and the crowd was told whether he had taken a ring or missed. Every rider was somebody's favorite and loudly cheered.

Each had three trials; the one capturing the most rings won the tourney, a prize—and could choose a queen.

Almost every season during Porterfield's management a jousting tournament was held in a mountain meadow near the Lake. A grand ball was held that night at which time the winner of the tournament crowned his chosen queen of beauty—and dancing lasted till a late hour.

Porterfield remembers with nostalgia the tournaments, the dances, and the quiet times of talk and good fellowship about the open fires and on the wide verandahs. He remembers the animals and plants found there—the wild turkeys in the woods near the Lake, and the deer that came to drink warily in the early morning mist. Deer and turkeys are still plentiful, and occasionally a bear is seen.

The University of Virginia established a biological station at the Lake in 1930. At an altitude of 4,000 feet, studies are made of plant life in its natural habitat.

Plants common to the entire eastern part of the United States can be found on the mountains there. Some of the loveliest ones belong to the heath family.

The trailing arbutus is seldom seen in bloom by student or guest

as it is ready to bloom in early March. The ground may still be snow-covered, the winds high and cold in the bare trees, when its tiny, fragrant pink blossoms open amid dry-winter-worn leaves. Once seen, it is not easily forgotten.

The bridal paths and hiking trails at the Lake may lead through thickets of mountain laurel white with bloom. Indians are said to have used the young green leaves of this poisonous shrub to concoct a suicidal drink.

Both pink and flame azaleas can be seen. Their bright beauty vies with the rhododendrons. Honey made from these flowers and the laurel bloom is poisonous.

Wintergreen, known as mountain teaberry, hugs the ground. In it is no bold beauty . . . no fatal poison. Only modest looks and general usefulness . . . from its leaves a tea and a remedy for rheumatism are made. Its edible red berries delight the children, and feed hungry little birds.

Galax, not a heath but a small evergreen plant, grows abundantly about the Lake. The shape of its leaf has given it another name, Colt's-Foot. In the summer, it has white spikes of delicate wand-like beauty. In the fall, its green leaves turn to variegated colors, rose, and wine, and maroon.

Mountain people near the Lake used to gather the leaves in bunches of 100, and sell them for needed cash. They are used in floral arrangements. Women picked them in winter for bouquets, shaking the snow from their crisp freshness.

Ginseng, perhaps the most valuable herb of the mountains, can still be found. Years ago, it grew on the slopes of the mountain ravines. Its five leaves and scarlet berries were attractive, but the roots were worth money, being valued highly in China for their curative powers.

Years ago mountain people gathered the roots of the "sang," which is scarce now. In a known instance, the dug roots sold have helped to finance a boy's college education.

Mountain Lake is in a land of legend and tradition. From Virginia 700, one may look over the Sinking Creek Valley and almost see the New. Two miles away, as the crow flies, is Gap Mountain.

Halting his Bluecoats on the upward climb of the mountain road on a May morning in 1864, General George Crook, looking down on Hoge's beautiful plantation in the valley below, is said to have fired cannon . . . perhaps in swaggering defiance. Had he not just escaped from the Gap . . . and was he not well on his way to join the Union Army in West Virginia?

Ten miles beyond the Gap, Mary Draper Ingles was captured by the Shawnees in 1755, at the Massacre of Draper's Meadows, now

Blacksburg.

New River is near. Its discovery is an interesting story.

On September 13, 1671, after having traveled "due west" over the mountains from Fort Henry now Petersburg, Colonel Abraham Wood's party, guided by Perecute, an Appomattox Indian, discovered a small stream, Strouble's Creek, near present Blacksburg in Montgomery County. Following it, they came upon the river near the site of today's Radford Ordnance Works. Thomas Batts and Robert Fallam, leaders of the party, were fascinated by this river flowing westward. All the rivers they knew flowed east! This different river was to have newness commemorated in its later name—the New. They pursued its course to present Narrows in Giles County.

The explorers wished to go farther but anxieties beset them. Perecute was ill; Thomas Wood, a member of the party who had started out with them from Fort Henry, and perhaps a relative of Colonel Wood, had been left earlier in the trip at a village of the Hanathaskies, ill with flux; supplies were low and game was scarce.

On September 17, 1671, near present Lurich, members of the party cut initials on the trees, CR for Charles II, King of England, claiming the country that the river drained in his name; WB for William Berkeley, then Governor of Virginia; AW for Abraham Wood, who had sent out the party; and P for Perecute, who was so impressed that he said he would learn "*Englishman.*"

This discovery and exploration of Wood's River, later called New, gave the English a strong claim on the Ohio Valley which they suc-

Among the last in Virginia.

cessfully held against the French and Indians less than a hundred years later.

The Lake reflects the beauty of the changing seasons. Autumn flings over the mountains a rich robe of color. Frost is thick underfoot. It traces flowers in delicate design on the windows of the empty hotel. Blown leaves drift upon the Lake like a flotilla of tiny boats. Geese put down on their way south. The guests are gone.

Winter slips across the Alleghanies with snow-sandaled feet, bringing chill and loneliness to the Lake. Deciduous trees are bare, but dark evergreens march, sentinel-like, to the very brink as though to guard its waters.

The peepers are loud along the creeks as spring comes, heralded by bird-song and the delicate green of new leaves. Within the leaves' light embrace, redbud and dogwood lavishly bloom.

Summer brings boats upon the water, and gay voices calling. At the lower end near the boathouse, rhododendrons grow close to the Lake. Their purple blossoms and oval green leaves are reflected in the clear water. Tourists and guests have come.

The present hotel was built in 1938 . . . a handsome structure of native stone. Mrs. Mary Northern, daughter of the late owner, William Lewis Moody, is in charge.

With old traditions, a modern hotel, and many opportunities for relaxation and play in a salubrious climate, Mountain Lake continues to attract the public.

Regardless of argument and theory as to formation, all agree that it is a lovely natural wonder.

Cupped in living green, and gleaming like crystal in candlelight, Mountain Lake enchants today's tourist, student, and pleasure-seeker, as it did yesterday's Indian, scout, and pioneer.

Historic Preservation - - A Challenge To Virginians

By Tony P. Wrenn

Not too long ago a folk song entitled "Where Have All the Flowers Gone," became fairly popular. With the change of one word, this song might well become the state song of urban and rural Virginia. "Where have all the landmarks gone, long time passing, where have all the landmarks gone, long time ago."

Some time after that, a California lady penned a song one night on the way to a concert. Though her lament was prompted by the Southern California countryside through which she passed, it could well apply to Virginia. "Little boxes on the hillside, little boxes made of ticky-tacky, little boxes on the hillside, little boxes in a row. There's a red one, and a white one, and a pink one, and a yellow one, and they're made out of ticky-tacky and they all look just the same."

Even Petula Clark with her invitation to come "downtown" can't erase the fact that the downtown, or the countryside either for that matter, is no longer what it was. I heard on the car radio recently, a song which may answer for all time the question "Where is Grandma's house," for the song was titled "This ole house has got to go, there's a freeway coming through."

The change will be defended. Many will tell you that nothing can stand in the way of progress, and progress means the destruction of a community for a freeway; it means the denuding of hundreds of acres of good Virginia farm soil and natural cover for a housing development; it means the destruction of a significant house for a gasoline filling station; it means the widening of a street with the attendant uprooting of trees and ever present increase in weight and size of overhead telephone cables and electrical wires.

Or does it? In 1854, Henry David Thoreau stood on the sidelines at Walden and wondered why "One generation abandons the enterprises of another like stranded vessels?"

A century later, Carl Sandburg pondered the question of growth and progress also, and came up with a prediction: "If America forgets where she came from, if the people lose sight of what brought them along, then will begin the dissolution."

There was a vision and a view of history which was always with

This is the address given by Mr. Wrenn before the annual dinner of this Society at Hotel Roanoke on June 17, 1966. *The author is an archivist with the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington.*

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, a young American who dared to dream aloud: At Amherst College in 1962, his dreams were transmitted through these words: "I look forward to an America which will not be afraid of grace and beauty, which will protect the beauty of our natural environment, which will preserve the great old American houses and squares and parks of our national past, and which will build handsome and balanced cities for our future."

In July, 1963, while preparing a foreword for his book *The Quiet Crisis,* Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall remembered and pondered: "One week last fall, two events came to my attention which seemed to sum up the plight of modern man: the first was a press report which indicated that T. S. Eliot, the poet, was a victim of London's latest 'killer fog' and lay gravely ill; the second was a call from a preservation-minded citizen of New Hampshire who informed me that Robert Frost's old farm—fixed for all time in memory by the poem 'West-running Brook'—was now an auto junk yard.

"The coincidence of these two events raised questions in my mind: Is a society a success if it creates conditions that impair its finest minds and make a wasteland of its finest landscapes? What does material abundance avail if we create an environment in which man's highest and most specifically human attributes cannot be fulfilled?

"Each generation has its own rendezvous with the land, for despite our fee titles and claims of ownership, we are all brief tenants on this planet. By choice, or by default, we will carve out a land legacy for our heirs. We can misuse the land and diminish the usefulness of resources, or we can create a world in which physical affluence and affluence of the spirit go hand in hand.

"History tells us that earlier civilizations have declined because they did not learn to live in harmony with the land. Our successes in space and our triumphs of technology hold a hidden danger: as modern man increasingly arrogates to himself dominion over the physical environment, there is the risk that his false pride will cause him to take the resources of the earth for granted—and to lose all reverence for the land.

"America today stands poised on a pinnacle of wealth and power, yet we live in a land of vanishing beauty, of increasing ugliness, of shrinking open space, and of an overall environment that is diminished daily by pollution and noise and blight."

Perhaps I have already stated the challenge of historic preservation to Virginians. It is a challenge to walk—and while walking, to touch and feel history. It is a challenge to ride or drive—and while doing so to see and to enjoy history. It is a challenge to read, to research, to study, and while so engaged, to understand what you have read.

And, as had been indicated, no history, no beauty, is really real unless we can touch it and feel it and see. For history really is the stuff of other men's lives, and this stuff is inalienably woven into the places they lived, and the paths they walked, and the scenes they loved.

Except to an engineer or a mathematician, the most beautiful drawing of a suspension bridge has only partial meaning. But drive across the Mackinac Island bridge, or the Golden Gate Bridge, or the Verrazano Narrows, and suddenly the theory involved and the very ink of the drawing is transformed into steel beauty which can be used, and touched, and seen in three dimensions.

This is the stuff of history. It is that which can be seen and touched and lived through that completes the picture of history. And, this is the crisis of historic preservation. How can we know where we are going, unless we know where we came from? And how can we know where we came from unless we can see, and feel and use our heritage from the past. Someone has said that there can be no true architectural museum, except in existing buildings. No drawing or photograph of a building can be walked around meaningfully. It is necessary to look up at the building itself and judge its height. The building itself is necessary to stroll through and pace its depth; the building itself is necessary to touch and savour its texture; to look at and enjoy its color, to see the interplay of sun and shadow upon. A drawing will not provide a place for a sofa to sit upon or a bed to lie upon, a table to eat upon, or a stove to cook upon. And so it is with history, as well as architecture, for the word upon a printed page, and the painting hanging on the wall, give less than a complete picture.

Life does not stop, yet there is no continuity in the community which destroys its past for a shoddy present. It is the interplay of styles from colonial to contemporary which gives most communities their value. It is the sterility and sameness which depresses the spirit in the typical development. It is sad that too often the man who appreciates most the quiet tree lined street, is the man living in a community that no longer has any. It is sad that too often we appreciate the fine old Georgian house on the corner only after it has been replaced by a parking lot. It is sad that too often we appreciate the trees and the wildflowers and streams of the meadow only after they have been covered with ribbons of concrete.

Man has the capability of creating something better than that which he destroys. It should be quite clear that replacement quality is one of the factors that ought always to be considered in any decision to destroy a building. It is important to consider, before we bulldoze a wooded lot, whether or not the six-foot maple sapling we plant before the house we intend to build can really replace in beauty and

shade the 50 foot giant we destroy. It must be obvious to you, as it is to me, that we have not learned sufficiently to consider the quality of the replacement and weigh it against the quality of what we intend to demolish. There is irony in this when we realize that some credit is due the producers and promoters of ugliness in our architecture and development, for they have done much to heighten our respect for sufficient open space to match our humanness with our natural surroundings, and to appreciate the beauty of earlier days.

In 1964, Cornelius Ripley Sherman wrote a letter to the editor of the San Francisco *Chronicle* about this beautiful America. He suggested paraphrasing *"My Country 'Tis of Thee"* in this manner:

My Country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of Ways so Free,
Speed be the King!
Land bulldozed far and wide,
Cuts where the trees have died,
From every mountainside,
Let freeways spring!

Fill every blue lagoon,
Kill off egret and loon,
Concrete be blest!
What though this soon may be,
All that there is to see,
We'll see it doing ninety-three,
Proving we've progressed!

The Virginia Outdoor Recreation Resources Commission Report —*Virginia's Common Wealth* carries these words: "Virginia's land and waters have abundantly nourished its citizens, in body and spirit, for more than three centuries. To neglect these resources—to abandon their conservation—to let heedless exploitation consume them or remove them from reach of the great majority of your citizens—is to sell your birthright for a mess of pottage. Once sold, it cannot be recoveved. Virginia's resources, abundant as they are, are neither inexhaustible nor indestructible."

Today a sharp change is taking place. The face of Virginia is taking on a new character as it becomes increasingly urbanized and industrialized in its commitment to progress. This progress is manifested by population growth and concentration, by increased income, by more cars and better roads, and by more leisure time.

But these forces, which increase the demands for recreation are also threatening the very resources which are basic—our brooks and woods, our farms and shorelines.

The problem is that the average person—and especially the city

dweller—is having a harder and harder time finding his natural heritage.

It is being marred or demolished.

It is being walled off with "no trespassing" signs.

It is being consumed by unplanned urban sprawl.

But such devastation is not an inevitable result of growth and progress. It is inefficiency. There is plenty of room in Virginia for both development and your natural and man-made heritage. The key is effective use of the land.

Thus we do not have to choose between material progress and an agreeable environment. We must have both. But we can have both only if we decide now the kind of environment we want . . . and shape our programs to bring it about. The need for action is urgent.

I believe, as do the many thousands associated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, that our historical and architectural heritage of buildings and communities is a natural resource, to be tended and cared for in the same manner that we tend and care for our other natural resources. We believe also that conservation and preservation go hand in hand, for you cannot preserve anything without conserving something at the same time. Buildings and neighborhoods do not exist in a vacuum. They exist as a part of their surroundings, and the surroundings must be a subject for conservation, or the preservation of the structure or neighborhood will not have been successful.

The National Trust has accepted a challenge, just as has the Roanoke Historical Society, to help keep a beautiful and liveable America, but neither can fulfill the challenge without your aid.

Note From The Past President

In the summer of 1966, the Roanoke Historical Society has 312 members, an interest in several projects and a new president, Mrs. English Showalter. She was elected at the annual meeting on June 17.

A leader in organizations, Mrs. Showalter is a member of the VPI and Community Hospital boards and past president of Roanoke Fine Arts Center and Hollins College Alumnae Association. One of her goals is to expand the participation of our membership in local historical activities. Enrollment of others in Roanoke Valley who share our interests will be a part of this program.

Your retiring president is grateful for your support over the past three years. I believe many of us have learned something of local and regional history and have had a good time through our tours, meetings and the *Journal*. This will continue, I am sure.

A fine job of restoration is under way at our Botetourt museum site near the courthouse in Fincastle. Within a very few months, our Botetourt friends should be collecting and displaying objects from their past. Our museum in Salem recently has received maps and books, and we trust that it will continue to grow.

Reproductions of an excellent historical map of Botetourt County will be available soon for anyone interested in the colorful beginnings of our neighboring county. The map, prepared by J. R. Hildebrand, leading Roanoke Valley historical researcher and cartographer, will be sold for a minimal amount, probably $1.

At least two of our members have published historical works in recent months. Dr. George Green Shackelford of the Virginia Tech History Department is the editor of Collected Papers of the Monticello Association, from the Princeton University Press. Hoskins M. Sclater, Roanoke lawyer, compiled a history of the first 75 years of Second Presbyterian Church for its anniversary observance.

Thank you for your interest and cooperation. Let us continue to strive to keep the past alive as we move into the future.

GEORGE KEGLEY

In Memoriam

Henry L. Taylor
George Scott Shackelford, Jr.
Fielding L. Logan
Mrs. Walter Macdowell
James J. Izard, *director*
Dr. A. P. Jones
Mrs. Storer P. Ware, Jr.