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ROANOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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GEORGE KEGLEY

Editor of the JOURNAL

CONTENTS

Collectors' Items Span Four Centuries by Edmund P. Goodwin	1
Saving Virginia's Treasures by Edward P. Alexander	8
Edward William Johnston and Roanoke Female Seminary by Margaret P. Scott and Rachel Wilson	15
Is There an Older Roanoker?	26
Five Rivers Flow West by Goodridge Wilson	27
Longwood Was Salem's Castle	34
Roanoke's Cows in 1898	35

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Collectors' Items

Span Four Centuries

By EDMUND P. GOODWIN

Donors have been exceedingly generous in their contributions to the Roanoke Historical Society in recent months.

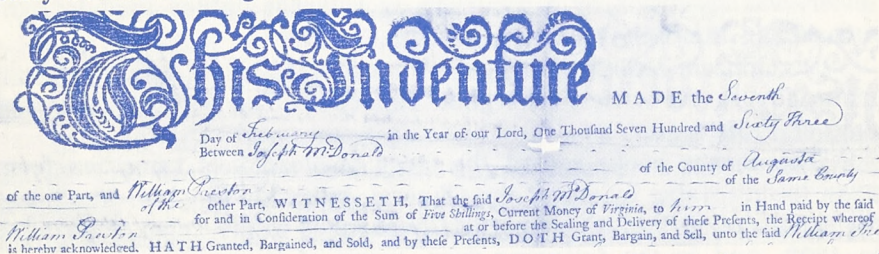
Into the society's collection have come many old letters and papers dating from the mid-1700s, three fine crossbows from the 16th century and a variety of guns, journals and ledger books from early Virginia, three 1883 Roanoke census books, and a set of 19th century surgeon's instruments.

Dr. Mason Robertson of Savannah, Ga., has given a magnificent collection of approximately 1,000 letters and documents written by or to the Breckenridge family of Botetourt County. His mother was a Preston and his grandmother a member of the Breckenridge family.

The earliest paper in what has been designated as the Breckenridge Collection is dated 1755 and most of the letters were written before 1875. The Breckenridge letters and those of the allied families of Watts, Gilmer, Woodville and Preston greatly enrich the history of Southwest Virginia.

Through the years the Breckenridges have been one of the most prominent families in this area. When Botetourt was formed in 1770, Robert Breckenridge was named one of the original justices and the records show the organizational meeting of the county was held at his home.

Names of men who contributed to the defense and development of the frontier communities appear frequently in the letters. Among them were Col. William Preston, Col. James Patton, Col. James Buchanan, Gen. Edward Watts, Thomas Lewis, Nathaniel Burwell, Edmund Pendleton and Lord Dunmore. There are references to politics, wars, inflation and education, as well as day-by-day accounts of the development of early Southwest Virginia.



William Preston paid Joseph McDonald five shillings for a tract of 142 acres on Tinker Creek in the County of Augusta (now Botetourt) on Feb. 7, 1763, according to an indenture (above) in the Breckenridge Collection.

Cataloguing a collection of this size is a long and tedious task, With the advice and help of Dr. James I. Robertson Jr., of the Virginia Tech History Department, a chronological method of filing has been adopted and completed to a substantial degree. The material must be properly protected from damage in handling and then cross referencing will begin. Volunteers for this work are sorely needed.

The collection, because of its continuous material, will be of inestimable value to historians in the development of many unknown facets of history. However, other letters and documents of the Breckenridges and allied families are known to be in existence today.

Many members of these families still live in this general area and it is highly probable that they have letters and documents which would add materially to the collection. The society urgently requests that they be donated. But if the owners wish to keep the originals, the society would like to borrow them for duplication. Gifts or loans will provide a material part in making a great collection ever greater.

Old weapons are a fascinating link with the past as is shown by an outstanding collection given by Mrs. S. H. McVitty.

She has contributed three crossbows traced to the 1500s, which are in excellent condition. Before the satisfactory development of firearms as weapons, the short bow, the crossbow and long bow were used by the English and European armies. Of the three received by the society, two are French and the third is Swiss. Stones were the ammunition for these bows. So deadly was the crossbow that an early statute of King Henry VIII condemned it as being evil.

Also in the collection are 11 pistols and revolvers made in many countries from the early 18th century on and six interesting rifles from different periods. To look at a blunderbuss with an 11-inch barrel or a flintlock pistol inlaid with silver is to conjure a picture of the men who fired them generations ago. Two of the rifles of Pennsylvania or Kentucky design could have been carried through the valley to the Wilderness Road in the 18th century.

A Miquelette lock from a rampart gun of Spanish origin apparently dates from around 1600. A smaller device, first described as a powder tester, was identified by a gunsmith as a tinder lighter used to light a candle in the early 1800s.

In addition, Mrs. McVitty gave a number of books which will add materially to the society's Virginia collection. The earliest bears the date of 1752.

The census books record the story of Roanoke's transition from town to city status by act of the General Assembly in 1884. The name of the village of Big Lick was officially changed to the Town of Roanoke in 1882. And in the following year, many of its progressive citizens decided that the population had increased to 5,000 and the burgeoning

town should become a city. To make this determination, state law required that a census be taken to show the names and addresses of all citizens.

The three original census books, from the estate of Mrs. Alma Hart Keyser, a pioneer Roanoker, show the names and addresses of the city's first residents which contributes greatly to the early history of Roanoke.

Mrs. Keyser's estate, through her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Mamie Keyser of Lynchburg, also gave a souvenir program of Roanoke's decennial celebration held on June 19, 1892.

An interesting set of surgical instruments, used by Dr. Arthur Zirkle Koiner in the first years of Roanoke, has been given by Judge Oscar Ogburn Efird of Winston-Salem, N.C. His wife, Mrs. Frances Katrina Susan Koiner Efird, the only child of Dr. Koiner, died in 1967.

Dr. Koiner was surgeon for the Norfolk and Western Railway and co-owner of a drugstore at the corner of Salem Avenue and Commerce (Second) Street, S.W. He formed a partnership with Dr. Joseph A. Gale and practiced medicine in Roanoke for about 12 years until his death, after a short illness, on March 22, 1893.

Born in Augusta County in 1855, he graduated from Roanoke College and in medicine at the University of Virginia and New York University. After study in Vienna, he taught at what was then Richmond Medical College and practiced in Richmond before coming to Big Lick about 1880.

The instruments, made by Weiss of London, are stored in a handsome wooden case with the name, "Dr. Maddux," engraved on the cover. Dr. Hugh Trout, Roanoke surgeon, said he does not recall having seen 90-year-old instruments in such excellent condition. "The set is almost complete, the knives sharp and none of the instruments have been allowed to rust," Dr. Trout said.

The instruments illustrate how surgery has changed since 1880, he added. However, the same type of amputation still is performed, the saws are not too different and many of the hooks and retractors could be used today, he said.

Reminders of everyday life as much as two centuries ago come from a ledger and other old Read family books given by Mrs. St. Julian Openheimer of Richmond, the former Emma Read of Monterey in Roanoke County.

In 1846, Mrs. Betsy Read and her two sons, David and Thomas, moved west from Henrico County and purchased 1,155 acres from William M. Peyton for \$25,000. The land adjoined the Fincastle road where it forded Tinker Creek. Among their possessions was a ledger book originally kept by Clement Read and later by his son, Thomas Read, the grandfather of David and Thomas.

The first entry was in 1763 and the ledger continues through 1807. As in ledgers of that period, a vast store of information is recorded on such subjects as genealogy, cost of goods and services, slaves and recipes.

Geographically, the ledger covers eight counties in the southeastern part of Virginia. Many references are made to men who contributed to the development of the colony and later the state. Some of them are Paul Carrington, Edmund Pendleton, Peyton Randolph, Francis Nash, William Watts and Nathaniel Terry.

Among other books given by Mrs. Oppenheimer was one printed in 1717 and two music books of Priscilla Read dated at Jamestown, 1810 and Petersburg, 1822. This Jamestown is believed to have been a plantation in Prince Edward County.

Still another valued acquisition, a framed set of medals bestowed on unknown heroes in six wars, came from the Roanoke Chapter of United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Presented by Mrs. L. E. Foley, UDC chapter president and a member of the Society, the Crosses of Military Service are given to certain Confederate veterans and their lineal descendants. They represent service in the Civil War, the Philippine Insurrection, World Wars I and II, the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Old Browne Was Hung

This brief eyewitness account of the hanging of John Brown at Charlestown, W. Va. comes from the Breckenridge papers. Note the role played by Edmund Ruffin, the secessionist leader who fired one of the first shots at Fort Sumter.

Charlestown, December 4th, 1859

Dear Mother,

I have at last found time and the means of writing you a few lines to let you know that I am well. We have been here just a week and will probably leave next Tuesday. Old Browne was hung on the day appointed and every thing went off quietly. I don't suppose there is an Abolitionist in fifty miles of this place. I never knew what a soldier's life was until I took this trip. We are on guard every other night and are obliged to set up all the time. Uncle William has been here since last Monday. No citizens were allowed to go near the gallows on the day of execution so Uncle William borrowed my overcoat and a sword from somebody and went in Col. Smith's staff. Old Edmon Ruffin was so anxious to see Browne hung that he borrowed cadet clothes, shouldered a musket and marched with our company to the gallows. As I am very badly situated for writing I will have to put it off until I get back to the Institute. Give my love to all at home.

Your Aff Son

Cary Breckenridge

Taxable Property of Botetourt

Inside the cover of a Breckenridge journal of the 1838-1865 period was the following listing of taxable property in Botetourt County in 1852.

Mr. C. L. Alderson, one of the Commissioners of the Revenue for this county has furnished us with the following exhibit, giving a full statement of the various species of taxable property in Botetourt County, for the year 1852. Taxpayers will do well to preserve this form as it will enable them to make out their list for the Commission in future, with little or no trouble.

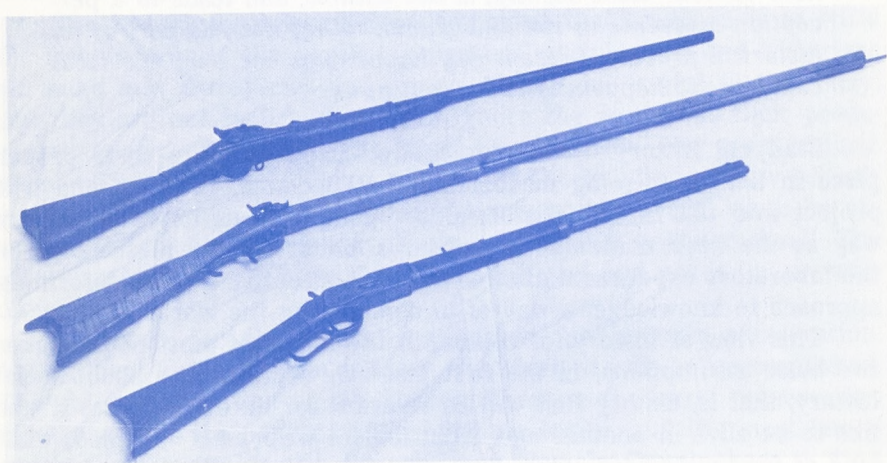
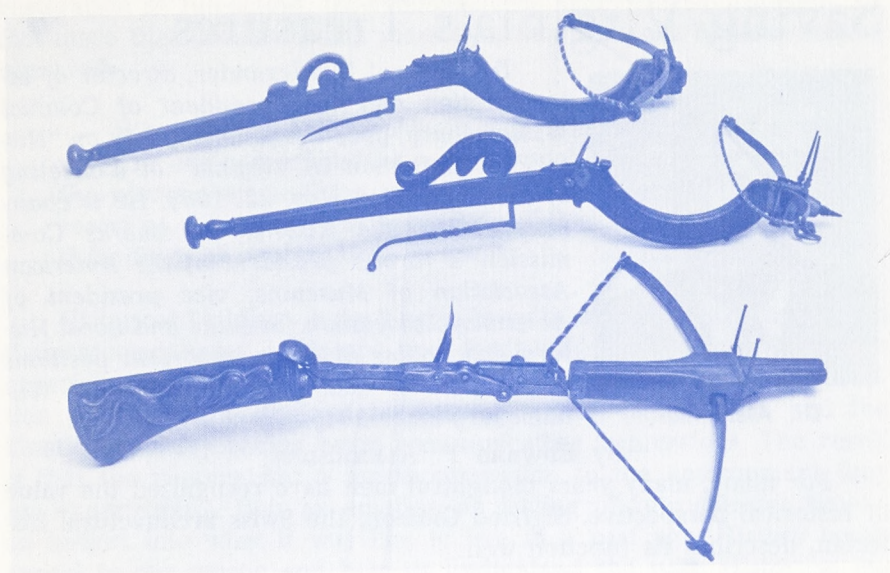
NO.	Value	Tax on Value	Total Tax
1765 White males, at 36 cents			\$ 634.68
67 Male free negroes, at 100 cents			67.00
1750 Slaves, at 54 cents			945.00
3248 Horses, mules, &c.	\$169,734	\$ 305.51	
27217 Cattle, sheep and hogs	98,338	177.00	
76 Pleasure carriages	9,375	16.87	
4 Stage coaches	480	86	
16 Jersey kagons	1,095	1.97	
7 Carryalls	375	67	
65 Buggies	3,918	7.05	
122 Gold watches	7,983	14.36	
183 Silver or other metallic watches	2,628	4.73	
512 Metallic clocks	3,414	6.14	
333 Other clocks	1,222	2.19	
27 Pianos and harps	4,465	8.03	
Plate	5,401	9.72	
Household and kitchen furniture	122,415	220.34	
Other articles of personal property, &c.	37,228	67.01	
Solvent bonds	342,331	598.19	
Capital invested in manufacturing business	8,890	16.00	
Interest or profits, \$2,895 at 3 per cent			86.85
Income			
Toll-bridges, \$2,800 at 3 per cent			24.00
Value and tax thereon at 18 cents	809,272	1,456.68	
Exemptions	114,577	206.23	
	\$694,695	\$1,250.45	
Aggregate tax on values			\$1,250.45
TOTAL			\$3,068.59
Amount of Tax on Land			\$3,996.03
Total amount of Revenue in the County			\$7,064.62

Edm^d. Pendleton Col^o: William Preston
 1762.
 in
 Augustay

To the Surveyor
 of Fincastle County } Given under my hand and seal
 at Williamsburg the 10th Feb^r 1774
 DUNMORE

At a Committee held for Fincastle County at the House of Mr
 James M^c Gavock on Wednesday 6th September 1775.
 It appearing to the Committee, that on the 2^d Day of May
 last Col^o W^m Preston Surveyor of this County had received Orders
 from Lord Dunmore to survey lands agreeable to a Proclam-
 ation that had been issued by him, directing among other
 things the said lands should be sold at Public Auction for
 the highest Price that could be had, for the use of their Majesty

When lawyer-statesman Edmund Pendleton wrote from Williamsburg to Col. William Preston at Greenfield on Dec. 14, 1762 he addressed a business letter found in the Breckenridge papers as shown at top of page. At the end, Pendleton wrote, "I would give you a history of our legislative proceedings but am in a great hurry as I leave for home tomorrow morning." Lord Dunmore, last of the Crown governors, certified that Thomas Gist, representative of Christopher Gist, was entitled to 6,000 acres in Fincastle County "or on any of the Western waters if he can lay it on any vacant land." Dunmore's signature (above) was at Williamsburg, Feb. 10, 1774. The Revolution had started in New England when the Fincastle County Committee met at the home of James McGavock on Sept. 6, 1775 (excerpt from minutes above). After hearing that Dunmore had ordered land auctioned for the king's use, the committee rebelled and moved that an order be entered "requiring that no lands be surveyed agreeable to the said instructions."



Three fine crossbows (top), donated to the Society by Mrs. S. H. McVitty, may have been used in European wars 400 years ago. A gunsmith said the upper two are French and the lower is Swiss. All three were used to fire stones, he said. The rifles (from the top) are a Springfield 1870, a Pennsylvania style piece and an 1873 Winchester.

(See page 36 for more photographs of articles recently donated to the Society.)

Saving Virginia's Treasures



Dr. Alexander

Dr. Edward P. Alexander, director of interpretation and vice president of Colonial Williamsburg, gave the following talk on "Historic Preservation in Virginia" at a meeting of the Society on Nov. 22, 1968. He is chairman of Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, a former president of the American Association of Museums, vice president of American Association for State and Local History and holder of other important positions in the field of history. He has been at Williamsburg since 1946.

By EDWARD P. ALEXANDER

For many, many years thoughtful men have recognized the value of historical perspective. Sigfried Gideon, the Swiss architectural historian, describes its function well:

To plan we must know what has gone on in the past and feel what is to come in the future. Living from day to day and hour to hour lacks dignity, is not natural, and leads to a perception of events as isolated points, rather than as part of an historical process. Present day happenings are only the most conspicuous happenings in a continuum.

Studying history, then, puts today's happenings in their proper place in living, on-going movements that began in the past and will project into the future. Historical perspective is as important in its way as the keen contemporary observation of the social scientist or the laboratory experimentation of the pure scientist. It is an informing approach to knowledge, a way of understanding the world about us.

This view of history, of course, in the minds of most of us makes two basic assumptions. In the first place we are thinking about social history, that is, history that will be relevant for all of us—what it was like to be alive in another age, what houses we'd have occupied, what kind of food we'd have eaten, how we'd have made a living, our sports and amusements, our education and religion, and a host of other concerns of everyday life. We are not much interested in lists of kings or battles, elections or significant dates. In the second place, we are thinking about authentic history—not romantic fairy tales of cavalier ancestors with plumed hats, not moonlight and honeysuckle, not big-columned buildings and lost causes. We want the hard facts, the homely details; we beg the historian "to tell it like it was."

This kind of living history is stimulated by the preservation or

restoration of full-scaled, three-dimensional historical environment. In fact more than two thousand years ago, that wise old Roman, Cicero, observed:

Whether it is a natural instinct or a mere illusion, I can't say, but one's emotions are more strongly aroused by seeing the places that tradition records to have been the favourite resort of men of note in former days, than by hearing about their deeds or reading their writings.

Historical buildings have length, breadth, and thickness, and so do their accompanying landscape and furnishings. When human beings experience this realistic historical environment, their sensory perception goes to work—their sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and the kinetic (muscle) senses begin communicating impressions. The result is that the viewers add a fourth dimension to the environment they are experiencing. It is an emotion or feeling of retrogressive time—an insight into what it was like to live in a past age. History books appeal to our reason and help us understand the past. Historical environment arouses our emotions and creates historical mood that lets us feel almost as if we were there. We thus add our own fourth dimension to history.

The historical approach does not mean that tradition is to stifle the imagination of the present. Scientists, sociologists, and historians all make new discoveries and create adaptations useful to their day. But they are not foolish enough to ignore the accretions their predecessors have contributed to the fabric of civilization. Nor must historic sites and buildings be allowed to prevent the building of new schools or useful highways. Thomas Jefferson was entirely right when he observed: "The earth belongs always to the living generation." The ideal compromise will keep the best of the past and use it for present-day needs.

So much for the underlying reason for historic preservation. Let us now look at some methods by which it can be accomplished. The chief contribution of the United States to the early preservation movement was the concept of the historic house, and the most famed historic house was Mount Vernon. Ann Pamela Cunningham, a frail little woman from South Carolina, saved Washington's plantation home after the Federal Government and the Commonwealth of Virginia had failed. Miss Cunningham formed the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, raised \$200,000 to buy the plantation, and in 1860 opened it to the public as a historic house museum.

When Miss Cunningham retired as regent of the Ladies' Association in 1874, she made a Farewell Address, as her great hero had done before her.



(photo courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association)

Miss Ann Pamela Cunningham, the South Carolina lady who saved Mount Vernon.

Ladies, she said, the home of Washington is in your charge—see to it that you keep it the home of Washington . . . Those who go to the home in which he lived and died wish to see in what he lived and died. Let one spot in this grand country of ours be saved from change.

Miss Cunningham's chief object then was historical—to keep Washington's plantation home unchanged so that visitors could understand and appreciate it. Since her day, American preservationists have considerably broadened their objectives. William Sumner Appleton, founder of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities in 1907, saved more than 50 buildings during his career. He emphasized the architectural or aesthetic values of structures and frequently preserved those that had little historical interest but were instead the work of master architects or important architectural type specimens. He also played down the museum aspect of historic houses and often continued them in residential use or converted them into headquarters for clubs, offices for professional men, restaurants or tea rooms, or stores or antique shops. Such adaptive uses needed to be consonant with the preservation of the structure, but they often gave landmarks an economic viability far greater than they could obtain as house museums.

In 1926 Colonial Williamsburg broadened the historic house concept by preserving and restoring the major portion of an entire town, and since that day many historical villages have appeared in this country, either as actual on-site preservation projects or as outdoor museums with authentic buildings moved to a convenient plot and provided

with suitable landscape and furnishings. These historic villages present a larger and more varied slice of history than single houses can do.

A different application of this idea has been the historic district, a part of a living city given over chiefly to residential and adaptive uses. The first of these in the United States were the bay area of Charleston in 1932 and the Vieux Caree of New Orleans soon afterwards. The historic district often succeeds in saving houses that would not survive individually under ordinary historical or architectural criteria. The fact that they add atmosphere to the historic district assures their preservation; this is a case where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Today there are more than 80 historic districts in this country, usually protected by careful zoning acts and supervised by boards of architectural review. We have several of them in Virginia, including Alexandria, Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, Leesburg, Richmond, and Williamsburg. In 1954 the United States Supreme Court in *Berman v. Parker* upheld the validity of such architectural controls and declared "it is within the power of the legislature to determine that a community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clear, well balanced as well as carefully patrolled."

Two other movements have advanced historic preservation on a national scale. In 1935 the National Park Service began "to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States." Today the Park Service supervises 96 natural or recreation areas and 145 historical sites. In 1949 Congress chartered the National Trust for Historic Preservation which now enrolls 16,000 members and advises and coordinates preservation efforts throughout the private sector.

To summarize the how of historic preservation then:

Historic house and historic village museums number about 2,000 and preserve structures of historic significance and architectural beauty. They attract heavy visitation by tourists throughout the nation, and these tourists help support the preservation movement, directly through admission fees and the like and indirectly through expenditures for lodging, meals, transportation, and incidentals. In fact, tourism has become big business in many states and foreign countries; it gives increasing support to historic preservation.

Some 80 historic districts within America cities emphasize the values of historical environment through residential and adaptive uses. They add historical interest and architectural beauty to the city-scape, and they also give citizens an important feeling of pride. As sociologists and social psychologists have pointed out, individuals need to identify with the society in which they live, and well-planned cities provide their

residents with civic pride and thus help avoid feelings of futility and boredom that can lead to delinquency, crime, and riots. Historic districts, then, are closely linked with good city planning.

Together these varied approaches have created a great panorama of historic sites, buildings, and objects across the land that tell the social and architectural history of the United States from Jamestown and Plymouth down through the skyscraper and Frank Lloyd Wright. This history is open to everyone, and more and more American families are exploring it as travel becomes easier and vacations longer. The story is huge and ever expanding; a person could spend a lifetime trying to see it all.

The General Assembly of Virginia in 1966 determined to promote and coordinate historic preservation in the state by establishing the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission. The Commission has a big job assigned to it. First it is making a survey of historical, architectural, and archaeological sites and buildings of state and national interest. After nearly a year of intensive work, it looks as if the Commission will inventory more than 4,000 sites and buildings.

As the survey goes on, the Commission is authorized to certify the landmarks and set up a State Register of them in printed form. If the owners of each landmark will agree to preserve its external appearance according to standards set by the Commission, the Commission will certify the landmark and enter the agreement in the proper county or city deed book. The Commission will inform the local tax assessors that the certified landmark may be entitled to a lower assessment because its commercial or residential value is reduced by reason of the designation. The Commission will also mark the landmark with an appropriate plaque.

The Landmarks Commission is authorized to set up a similar system of certification for historic districts. In these cases, however, the Commission is to aid and encourage the county or city involved to create such a district. Landmarks in the district, however, can be certified, marked, and reported to the tax assessors.

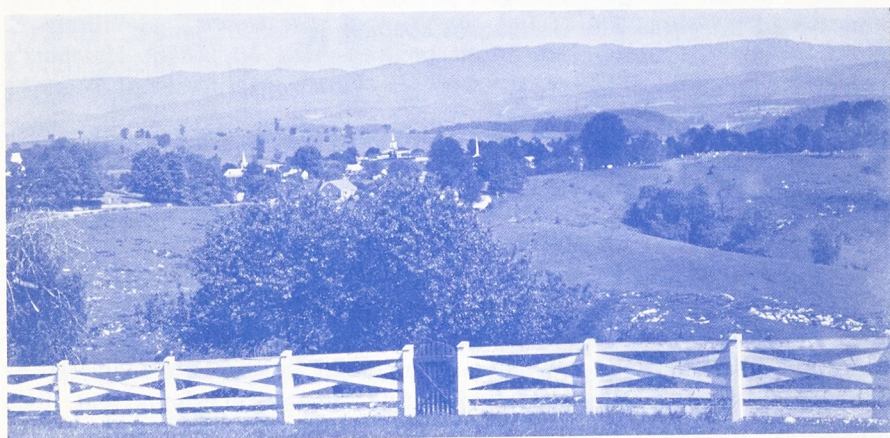
The Commission can actually acquire and administer landmarks by gift or purchase, though thus far no significant funds are available for such purchases. The Commission may also secure historic easements under which the owner of a landmark agrees to give up his right to change the appearance of the landmark and its surroundings.

Two other activities, formerly administered by the Virginia State Library, have been turned over to the Landmarks Commission. One is the financial supervision of grants-in-aid to several historical agencies and preservation projects. The other is the state historical marker system that so well covers the commonwealth. Both these functions are natural and valuable adjuncts of historic preservation and deserve professional attention and development.

Virginia is thus one of the most enlightened states in the field of historic preservation with its new landmarks legislation. The national government is also taking steps to create a unified national program. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, under the supervision of the National Park Service, established a National Register to which our Virginia State Register will send national, state, and local landmarks for listing. The national act also provides matching grants to the states for landmark surveys and for the acquisition of landmarks. In the latter case, the state involved must pay 50 percent of the purchase price and agree to assume the maintenance costs. Thus far, however, the act has not been properly funded, and no matching grants have been made.

A most significant part of the National Act of 1966 sets up an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation that includes the Secretaries of the Interior, Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, and Treasury; Administrator of the General Services Administration; Attorney General; Chairman of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and ten lay members. No federal or federally assisted project that affects a landmark listed in the National Register can be approved until the Council on Historic Preservation has been given an opportunity to comment on the undertaking. This provision applies to varied projects including not only the customary highways and dams but also the new atomic power plant not far from Jamestown Island or the extension of the library of the Medical College of Virginia near the White House of the Confederacy.

Other national action of importance sets up safeguards for landmarks in the Transportation Act of 1966 and provides funds for historic preservation of landmarks in urban rehabilitation projects under the Housing and Urban Development Act.



Fincastle and her church spires as seen from "Prospect," the McDowell home. Will the quiet Botetourt County seat be established as a historic district?

What, then, is the future of historic preservation in Virginia as the Landmarks Commission and the federal legislation become fully operative? We can hope for the following general courses of action:

1. A small number of important landmarks will become museums, some of them receiving state assistance but with increasingly professional standards for their authenticity and their interpretation.

2. Many important and less important landmarks will be saved for residential or adaptive uses—a few with state grants, some under historic easements, but most of them as certified landmarks entitled to certain tax considerations.

3. Some landmarks, often less important in themselves but worth saving because they form part of a historic district, will be preserved chiefly by zoning ordinances and architectural controls but also as certified landmarks entitled to certain tax considerations.

4. The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission will increase in usefulness as it coordinates the efforts of state, federal, and local governments and private organizations and individuals to promote historic preservation in Virginia.

Julian Boyd said not long ago that American historic houses, parks, restorations, and monuments “constitute a vast textbook across the land, wherein millions of people may deepen their experience, renew their acquaintance with the roots of their institutions, and occasionally encounter those rare moments of understanding and insight that regenerate our strength.” The Landmarks Commission intends to preserve the historical and architectural treasures of Virginia and to see them used wisely for the inspiration and benefit of all her citizens as well as for those who visit this historic Commonwealth.

Salem Is “Improving Fast”

An optimistic view of the county seat was taken by William E. Howbert in this brief description written May 10, 1856. Howbert's report is part of a Civil War scrapbook in the Virginia Room of Roanoke Public Library.

Salem is situated in Roanoke County near Roanoke River and on a very nice piece of ground. It contains a good many handsome buildings. The Court House and Roanoke College, the Town Hall and three churches are very fine buildings.

The sidewalks are nicely paved and nice young trees growing up which will be good shade trees in course of time. The town is growing larger fast and the inhabitants are a good many and a great increase daily and yearly. There are seven or eight doctors in Salem and 10 or 12 stores and confectioneries and a few shoemaker shops and little stores.

There are two taverns or hotels large in size. The town is improving fast and perhaps in course of time it will be a very large town and a nice one too.

Edward William Johnston And Roanoke Female Seminary

By MARGARET P. SCOTT and RACHEL WILSON

About the year 1820, Charles Johnston of "Sandusky," Lynchburg, established a watering resort on his property at the springs on Carvin's Creek in Botetourt County.¹ This member of the second generation in America of a distinguished Scottish family continued to operate Botetourt Springs until his death in 1833.² These facts are familiar to anyone conversant with the history of Hollins College.

What is not so widely known, however, is that like many members of the Johnston clan, this proprietor of a resort was a person interested in intellectual things. Certainly he could observe keenly and write forcefully and reliably of what he experienced. His literary gift is shown in his *Narrative of the Incidents attending the capture, detention and ransom of Chas. Johnston, of Botetourt County, Virginia, who was made prisoner by the Indians, on the River Ohio, in the year 1790.*³ This was published by Harper's in 1827. Thus in addition to his preparation of the site which his nephew, Edward William Johnston, later selected for a school, Charles of Botetourt could write an account of adventure in the old northwest of which considerable portions were considered as late as 1905 worthy of reprinting in a collection of *Narratives of Captives* published in Cleveland.⁴

The interest of the Johnstons in reading and writing—in schools and schooling—was demonstrated by the first member of that family to settle in America. In 1727 Peter the immigrant arrived from Scotland to establish himself at Osborne's Landing on the James River in Virginia. In that center of tobacco inspection and shipping he became a merchant of some importance. In 1761 he married the widow Mary Butler Rogers. In 1765, when their first son, Peter the second, was two years old, Johnston moved his household westward to the Piedmont of Prince Edward. There on the Richmond road east of Farmville he built his homestead "Cherry Grove" (later called "Longwood") where in 1768 his son, Charles, was born.

A firm believer in education and determined that his sons should receive a sound one, Anglican Peter I aided the Hanover Presbytery in the foundation of Prince Edward Academy. His donation of 100 acres of land was accepted by the presbytery in February, 1775, and in May,

Miss Scott and Miss Wilson, emeritus professors at Hollins College, have done a great deal of research on the school and its forerunners, Roanoke Female Seminary and Valley Union Seminary. Both are Hollins graduates. Their original title for this paper was "*Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*," or "It may be that in the future you will enjoy remembering these things."

two years later, the academy was named Hampden-Sydney College.⁵

In one of the college's earliest sessions, Peter II was enrolled to study for the ministry. However, with youthful ardor he took the patriot side in the developing conflict with Britain, left college at seventeen and enlisted in the legion of "Light Horse Harry" Lee. Young Peter fought in the southern campaign of 1780-1782, in 1782 under General Nathaniel Green's command. The war over, Peter "read law" and began to practice. He married Mary Wood, niece of Patrick Henry. He became a Jeffersonian in politics, in 1805-1806 and in 1806-1807 representing that faction in the Virginia House of Delegates. He was speaker of the House in '06-'07.

In 1811, Peter II moved to southwestern Virginia where he established his family at "Panicello" near Abingdon. He became a distinguished judge of the Superior Court of the Southwest Virginia circuit. Exemplifying his family's concern with education, Judge Johnston gave steady support to Abingdon Academy.⁶

In view of the judge's interest in the school as well as the fact that his son, Joseph Eggleston, was a pupil in it, it is likely that the older son, Edward William, enrolled there also. There is no record of the latter's matriculation at Hampden-Sydney College.⁷ Indeed, we know nothing of Edward William Johnston until he appears in the late 1830's as a schoolmaster in the village of Liberty (the Bedford of nowadays) in Bedford County.

About the time of Edward William's birth at "Cherry Grove" in Prince Edward County—perhaps in 1805—Mrs. Elizabeth C. Leftwich had opened Bedford County's first boarding school for girls. The Bedford Female Seminary evolved from this school. It was conducted by the Rev. and Mrs. Vinal Smith. Like the Rev. Joshua Bradley, the Smiths came to Virginia from the state of New York. Their regime was brief; the principal who followed them was the Rev. Jacob Mitchell. After a short time he was succeeded by Edward William Johnston. It was in 1837, we think, that the new head assumed responsibility for the little academy at Liberty. In March of 1839, however, Johnston moved his school to Botetourt Springs. In its new home the school became the Roanoke Female Seminary, doubtless taking its name from the newly created County of Roanoke.⁸

There are only a few scraps of information about life at the Johnston school during its brief time in Liberty. In the fall of 1838 pupil Elizabeth Steptoe assures her mother that she is studying very hard and that one new scholar (sic) has recently come from Lynchburg. Elizabeth's first cousin, Frances Mennis, writes to the same lady that the school has no good fires and that she does not like the place "near as well as I did last session." Frances goes on to say that "Mrs. Johnston doe not treat the gearls (sic) as well as she used to . . . as for Mr. J.

I don't believe there is any difference in his treatment." In the midst of this rather unhappy letter the dinner bell rings and Frances concludes with the not surprising observation that the girls are always hungry before dinner. Perhaps Frances' spirits rose at the prospect of the Christmas party planned by the Johnstons. Of course, pupils did not go home for the holidays. It was from her daughter, Elizabeth, that Mrs. Steptoe learned of "Mr. Johnston's intention to go to Botetourt Springs to teach. He has bought that place and will move next March to complete the ten months session there . . . He expects to do great things when he gets there." Elizabeth adds that Mr. Mitchell, the drawing teacher will go along, and that "Mr. Bozzaotra will accompany the accomplished folks over there to give lessons on the piano and the guitar."

We hear no more from young Elizabeth until the Liberty school has migrated west to Botetourt Springs, there to become the Roanoke Female Seminary. Then she writes as one of that first group of school girls fortunate enough to enjoy the experience of springtime at Hollins. "I never saw a place I like even half so well as the Botetourt springs," says she. It is true she admits to getting lonesome. But she goes on to tell her mother of the increased enrollment. "A Miss Lewis from Charleston Kanawha, a Miss Bowyer and Allen from Fincastle with a Miss Dabney from Lynchburg" have arrived since Elizabeth's last letter home. Her account of springtime diversions has a familiar ring. "We had a delightful party here on the first of May." A number of guests were invited and evidently a good many came, though "a little rain just before sunset" prevented some from attending. However, "our general and almost only amusement now is bathing in the creek." Sewing occupied some leisure hours. Elizabeth says "we stand in great need of our frocks"; evidently the girls are working on their summer clothes. Black sewing silk and white kid cut from the tops of long gloves would be a welcome contribution from home. The letter closes with "Fanny Mennis and Sally Langhorne join me in love to you all."

Mrs. Steptoe in June writes to her niece Fanny and her daughter "dear and far off Sally." For the most part, her letters deal with two matters perennially important to girls at boarding school: clothes and a box of "eatables"—"for which you crave so much"—that will arrive soon at Botetourt Springs.⁹

We have a copy of a letter written that summer of 1839 by the head of the school to his nephew, Cadet J. Preston Johnston,¹⁰ at West Point. "We are charmed with our inhabitation and the new pleasures and conveniences it offers us. Our school is a good one," Johnston says, and adds that it is already bringing in a good income. He expects that the new term will see more of an enrollment. There will be changes in the faculty: his sister, Jane, and her husband (Michel) are leaving, as is "Cousin Sue." But "Cherie" (Johnston's wife, Estelle de Coster) naturally will continue at the school where her mother will join her,

"perhaps to take up her abode." Mr. Bozzaotra plans to stay on. By late November, however, Johnston's optimism is beginning to wane. On the 26th of that month his niece, Eliza Johnston, writes to her brother, the West Point cadet, from their home at Burke's Garden in Tazewell County. She tells him that "Uncle Edward writes me that he has but eleven scholars, and little prospect for more." But Eliza is preparing to return to the Seminary and "he shall have one more as soon as I am able to get off."¹¹

By its second year and Eliza's return to her studies, what sort of place was Edward William Johnston's school at Botetourt Springs? The stage that came by each morning "on the Public Road" picked up letters written by that young miss which add considerably to the information afforded by the scanty Steptoe-Mennis correspondence and by the proprietor's comments of the previous fall. Eliza writes to the West Pointer of the "Great House" which was evidently the old Botetourt Springs hotel on the site of the present West Building and sometimes referred to as "the school" or "the other house." When asking her aunt Mrs. Floyd (of "Thornspring" in Pulaski County)¹² for seeds for schoolgirl planting, she speaks of "our cabin doors" before which the flower garden lies. Here she is referring to a row of dwellings for the pupils which stood approximately where Main Building is today. Eliza makes mention also of Johnston's large garden, of "cultivated fields," of fruit trees and of "the creeks."

The young writer was full of enthusiasm that early spring. "I may with safety say that this is one of the best (if not the best) schools in the U. S." It's true that only 13 pupils were enrolled. However, "we are now expecting five or six new scholars every day." She adds that gentlemen of the neighborhood are working for the school, undoubtedly with some success: shortly afterwards Eliza is able to write her brother of 25 or 26 scholars including "nearly all the old ones we had at Liberty."¹³

But, alas, by mid-April the cheerful tone had changed! The number of pupils was "very small indeed" and there was little expectation of a pickup in numbers.

Eliza Johnston's letters give us also some impression of studies at the seminary. She has praise for her teachers, especially the principal—"Uncle Edward is an excellent teacher"—and she anticipates that the new session (the fall of 1840) will see an improvement generally at "the Springs." That summer she had written Mrs. Floyd about her dancing master, "Mr. Goodsick of Richmond," a Polish exile. "He is a capital dancer and teaches beautiful steps," doing waltzes and galopades to perfection. His manners are those of a "perfect gentleman," not of a dancing master; "his romantic history has interested us all very much." Dancing lessons are from four to six p.m. On this subject Eliza concludes with "besides being a dancing master he is also a Catholick



Female Seminary at Botetourt Springs as pictured in 1854-55 catalogue.

(sic)—his wife has a city maid and a lap dog.” No wonder that shortly thereafter his pupil had to tell Mrs. Floyd that she was in need of new shoes. “I have nearly danced out those you sent me and cannot get others conveniently in the neighborhood.” Besides dancing, concerts were a part of the school routine, and dresses as well as shoes in demand. Eliza’s “cambric” has not arrived. “I would like to have it for the last concert,” which, along with “review lessons,” was scheduled for midsummer before the beginning of vacation. Eliza was not too sanguine about her progress in musick (sic). Mr. Bozzaotra said she forgot easily, while his pupil admitted to especial trouble with “time.” But she hoped by improvement to allay her aunt’s apprehension. And improve she did.

Her French grades told a different story. Eliza received the extra credit given for French conversation at mealtime “at the other house.” Her June report was the school’s highest and her mark in foreign language helped to make it so. She requested Mrs. Floyd to send on a copy of *Corinne*,¹⁴ “not the translation but the original work.” Good grades in studies were not necessarily accompanied by similar ones in conduct. Eliza admits receiving “bad” marks “for walking across the yard without my bonnet,” for “speaking in school,” and for “not being present one morning at prayers.”¹⁵

In other words, our young correspondent had run afoul of the principal’s catalogue of do’s and don’ts for his charges. This formidable document is a revealing Victorian period piece. Upon the ringing of the bell prompt attendance was expected at both morning and evening prayers. Failure to answer at roll call meant a demerit, as Eliza had found out. Sunday was supposed to be devoted entirely to moral and

religious study and activity. Saturday was not Sunday, but even it was to be occupied in "mending clothes, attending to some household art or something improving." The gospel of improvement, indeed, echoes throughout the *Rules*. Rule 20 clinches the matter: "There must be no Idleness. Pupils must endeavor to render their very Recreation useful. When not taking Exercise, they must read or work. No plays (sic) will be suffered in the House, unless with the governess's permission."

One way of busying otherwise "idle hands" for which Satan might "find some mischief still" was to require the schoolgirls to take care of their rooms daily between morning prayers and breakfast. Each room had a student "inspectress." It was she who was responsible, moreover, for giving out and receiving back the laundry. Every girl was to bring from home a list of her clothes. What she might wear was definitely prescribed, and included no jewelry whatsoever.¹⁶

Johnston's regulations seemed designed to govern every aspect of his girls' behavior. Servants were to be treated considerately. Proper manners required also that "no greediness or Daintiness (sic) must be discovered" at table—where "pupils must either learn to speak French or be silent," a rule doubtless honored as often in the breach as in the observance. Respect was assumed both for the school's property and for that of fellow pupils. In sum, nothing was acceptable that could injure the reputation either of the school or of the individual pupil.

Enough has been cited to show what a tight regimen the Rules of the Seminary at Botetourt Springs prescribed. And the daily schedule of busy bees like Elizabeth Steptoe and Eliza Johnston undoubtedly implied strict routine. However, the reader of schoolgirl letters is bound to conclude that those enrolled at the Johnston school by no means confined themselves to work or to "rendering their very recreation useful"! We remember that Elizabeth Steptoe had written home in 1839 of wading in the creek, and of a "delightful" celebration of May Day. There is no reason to think that the next year girls were not pleasuring themselves in the same fashion. That summer Eliza Johnston wrote to her cadet of a party in "the Great House" honoring "the old lady who completed her sixty-ninth year today." She speaks of feasting on this occasion. A feast indeed—on terrapin and cherry pie! The entertainment which impressed the young people most, however, was the picnic held at the Falls of Carvin's Creek. At the "little cascade" "Mrs. General Watts" (Mrs. Edward Watts of "Oaklands" in Roanoke County) was the hostess and among the good things set out were juleps—"the girls took a pretty good pull of it," says Eliza.

Rules about dress evidently had little effect upon the girls' concern with clothes. In March 1840, Eliza wrote Mrs. Floyd that she needed "gloves, corsets, shoes and handkerchiefs." The last item was in especially short supply and she "had better get a half-dozen new ones"—in Fincastle, no doubt, as her corset was to be made in Bote-

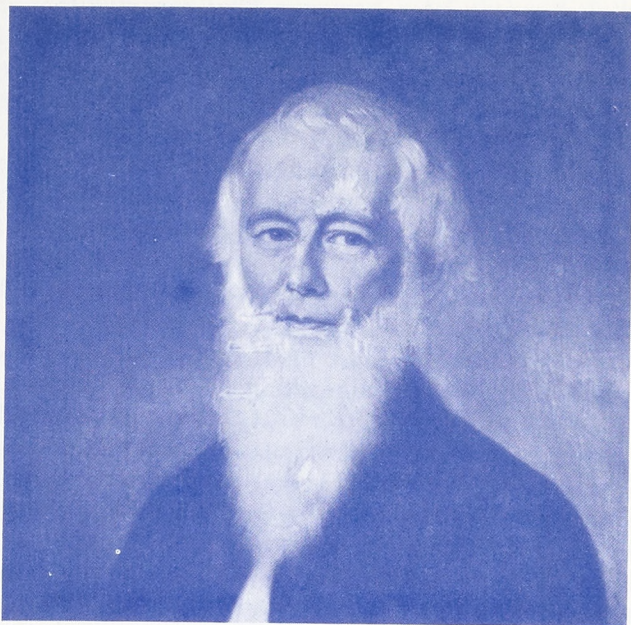
tourt's capital. A month later, however, Eliza reported that she had not been able to have the corset made, moreover, she was still in need of handkerchiefs and also of a white dress "as I have no nice uniforms (sic)." Maybe disappointment about her wardrobe explains the complaint that school life was going on in "a monotonous manner."

Every now and then a vacation helped to break the "monotonous" routine of a ten months' session. At Christmas there were two days of holiday; at Easter and on the Fourth of July one day. Occasionally a trip home was a reward for "unusual diligence." From time to time parents visited the school, where, said the principal, "they would always be entertained with pleasure."

In late October of 1840, Eliza wrote from Burke's Garden¹⁷ to her brother that she was to spend the coming winter in Richmond "at Mr. Perico's school"—this in spite of the fact that she seemed to have found Botetourt Springs reasonably satisfying. "If it had been left entirely to me," she said, "I think I would have chosen his (i.e., her uncle's) school." But she withdrew from the Roanoke Female Seminary, and with her went our only source of information about the little academy.

We do know that Edward William Johnston's school was not long continued by him after the "low" session of 1840. The Botetourt Springs property was bought in 1843 by the Valley Union Education Society. This local group proposed to operate the Valley Union Seminary at the Springs and did so for some twelve years. Joshua Bradley who had been running a school on the site was instrumental in the organization of the Society to which women of the community as well as men belonged. Bradley became the Seminary's first principal in 1843. Like Johnston, he saw his school lose teachers and pupils. The board of the Seminary replaced him in 1846 by Charles Lewis Cocke who was destined not only to save the Valley Union Seminary but to become the founder of Hollins College.

In the meantime, Edward William Johnston had spent several years at "Lauderdale," the house of his cousin, Judge Edward Johnston.¹⁸ This farm is about twenty miles from Hollins College. We have in the Hollins Archives a letter written by Edward William from "Lauderdale" on Feb. 14, 1844, to Dr. John H. Griffin of Salem about the recurring illness of his wife, Estelle. From his Cousin Fanny's *Memo-randum* we know that Edward William had a bookstore in Charleston, South Carolina, at one time.¹⁹ We also know that he wrote a biographical sketch of Hugh Swinton Legare as an introduction to the latter's *Writings* published in Charleston in 1846.²⁰ This same year he was writing for the *National Intelligencer*, a Whig paper published in Washington, D. C. He contributed to the *Southern Literary Messenger* and quarreled with the editor of the *Richmond Examiner*, John M. Daniel, over the merits of a statue by Hiram Powers. This dispute about the Greek Slave ended in a duel, fortunately bloodless.²¹ In 1848, Edward



Edward William Johnston as a librarian in St. Louis.

William Johnston was made a corresponding member of the Virginia Historical Society, along with Lt. Matthew Fontaine Maury and other distinguished Virginians.²² After the death of his first wife, Johnston married a Mrs. Woolley of Louisville, Kentucky, and just before the outbreak of the Civil War he went to St. Louis, where he served as librarian of the Mercantile Library of that city. His portrait—of which Hollins has a photograph—hangs in that library today. He is buried in St. Louis where he died in 1865.²³

Ties with Botetourt Springs did not cease for the Johnstons when Edward William left this community. His great-great-niece, Caroline Hughes Neal, was graduated from Hollins in 1953. Other Johnston daughters who have been at Hollins include Alice Johnston Williams '92 and her two daughters, Virginia Williams Lee, A.B. '28, and Jane Williams, B.M. '30. Eloise Johnston—the sister of Mary Johnston, the novelist—was a student at Hollins during the sessions of 1888-1890. The most recent member of the family to graduate from Hollins was Helen Converse Putzel, A.B. '63, the granddaughter of Agnes Hughes Johnston who came originally from Abingdon. According to strong Johnston family tradition Agnes came to Hollins about the time of the Civil War. We assume that for some reason her stay was short as we have not yet been able to find her record. However, to the end of her life she had a warm affection for and interest in Hollins, and because of her Helen Putzel came to this college.

Long may the Johnston daughters continue to come to Hollins; long may two small and ancient springhouses, so reminiscent of the earliest history of this area, continue to grace the campus; and may Hollins in fulfilling her destiny never forget her own small beginnings or the little Roanoke Female Seminary, one of whose Botetourt Springs buildings was still being used by Hollins in 1900. This was the "Great House" of Eliza Johnston's letters.

The land and buildings that are known today as Hollins College have been across the years an important part of the life of the Roanoke Valley. Hollins, the first chartered school for women in Virginia, is a part of the history of the State. One sees here in brick and stone a pleasing and extraordinarily complete evolution from past to present. With this historic setting is associated the story of some remarkable men and women. Edward William Johnston "rejected . . . superficial studies," "Smatterings of sciences." The subjects offered in his school were to be "solidly taught," and to this end "male teachers alone" were "employed." Charles L. Cocke was more tolerant of women teachers. In fact, several of his graduates did distinguished work at Hollins Institute. These women in turn eventually sent some of their best students on to graduate work. And it should be noted that the men and women who taught here long ago not only acted on a faith that women were educable, they also believed in the pursuit of excellence in learning.

Hollins benefits today from a double heritage. Her authentic historic setting and her long tradition of excellence in academic training and performance are today—as they always have been—qualities which set Hollins apart in the minds of the alumnae of the College.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Deed Book 14, p. 16, Fincastle Courthouse, Botetourt County, Va.: Christian Wingart and Elizabeth his wife to Charles Johnston. Bargain and sale. Dated Dec. 30, 1818. Recorded May 8, 1819.

² Hollins Archives: Photostat of the Richmond, Virginia Constitutional Whig, May 3, 1825, p. 1. Charles Johnson advertises Botetourt Springs.

³ Fishburn Library, Hollins College: Charles Johnson, A Narrative of the Incidents attending the capture, detention, and ransom of Charles Johnston of Botetourt County, Virginia, who was made prisoner by the Indians, on the River Ohio, in the year 1790; together with an interesting account of the fate of his companions, five in number, one of whom suffered at the stake. To which are added, sketches of Indian character and manners, with illustrative anecdotes. New York: printed by J. and J. Harper, 82 Cliff St., 1827.

The author's introduction, written at Botetourt Springs, is dated April 10, 1827. It is more than likely that the Narrative was written at the same place. No proof has been found to that effect, however.

⁴ Incidents attending the capture, detention and ransom of Charles Johnston of Virginia. Reprint from the original, with introduction and notes by E. E. Sparks, Cleveland: The Barrows Brothers Company, 1905.

⁵ Dictionary of American Biography, eds. Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, New York. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931, Vol. X, pp. 144-148.

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⁶ D.A.B., op. cit., Vol. X, p. 144.

Govan and Livingood, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

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Lewis Preston Summers, History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870. Richmond, Va.: J. L. Hill Printing Co., 1903, pp. 768-769.

- 7 Hollins Archives: Communication from the Alumni Office, Hampden-Sydney College, Nov. 13, 1961.
- 8 Edward William Johnston at Liberty and Botetourt Springs
 - a) Hollins Archives
 - 1) Fanny R. Johnston, Memorandum, typescript, p. 1. Copy of original MS. Material furnished by her nephew, J. Ambler Johnston.
 - 2) Jane E. Smith, Circuit Court of Bedford County, Va. Letter and enclosure, August 23, 1961. Miss Smith and Mr. Duvall Radford of Bedford very kindly searched the 1834-35 Acts of Virginia General Assembly and the Bedford County records for data concerning the Bedford Female Seminary.
 - b) County Records
 - 1) Deed Book 21, p. 5, Fincastle Courthouse, Botetourt County, Va.: Jas. T. Royall, executor of Chas. Johnston, sells to Hezekiah Daggs 475 acres including Botetourt Springs. Dated Dec. 18, 1833. Recorded Dec. 13, 1834.
 - 2) Deed Book A, p. 121, Salem Courthouse, Roanoke County, Va.: Hezekiah Daggs and wife Margart (sic) to sell to Edward William Johnston the Botetourt Springs property, 475 acres. Dated April 20, 1839. Recorded April 23, 1839. Land Book, 1839-1844, Salem Courthouse, Roanoke County, Va.: Edward William Johnston's tax assessment for 1842.
- 9 Hollins Archives: Letters written to and by Mrs. Elizabeth Steptoe of "Fairview," Bedford County: 1838, two letters on the same stationery, Nov. 24th; 1839, May 8th and June 24th. These original letters were given to Joseph A. Turner of Hollins College by Annie Lowry of Bedford. Mr. Turner notes that Miss Lowry is related to the Johnston family.
- 10 Preston Johnston was killed during the Mexican War at the battle of Contreras, Aug. 19-20, 1847. For an account of this battle see: Robert Selph Henry, *The Story of the Mexican War*, Indianapolis-New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1950, pp. 329-337.
- 11 Copies of Letters from Students and Others Connected with the Roanoke Female Seminary at Botetourt Springs, 1931. Unpublished typescript. Unpagged.
- 12 In 1804 Letitia Preston, daughter of Col. William Preston, married John Floyd (1783-1837). John Floyd was in the Virginia Assembly in 1814; member of Congress where in 1821 he proposed the American occupation of the Oregon Country. He was the author of the Oregon Bill. In 1830 he became Governor of Virginia.
- 13 Letitia's son, John Buchanan Floyd (1806-1863), was born in Montgomery County at "Smithfield," which has recently been restored by Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. He became Governor of Virginia in 1849. He was Secretary of War under President Buchanan. He was an anti-secessionist.
- 14 The Lynchburg Virginian of July (?), 1840. Two advertisements: One dated Feb. 14, 1840 is signed by Ed. Watts, W. M. Peyton, John E. Richardson; the second is Ed. W. Johnston's dated Feb. 20. Through the courtesy of Mr. M. Carl Andrews, Editor of the Roanoke World-News, and of Miss Virginia Earp (A.B. '30, Hollins), Librarian of the Times-World Corporation, we were able to examine a photostat of these 1840 advertisements.
- 15 Madame de Stael, *Corinne ou l'Italie*, Paris: Nicole, 1807. 3 vo's. France's first international novel is authentically cosmopolitan. It is also a frank defense of feminism. The success of the novel in Europe was "immense." It would be interesting to know how many American schoolgirls in the 1840's were reading this novel in the scattered small schools across the country. We know that it still was being read at Hollins in the 1860's.
- 16 Hollins Archives: Copies of Letters, op. cit., especially letters of March 11 and July 1, 1840.
- 17 The Lynchburg Virginian, op. cit. Edward William Johnston's own advertisement prescribes "Dress" in detail and ends with this injunction, "Jewelry forbidden."
- 18 In Tazewell County, Va.
- 19 Robert Douthat Stoner, *A Seed-Bed of the Republic—Early Botetourt*, Roanoke, Virginia: Sponsored by the Roanoke Historical Society, 1962, pp. 399-401.
- 20 Fanny R. Johnston, op. cit., Typescript, p. 1.
- 21 Linda Rhea, Hugh Swinton Legare, Charleston Intellectual, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1934.
- 22 Bibliography includes Writings of Hugh Swinton Legare of which Vol. I is prefaced by a "Biographical Notice" written by "E.W.J.". Miss Rhea attributes the "Notice" to Edward William Johnston, (sic).
- 23 Robert M. Hughes and Joseph A. Turner, "Roanoke Female Seminary, Valley Union Seminary, Hollins Institute, Hollins College," *William and Mary Quarterly Historical Magazine*, Vol. IX, Second ser., October 1929, p. 329.
- 24 The Virginia Historical Register and Literary Advertiser Vol. II, January 1849, p. 53.
- 25 We are greatly indebted to Mr. Paul Greer, for many years a member of the editorial staff of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, for locating Edward William Johnston's portrait in St. Louis and for three informative letters about Johnston's life there.

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"Roanoke Female Seminary, Valley Union Seminary,
Hollins Institute, Hollins College"
William and Mary Quarterly Historical Magazine
Vol. IX, second ser. October, 1929.

Raymond Barnes
"Hollins Has Changed—Girls' 1840 Dress Strict at Old Roanoke Seminary"
Roanoke World-News, November 20, 1965
Article based on advertisements in the Lynchburg Virginian, July (?), 1840.

Virginia Lee Cox
Richmond Times Dispatch, February 27, 1927
Article based on letters in the Hollins Archives written by pupils at the Roanoke Female Seminary.



(photos by Bob Phillips)

Dr. Henry Clay Hart of Roanoke Valley Health Institute.

Is There An Older Roanoker?

Mrs. Lena Hart Hoback, daughter of Dr. Henry Clay Hart and the last living member of a well-known family, is recognized for two reasons. She claims the record for living more than 90 years in Roanoke and Big Lick. And she has given the Roanoke Historical Society a portrait of her father who died in 1918 at the age of 81.

Mrs. Hoback, who was 90 on Sept. 13, 1968, says she has never lived outside of what is now Roanoke. She wonders "if there is anyone else who has my record? I was born under Mill Mountain and I want to die under Mill Mountain."

The portrait, done by an unknown artist in 1888 when Dr. Hart was 51, has been handed down from Mrs. Hoback's parents. Dr. Hart came to Big Lick in 1876, just two years before Mrs. Hoback was born, from Corning, N.Y. The family lived at Bonsack for a time in 1875.

Dr. Hart purchased "Magnolia," the old brick house on Orange Avenue at the intersection of Williamson Road. Built by Zechariah Robinson, apparently in 1837, it was a tavern for the stagecoach trade. Dr. Hart, a hydrotherapist, operated the Roanoke Valley Health Institute.

Mrs. Hoback, the last of seven children, lives at the Methodist Home. Her late sister, Mrs. Alma Hart Keyser, who was born June 23, 1882, claimed to have been the first baby born in the new town of Roanoke which was chartered on Feb. 3, 1882. However, the late Harry P. Fishburn was born here on May 4, 1882 and his cousin, Miss S. Ella Fishburn, was born May 17, 1882.

Story of Streams -- II

Five Rivers Flow West

By GOODRIDGE WILSON

"Western waters" is a term designating streams rising west of the crest of the Alleghany watershed and ultimately flowing westward. Springs run off in branches, branches make creeks, creeks make rivers. A branch, creek, or river west of the national watershed may flow in any direction, but all belong to river systems, trunk streams of which carry their flow eventually in a westward course.

The master system of the region that this paper deals with is that of the Ohio River, which ultimately receives all water of the entire region that is not evaporated or absorbed locally, and sends it to the Gulf of Mexico by the Mississippi River. Each contributory system of the Ohio has its own trunk stream that carries its water into the next larger system.

All western waters of Virginia are in that part of Southwest Virginia which is west of the Alleghany divide. Five trunk rivers carry them out of the state on their more or less devious way to the Ohio. Names of the five are: New, Holston, Clinch, Powell, and Big Sandy.

Western waters of Virginia and her neighbors have great significance, both geographically and historically. The land blessed by their presence is land where "The West" begins and the stage upon which were enacted early scenes in the great historical drama that brought all of the vast territory into the United States.

When I was a small boy I would read in a daily paper about big league baseball. Pittsburgh is listed in the western division of National League teams, along with cities in the western states. That puzzled me. Pittsburgh is in Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania is an eastern state. Why is it put in the western division? The answer is simple. Pittsburgh is in "The West." It is in the part of Pennsylvania that is drained by western waters, along with most of West Virginia and parts of Virginia and North Carolina. All of Southwest Virginia from Blacksburg and Christiansburg, and the Blue Ridge Parkway through Floyd and Carroll counties to the West Virginia and Kentucky state lines is in "The West." Much of Lee County is nearer to Knoxville than to Bristol. Cumberland Gap in Virginia is nearer to the capital of Illinois than it is to Richmond.

Dr. Goodridge Wilson continues the Journal's series on the rivers of western Virginia with a paper on five streams which flow from the far southwest into other states. Dr. Wilson, long a student of Virginia history, has written The Southwest Corner in the Sunday Roanoke Times for 40 years. A Presbyterian minister, he lives in Bristol.

That fact of geography is significant in many ways. To mention only one, it makes Southwest Virginia one of the principal gateways into the great Mississippi River basin.

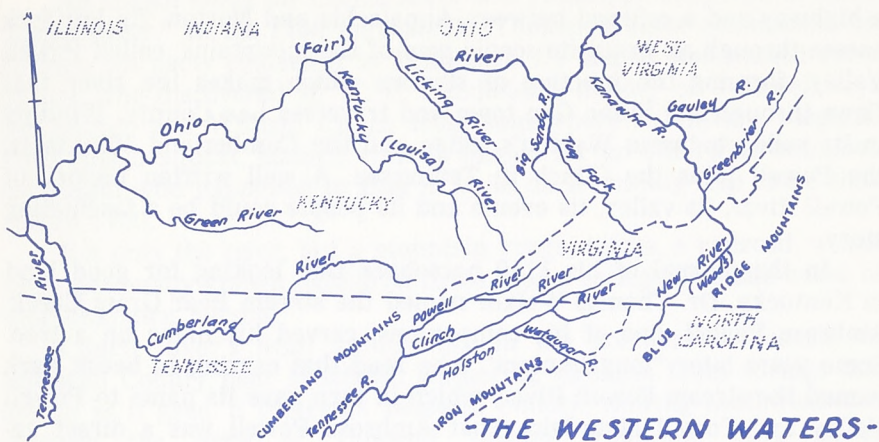
Historically, "The West" as English speaking country began on Southwest Virginia soil. Southwest Virginia "blood, sweat, and tears" have been expended copiously in winning and holding it. The first permanent settlement under the British flag in all of "The West" was planted beside New River waters. The first blood shed in the French and Indian War that decided whether "The West" should be French or English was spilled along Virginia's western waters.

The earliest record in the archives at Richmond of a legally recognized attempt to start settlements on the western waters is a petition to the Governor and Council of Virginia to grant Col. James Patton and associates 200,000 acres in that region. It was filed in 1743, but not granted until 1745 when the petitioners, organized as the Wood's River Land Company, were authorized to take up about one half of the acreage they originally applied for. That action by the Council in the spring of 1745 formally opened the land of the western waters to legal surveying and settlement. Prior to that action by the Council of the Colony on April 26, 1745, quite a number of German families, and perhaps a few of Scotch-Irish or English descent, had chosen some sites, and were living in log houses on them, as far west as Max Meadows on Reed Creek. The claims of these settlers, squatters on the land, were legalized by their paying the Wood's River Land Company for what they wanted. While I know of no document to prove it, which certainly does not mean that no such document exists, the probability is strong that Col. Patton and others were on New River and Holston for the purpose of finding choice locations prior to 1743. Certainly traders and hunters had been there and some residents on the Roanoke prior to that time may have surveyed some choice tracts.

Since New River was the subject of an article in this journal in Summer 1968, I will say no more about it except to comment briefly on its name.

Its original English name was Wood's River, given it in honor of Abraham Wood who discovered it either in person or through an expedition which he sponsored and sent out from his station at the site of Petersburg. According to a persistent tradition, Gen. Wood discovered the stream himself in 1654 when he led a party through Wood's Gap in the Blue Ridge and down Little River to its mouth. No written proof of this has been found. In 1671 he organized and sent out the Batts and Fallam expedition which reached the river and explored it for some miles, keeping a journal of the trip which may be read now in sundry publications.

The earliest appearance of its present name that has come to my knowledge is in an entry of Dr. Thomas Walker's journal made while



(map by J. R. Hildebrand)

he was with the German folk along the stream in 1750. In that entry he wrote the name "New River." The Indian name of the river was Kanawha, spelled in a variety of ways. The Indians slurred the first syllable, emphasizing the "na-wha" in such a way that it sounded like the German word for new. The Germans began calling the river that word in their language and when speaking English translated it "New." Several explanations of the origin of the name have been proposed but this one, given to me by the late Prof. Daniel A. Cannaday of Radford College, is most likely the correct one.

Three of the trunk streams of the four other river systems of Southwest Virginia, within the great Ohio system flow out of the state into Tennessee. The fourth, Big Sandy, flows directly into the Ohio. The Big Sandy is mostly a Kentucky stream, but its Russell Fork drains Dickenson County and a part of Wise, and makes the increasingly famous and magnificent Breaks of Cumberland.

Pound River, a tributary of Russell Fork, has two federally financed flood control dams that create scenic lakes suitable for water sports. Levisa River drains Buchanan County and adds its flow to Big Sandy. Both of these streams were notable in times past for their "splash dams," which enabled residents of Virginia's Sandy Basin to raft logs down the big river for sale to Kentucky saw mills.

Powell River can hardly be classified as the trunk stream of a river system. It is a large tributary of the Clinch, but a small river with few if any so-called rivers among streams that flow into it. But it is one of the historic rivers that rise in Virginia mountains and flow into Tennessee. Its head springs mingle with those of Guest River, another tributary of the Clinch.

The right fork of Powell River, flowing through the gap in Big Stone Mountain that named the town, provides a water grade for

a highway and a railroad between Appalachia and Norton. Its left fork passes through an exquisite scenic gem of the mountains, called Powell Valley, forming the junction of streams which makes the river that flows through Big Stone Gap town and traverses Lee County. Winding in its valley between Walden's Ridge and the Cumberland Mountains, the Powell joins the Clinch in Tennessee. A well written history of Powell River, its valley, its events and its people could be a fascinating story.

In the journal of his 1750 horseback ride looking for good land in Kentucky, Dr. Thomas Walker named the stream Bear Grass Creek. Ambrose Powell, one of his companions, carved his name on a tree. Some years later "long hunters" who read that carving in beech bark named the stream Powell River, which in turn gave its name to Powell Valley and Powell Mountain. That Ambrose Powell was a direct ancestor of Gen. Ambrose Powell Hill, one of Gen. Robert E. Lee's corps commanders in the War Between the States.

The Patton petition for a land grant in 1743 specified land on New River and on two Mississippi River streams west of it. The two streams are Holston River and Clinch River.



(photo by Norfolk and Western Railway)

A placid scene on the Clinch River.

An Indian name for Clinch River was Pelissippi, supposed to mean "Clear River." In his 1750 journal, Dr. Thomas Walker commented on it when his party crossed it in Tennessee. He said it was named for a hunter who discovered it. W. C. Pendleton's history of Tazewell says the hunter was William Clinch from somewhere in eastern Virginia. Thus that beautiful, historic river is named for an otherwise unknown individual who happened to find it while on a hunting trip some time before 1750.

Not only the river, but a mountain range, towns, a railroad, a coal field, nationally known industrial firms, and a college bear the name of that unknown person.

Clinch River's head springs are in the northeastern corner of Tazewell County near Bluefield. Gathering strength from springs and creeks as it goes, it traverses Tazewell County, flowing southwestward through the town of Tazewell, passing Pounding Mill, Cedar Bluff, Richlands, sweeping across Russell County, washing an edge of Wise, and crossing Scott to enter Tennessee. Picking up Powell River and other tributaries, it rolls on to join Tennessee River below Kingston. By generating power for Oak Ridge and other TVA enterprises it has powerfully affected modern warfare and world-wide commerce and industry.

Early settlements on Clinch waters were made in Tazewell County in the middle 1760s. The Castle's Woods settlement in Russell County started about 1770. Its name is derived from an albino whose last name was Castle. He lived somewhere in what is now Rockbridge County. He had a way of wandering off alone into the deep woods and mingled on friendly terms with Indians who treated him with deference because of his pink eyes and white hair. He made a deal with some Indians who claimed that region, by which he acquired what he considered valid ownership of a large body of land along the Clinch, where he lived with natives and begat half breed children. He called his domain Castle's Woods. Although he had disappeared from the scene when the Dickensons, Russell and others moved in for permanent occupation they adopted the name for their frontier community.

During Indian warfare of the Dunmore and Revolutionary War period a chain of forts along the Clinch afforded protection to settlers and their families. Over a part of 1774, Capt. Daniel Boone was in command of operations involving those forts.

Among Indian names for Holston River are Hogoheegee, Callomanco, and Cootcla. A large tributary is the Watauga, said to be a Cherokee word meaning beautiful river, which L. P. Summers in his History of Southwest Virginia and Washington County implies was the Indian name for the main stream.

Early surveys under the Patton grant call it Indian River. Dr. Thomas Walker is supposed to have dubbed it Holston in recognition

of a daring exploit of Stephen Holston. An entry in Walker's journal for March 24, 1750 says he "met Stalnaker between Reedy Creek and Holston in 1748." That seems to be the earliest written use of the name. Dr. Walker had a penchant for naming streams, mountains and places. The evidence indicates that he immortalized Stephen Holston's name by giving it to this splendid stream in recognition of a remarkable achievement of that young man and some companions.

In the mid 1740s, Stephen Holston was on Catawba Creek in present-day Botetourt County, presumably with his parents who were pioneer settlers in that region. Sometime in 1745 or 1746 he ventured into the west and stopped at a bold spring whose branch flowed southwestward. On a hillside about 30 feet from the spring he built a log cabin, and went to work clearing land and planting corn to acquire corn right title to some acreage.

In 1747, having harvested his corn, he sold his land title to James Davis and induced some other bold adventurers to go with him down his spring branch and find out where it went. They made canoes and rode the springtime flow all the way to Natchez, Miss. There they disposed of their canoes and found their way back to Catawba Creek on foot.

Stephen Holston married Lucy Looney. After a varied career full of danger and adventure they lived out their last years on Holston waters in upper East Tennessee, where people of substance and prominence are still proud to claim them as ancestors.

Stephen Holston's spring was one of several head springs of the Middle Fork of Holston located close to the Wythe-Smyth county line. Exactly which one of them it is no one seems to know with certainty. The head spring of the North Fork of Holston is in Bland County on the grounds of the old-time summer resort called Sharon Springs. The South Fork is formed by the junction of three mountain brooks at Sugar Grove in Smyth County. The three are Slemple Creek that runs down the mountain south of Sugar Grove along the road from Marion, Cress Creek and Dicky Creek that flow out of Iron Mountain to the northeast.

South Fork, gathering tributaries from Iron Mountain, the Mt. Rogers-White Top area and Tennessee, joins Middle Fork below Damascus. From that junction to Kingsport, Tenn., the river is usually called South Fork of Holston. A few miles above Kingsport it is joined by the beautiful mountain river called Watauga, which flows out of North Carolina into Tennessee.

The scenic North Fork, twisting along bases of Brushy and Clinch mountains, flows out of Bland from its source at old Sharon Springs as a small creek, increases in volume as it passes through Smyth, Washington, and Scott counties, to join South Holston at Kingsport. From

that junction the stream is known as Holston River until it gets together with the French Broad near Knoxville to make the Tennessee River.

The Tennessee River draws its water not only from Virginia and Tennessee, but also from North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. Of the many rivers that combine to make that mighty torrent it is practically impossible to say which is the main stream in its upper course. Donald Davidson in his "The Tennessee" in the Rivers of America Series says:

"Most remote from its mouth are the headwaters of the Holston, which rises in Southwest Virginia at a distance of 916 miles from Paducah. If the Holston can be identified with the Tennessee, as it often used to be, then 916 miles would be the length of the main river."

In 1889 the legislature of Tennessee supported this view to the extent of declaring Kingsport, in Sullivan County, to be the upper limit of the Tennessee. But in 1890 a federal statute recognized the junction of the French Broad and the Holston, a few miles above Knoxville, as the point where the Tennessee ought properly to begin.

It has been said that "the Tennessee was once the wildest and most untameable river in America, but now it is only the dammedest." It has been tamed by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Norris Dam, main source of power for Oak Ridge industries, is on Clinch River, well below its junction with the Powell. The Norris Dam lake, however, extends far up both streams. Watts Bar is on the main stream of the Tennessee immediately below the mouth of Clinch River near Kingston. It impounds Clinch River waters, making a second lake on the Clinch.

Five TVA dams are on Holston waters. Cherokee Dam is some miles above the junction of the Holston and French Broad. Fort Patrick Henry Dam is near Kingsport on the South Fork above its junction with the North Fork. A few miles above Fort Patrick Henry, Boone Dam is a short distance below the junction of South Fork of Holston with Watauga River, making large lakes on both streams. Watauga Dam above Elizabethton makes a big, exquisitely beautiful lake in the Tennessee Mountains. Wilbur Dam is a little one below the big one on Watauga River, which was in operation before TVA started and was taken over and enlarged by the Authority. South Holston Dam, near Bristol, is in the foothills of Holston Mountain below the Tennessee line. Its great lake extends twenty miles into Southwest Virginia.

Longwood Was Salem's Castle

"Dead at 64" is the epitaph for Longwood, the Victorian mansion in Salem which was destroyed by fire in a snowstorm last November.

Built about 1904 by Thomas Henry Cooper, a wealthy West Virginia coal operator, the big house remained in the Cooper family until January, 1942.

It was purchased at an auction by the Town of Salem and used as a community center for a quarter-century until it was outmoded by the new Salem-Roanoke Valley Civic Center. At the time of the fire, a private club was preparing to renovate the second floor. The site appears destined for another Salem city building. Salem's council decided that rebuilding would not be practical.

Although its life was little more than one generation, the mansion long has been regarded as a landmark, an architectural curiosity and a nostalgic reminder of a bygone age of leisure. Students at nearby Roanoke College and children of Salem called it "The Castle."

The gingerbread design of the tower, orange-tiled roof, bay window, porches and the rich carved woodwork and paneling inside made it a unique building representative of the Victorian era.

Descendants of Cooper say the mansion cost \$100,000 to build in the early 1900s. But after the death of Mrs. Cooper in 1941, Salem bought it for \$20,100.

Its stained glass windows, fireplaces carved by European artisans, a sweeping staircase, a music room, and a third-floor stage have seen many parties, plays, small concerts, receptions and other social gatherings.

Longwood has stood on land once owned by Nathaniel Burwell, an officer in the Revolutionary War and owner of extensive holdings in Botetourt County. The 15-acre tract, owned by the Johnson and Nugent families before it was purchased by Cooper in 1903, was the site of an earlier brick house. The name "Longwood" preceded the present mansion.

A two-story carriage house was unharmed by the fire but another outbuilding was destroyed in a fire about 18 years ago.

Cooper, said to have driven the first electric car in Salem, was born in Pennsylvania of English parents and came to Roanoke College after working as a breaker boy in West Virginia coal mines for his father.

He succeeded his father as one of the largest operators in the Pocahontas coal fields and he served as president of the Colonial Bank and Trust Co. in Roanoke and the Cooper Silica Glass Co., Salem.

Cooper, who died in 1911 at the age of 41, married Mary Ella Busey Barnitz, daughter of Judge and Mrs. William M. Barnitz of Salem, and they had eight children. Four are living today.



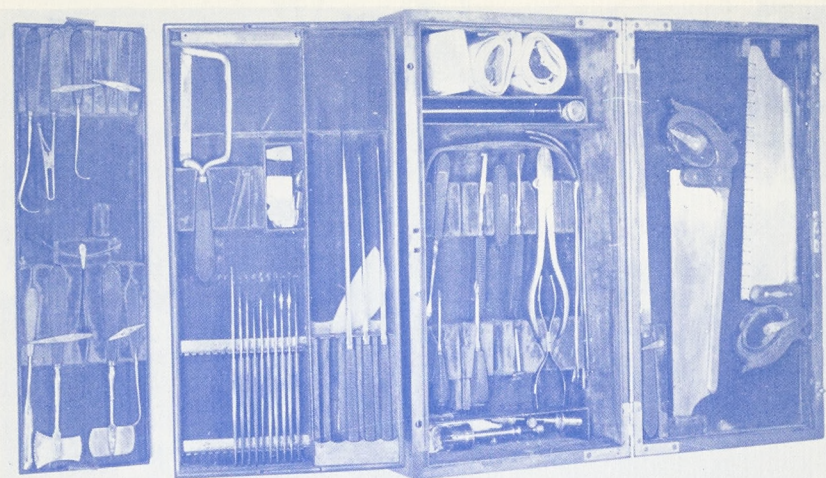
(photo by Kathy Thornton)

Longwood before the fire.

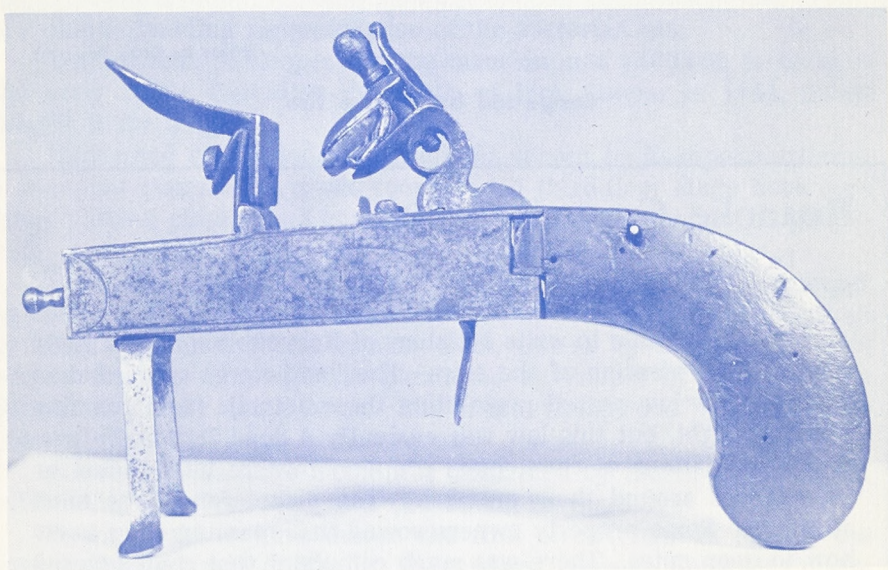
Roanoke Cows In 1898

In his 844-page "History of the City of Roanoke" published in February, Raymond P. Barnes, writing of 1898, says:

It is impossible to write a history of Roanoke about any early year without mention of the cows. The "anti-cows" succeeded in having a cow law passed prohibiting these animals from roaming about at night, but this law was evidently a dead letter. To prevent depredations of cows, most property owners built picket or wire fences around their premises. The picket fence was most attractive. Some property owners vowed that roaming cows knew how to open gates. There was much complaint that cows entered private yards during the night time and devoured expensive shrubs and flowers. In summer, the cow enjoyed a cooling sleep on the sidewalks and in winter found these thoroughfares the driest bedding places. In sections, not well lighted, the late pedestrian often stumbled over sleeping cows. The bicyclist found it nothing amiss if the feeble light of his oil lamp disclosed a cow asleep in the middle of the street.



Dr. A. Z. Koiner's surgical instruments of 19th century Roanoke.



This rare tinder lighter, first used about 1775, was given by Mrs. S. H. McVitty.

MRS. J. G. McCONKEY DIES

Mrs. Claudine Williamson McConkey, a director of the Society since its organization, died March 15. She was the wife of James G. McConkey and a member of the Williamson family which gave its name to Williamson Road.



