

History Museum & Historical Society
OF WESTERN VIRGINIA

2002
JOURNAL

Volume Fifteen

Number One

History Museum & Historical Society

A mor montium nos movet

(FOR THE LOVE OF MOUNTAINS INSPIRES US)

Officers

John P. Bradshaw, Jr.	President
James F. Douthat	Vice President
Ann F. Stephenson	Treasurer
Whitney H. Feldmann	Secretary

D. Kent ChrismanExecutive Director
Betty HundleyAdministrative Manager

Board of Directors

Sara Airheart	W. Tucker Lemon
Paul G. Beers	James Lesniak
Bruce Brenner	Edwin E. Lunsford
Paul C. Buford	C. Whitney Markley
David H. Burrows	Thomas O. Maxfield III
Betty C. Craig	Alice B. Roberts
Betty K. Dye	Michael K. Smeltzer
Alice T. Hagan	Ronald E. Sink
William C. Hagan	The Hon. Ralph K. Smith
David G. Helmer	Mary M. Utt
Robert H. Kulp	Edgar V. Wheeler
Dr. Whitney A. Monger Leeson	Cranston Williams, Jr.
David Lemon	

Permanent Directors

George A. Kegley Clare S. White

Table of Contents

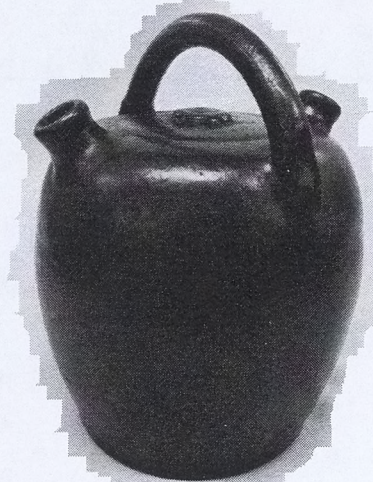
Note From the Executive Director	Page 3
Railroads and Their People	Page 4
Louis M. Newton	
The Virginia & Tennessee Railroad - 150 Years Ago	Page 17
George Kegley	
Working with Winston Link at the End of Steam Power	Page 20
Thomas H. Garver	
The Turnpikes of Southwest Virginia	Page 29
Dr. Kenneth W. Keller	
The Harris Family Archives	Page 36
Kathleen Ingoldsby	
What Do We Leave Behind?	Page 49
Anna Fariello	
Gwynn's Island Revisited	Page 53
Candy Daugherty	
Who Named Salem?	Page 57
John Long	
Regional Manuscript Guide Completed	Page 60
Oliver Hill's Home May Become Human Rights Center	Page 61
George Kegley	
What Victory May Mean	Page 64
Roy Baugher III	

This issue of the *Journal* was made possible by a grant from
**The Foundation for Roanoke Valley,
Stan and Elise Lanford Family Fund**

George Kegley
Editor of the Journal
Christina Koomen Smith
Production, Editorial Assistant

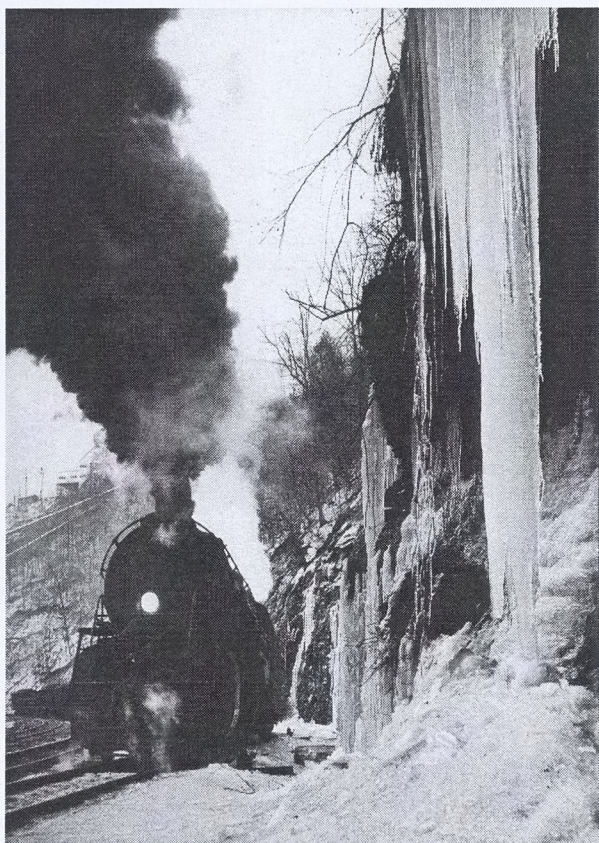
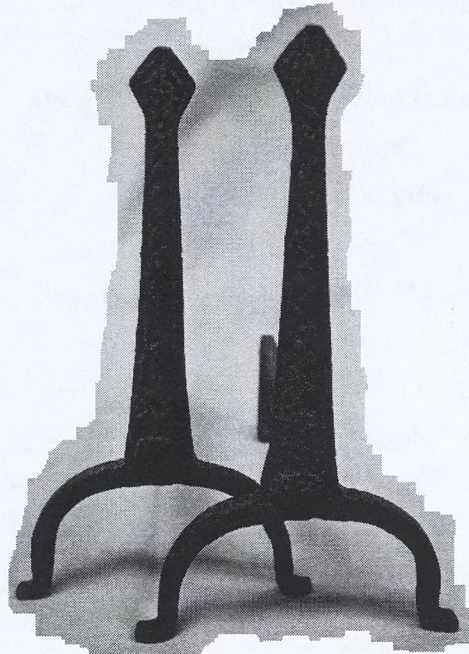
The Journal, Vol 15, No. 1, chronicles the history of the Commonwealth west of the Blue Ridge. Published by the History Museum & Historical Society of Western Virginia (formerly the Roanoke Valley Historical Society), P.O. Box 1904, Roanoke, VA, 24008. The price for additional single copies is \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members. The Museum will be careful in handling unsolicited materials but cannot be responsible for their loss.

FINCASTLE LIBRARY
11 ACADEMY ST.
P. O. BOX 129
FINCASTLE, VA 24090



This salt glazed stoneware field jug, circa 1880, was given to the Museum & Society through the bequest of the late John R. Montgomery, along with 14 other items, all with a history of use and/or production in Western Virginia. This "presentation piece" is inscribed "made by W.J. Wooten, Zenobia, Virginia," and on the reverse "Dr. N.P. White, Mendota, Virginia" (both towns, Washington County).

This pair of cast iron andirons, circa 1810-1830, was donated by Margaret Fluke. They were used at Fluke's Tavern near Blue Ridge in Botetourt County. Founded by Peter "Flook" in 1801, the structure remained in use until 1918, when the family razed the tavern and built a new residence. Botetourt County produced large quantities of iron ore, pig iron and simple cast iron throughout the 19th century. The Cloverdale furnaces were in close proximity and are their most likely source.



A part of the collection of works the Museum & Society is acquiring for the O. Winston Link Museum, this image, NW2222, was taken at the Massey Mine near Gilbert, West Virginia on March 16th, 1960, less than two months before the engine, Y6b 2190, was retired. A color version of the image was used on the cover of Link's fourth record album, "Second Pigeon and the Mockingbird," issued in 1961.

Note From the Executive Director

The Museum & Society is pleased to present this, the 29th issue of the *Journal*, Volume Fifteen, Number One. Of particular note, this 2002 issue marks the first back-to-back annual issuance since those of 1988 and 1989.

The Journal's very busy Editor's efforts are even more remarkable in view of the fact that during this same period, the Museum & Society published Clare White's long anticipated and definitive work, *William Fleming, Patriot*.

During this same period, the Museum & Society launched what is easily its most ambitious and noteworthy effort in its 45-year history, the O. Winston Link Museum. Once complete, the \$2.6 million effort will result in: the appropriate reuse of the only public structure in the Roanoke Valley designed by an individual of international renown; a greatly enhanced view of Western Virginia's role in our region's history and culture; a broadened and more balanced role for our institution within the greater historical community; a more synergistic role within Western Virginia's historical tourism; a significant increase in the relevance and utility of the Society's collections; and, importantly, a more financially stable institution.

With the international press and widespread interest the O. Winston Link Museum Campaign has received, and the substantial effort being put forth to create that success, it is all the more remarkable that the Museum & Society has been able to maintain a full schedule of regular lectures, tours, exhibits and more.

Exhibits have included the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts' *Arcadian Monuments*, and *What Victory May Mean*, the story of the only Navy ship named for a citizen of the Valley, the USS *Horace A. Bass*, curated by Museum staff member Roy Baugher III.

Collection highlights include an important pair of andirons from Fluke's Tavern and a signed piece of Southwest Virginia pottery (see facing page).

Recently, on November 1, the Museum & Society led a highly successful joint effort with the City of Roanoke, Downtown Roanoke, Inc., Norfolk Southern Corporation, Center in the Square, the Virginia Museum of Transportation, Commonwealth Coach and Trolley Museum and the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the seminal arrival of the Valley's first train, the "Roanoke," in 1852. As a result, a historic marker now marks the approximate arrival spot along downtown Roanoke's Rail Walk.

Looking toward the future, this year the Museum & Society was awarded two grants from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, a rare honor. The first will support the production of the Museum & Society film *Bright Leaf: The Tobacco Culture of the Old Belt of Virginia*, by Jim Crawford. The second will support a Museum & Society exhibit organized by Anna Fariello, *Movers & Makers: Doris Ulman's Portrait of the Appalachian Craft Revival*. The latter has also received a grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts – a first-time award for the Museum & Society.

It is to you, the Museum & Society's individual, corporate and foundation supporters, volunteers, participants and visitors, that thanks be given. Despite difficult times, your Museum & Society thrives!

Read and enjoy!

D. Kent Chrisman
Executive Director

Railroads and Their People: 20th Century Rail Development in Southwest Virginia

By Louis M. Newton

Although proposals were made by western Virginians to build a railroad as early as 1833, it was not until 1850 that actual construction was begun on the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad in Lynchburg. The route progressed across Campbell and Bedford counties, through a corner of Botetourt, into Roanoke County, through the community of Big Lick, and by December 1852 had reached the county seat of Salem.

Work then continued through the difficult mountainous terrain west to the New River and on through southwestern Virginia to Bristol, on the Tennessee state line, reached in 1856. By the time of the Civil War, through connections to the east and west, the Virginia & Tennessee formed part of a thin chain of railroads stretching from Hampton Roads to the Mississippi River at Memphis.

Some historians are of the opinion that the existence of the Virginia & Tennessee between Lynchburg and Bristol kept the southwestern Virginia counties from seceding from the Commonwealth and joining the counties to the north in the formation of the state of West Virginia. At any rate, the Virginia & Tennessee and its connections suffered badly during the war and struggled through the Reconstruction era.

The lines in Virginia were united after the war into the Atlantic, Mississippi & Ohio Railroad, headed by former Confederate General William Mahone, in 1870. Unfortunately, economic troubles of the 1870s forced the AM&O into receivership. In 1881, its properties were acquired by the Clark banking interests of Philadelphia and renamed the Norfolk & Western Railroad. The Clarks also owned the Shenandoah Valley Railroad, then under construction, and completed it the following year to a connection with the N&W in the community of Big Lick in Roanoke County.

Meanwhile, the Clark interests, through the leadership of Frederick J. Kimball, president of the Shenandoah Valley and a vice president—and later president—of N&W, became interested in reaching the coalfields along along the Virginia-West Virginia border. By 1883, a railroad line had been built west from Radford through the New River Valley to Glen Lyn, then along East River and into the coalfields in the Blue-stone Valley to the town of Pocahontas in Tazewell County. The subsequent rapid development of the coal industry in the area resulted in the construction of a number of branch lines and established the Norfolk & Western as one of the leading coal-carrying railroads in the United States.

Extending toward the southwest from Bluefield, Virginia, by 1891, the N&W had constructed a line through the Clinch Valley while the Louisville & Nashville had built east from Cumberland Gap. The two lines connected in Wise County at Prince's Flats, later renamed Norton in honor of L&N President Eckstein Norton. In a project of even greater importance, the N&W also extended its main line west into the Ohio River Valley, and by 1892 had a route extending from Norfolk all the way to Columbus, Ohio. It was then in a position to haul coal both east and west out of the highly productive Pocahontas coalfields.

The area of far southwestern Virginia, in the counties of Russell, Dickenson, Wise, Scott and Lee, attracted a number of railroads, including the Louisville & Nashville. In the late 1890s and early 1900s, the area saw the entrance of other carriers, including the predecessors of the Southern, the Clinchfield and the

Louis M. Newton worked for the Norfolk & Western and Norfolk Southern railways from 1950 until 1987, retiring as assistant vice president, Transportation Department. He has written four volumes of railroad history.



In the summer of 1897, a Class D 10-wheel steam locomotive pulled a passenger trainload of Norfolk & Western Railway employees to a meeting at Grottoes in Rockingham County. (History Museum photo)

Interstate, all built primarily to tap the coal resources of that part of the state. In later years, the N&W built an extensive rail network in Buchanan County.

Lines of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway and its predecessors operated through the Alleghany Highlands, including the counties of Alleghany, Botetourt and Craig. The city of Clifton Forge became a key location on the C&O system. The first decade of the 20th century saw the construction of the Virginian Railway, part of which paralleled the N&W from Roanoke west through the New River Valley.

Despite the presence of the other carriers, the Norfolk & Western became the dominant railway in southwestern Virginia. The location of its general offices and extensive shop facilities in the former community of Big Lick, which had developed into the City of Roanoke, made it particularly prominent in that section of the state.

An overview of the N&W and its organization shows the wide variety of skills and talents necessary for the efficient operation of a great industry. With a few variations, the same general principles would apply to the other railroads of southwestern Virginia.

By about 1910, the major railroad systems of the United States had been well established. They were the dominant form of transportation. Their only real competition, but only in limited areas, was from waterways. Railroads hauled virtually all the freight, express mail and passengers. In many communities, the railroad station was the center of commercial activity.

However, the dominance of railroads in the transportation field probably peaked around 1915, after which the industry began a slow decline, brought about primarily by the rise of the automobile and paved roads. Local passenger business was the first to be affected, followed by short-haul and time-sensitive freight traffic. This decline accelerated during the 1920s and became precipitous during the Great Depression. Then



A fading photo shows an old steam locomotive manned by a Bluefield yard crew. (History Museum photo)

a temporary reversal of fortunes occurred during World War II when the railroads experienced their “finest hour,” handling unprecedented volumes of traffic. Unfortunately, for many railroads the decline in virtually all segments of their business resumed and continued during the latter half of the 20th century. Railroad employment, of course, was drastically reduced.

Although its functions have changed to a great degree, the railroad industry is not dead. Let us go back to the time when railroads were at their position of greatest prominence, in the early decades of the 20th century, and consider how Norfolk & Western “railroad men” worked.

First, railroading was primarily a “man’s world.” Few women were employed by the industry until the 1920s and then usually only in clerical positions. Second, the term, “railroad man,” covers a wide range of positions and includes individuals with many different skills and temperaments. “Railroad men” did, however, generally have one common characteristic: They were intensely loyal to their employer and many spent their entire working careers, sometimes more than half a century, with one company.

In recent years, we have learned about “24/7” companies, those that operate around-the-clock, seven days a week. There is really little new about such a system—railroads have been operating that way for more than 150 years. Much railroad work was performed at night and many employees carried out their duties behind the scenes and out of the public eye. Let us look at some of the particulars.

The operation of a railroad has been likened to that of a military organization. To a great extent, such a comparison is true. A strict system of discipline was applied in order to ensure safety and to provide for the punctual operation of trains. Orders from the top were expected to be complied with throughout the organization and the failure of any link in the chain could have a detrimental effect on the rest of the operations.

Large systems were broken down into operating divisions, each headed by a superintendent and responsible for its own operation and its coordination with connecting divisions of the system. The N&W had five road operating divisions, four of which had some trackage in Virginia.

The most basic element in a railroad is its track and structures. In principle, although greatly improved in quality, it is almost the same now as when railroads began—steel rails fastened to crossties and supported by

crushed stone, or ballast. Railroad lines were divided into sections of various lengths, perhaps five or 10 miles, headed by a section foreman. In many cases, the foreman was furnished a company house, adjacent to the right-of-way. His forces consisted of a group of laborers usually called "section men," who had the responsibility for the routine maintenance of the track on their section.

These men labored in the heat waves of summer, the cold blasts of winter and in every other kind of weather condition. They earned their living truly by the "sweat of their brows," working mostly with hand tools such as picks, shovels, spike mauls, track jacks and ballast forks. They traveled to and from their work on hand cars, propelled by the pumping section of the riders.

Their normal work hours were during daylight, but when trouble such as broken rail occurred at night, the section foreman would assemble his men, gather the necessary materials and make repairs as expeditiously as possible. The first rule was to ensure safety. The next was to restore service as quickly as possible in order to keep the trains running.

When snow accumulated in winter, the section men were the ones called upon to remove it from switches, clear station platforms and road crossings and do anything else required to keep the railroad running. Their work had to be done between train movements, so as to cause as little delay as possible. In short, the maintenance-of-way personnel labored under often trying conditions to ensure the safety and continuity of the railroad's operations.

For large-scale projects, such as laying new rail, the railroad employed large groups of men known as "extra gangs." These gangs moved over the system as their work required and were frequently long distances from the homes of their members. They were usually housed in camp cars, consisting of several dormitory or "bunk" cars and a dining car. The cars were moved from place to place as the work required and on week-ends, the men were furnished free rail transportation to and from their homes.

Employees of the bridge and building department included carpenters, masons, steelworkers and painters. Their responsibilities included maintaining station buildings and other structures along the way, including bridges ranging in height up to 150 feet or more.

Other "outside" workers were the signal maintainers, responsible for the safety and efficiency of the signal systems along the way. In daytime, they performed routine maintenance and tests of signal equipment. They were subject to call at any time, however, and would frequently be summoned at night to take care of trouble, especially during or after windstorms, ice storms or snow. Frequently working alone and in the dark, they kept the silent sentinels of safety working. Telephone and telegraph linemen often had similar working conditions.

Steam locomotives were the very symbol of railroading itself. Their maintenance in top-notch shape was essential to an efficient operation and required a small army of men. After every trip, a locomotive was routinely serviced by cleaning the fire, dumping the ashes, replenishing the fuel, water, sand and lubrication supplies and washing. These tasks were usually performed by laborers. Locomotives were moved in the engine terminal by hostlers and their helpers.

Routine maintenance was generally performed in roundhouses at strategic locations on the system, usually at crew change points. The work was performed by various crafts, including machinists, boilermakers, pipefitters, blacksmiths and their respective helpers. By its nature, the work was dirty, with soot and cinders mixing with grease and oil to form a grubby and grimy mixture that adhered to many of the surfaces of a locomotive. At any rate, in the often dark recesses of the roundhouse, these men went about duties, using both brain and brawn as they worked underneath, on top of, and inside the locomotives to ensure that they were properly maintained. The failure of a locomotive on the road could be highly disruptive to an efficient operation.

Rolling stock was maintained by a separate class of employees, known variously as "carmen," "car repairers" or "car knockers," from their practice of tapping on car wheels with a hammer to see if they were in good condition. A wheel with a defect would yield a hollow sound. By its nature, much car work was per-

formed outdoors and, of course, in all kinds of weather. Inspectors would carefully inspect every car in an inbound train and add oil to the journal boxes. On an outbound train, they would couple the air hoses, assist in the testing of the brakes and make a final inspection of the train before it was released from a terminal.

Refrigerator cars, handling fresh meat or produce, required special handling at certain terminals en route. A mixture of ice and salt was added to the bunkers in order to maintain the desired cold temperatures.

Cars found to be defective in an inbound train were tagged and switched to a "shop track," sometimes called a "rip track," where they were repaired and returned to service. Much of this work was also performed outdoors.

Train operations were controlled from the division dispatcher's office, under the general supervision of the superintendent. Most divisions had a chief dispatcher who worked during the day, and a night chief as well.



A Norfolk & Western Railway wrecking crew paused for a picture around 1910-1912. (History Museum photo)

So-called "trick dispatchers," working eight-hour shifts, issued orders to trains on the road through operators at stations and signal towers along the road. For many years these orders were transmitted by telegraph, a process that required a special and highly prized skill. Telegraphers were somewhat of a fraternity of their own as they communicated through their arcane system of Morse code.

Stations were located in communities along the way, usually five to 10 miles apart. In many cases, they were the center of a town's activity. The

smaller stations were staffed by a single individual, generally working daylight hours, who had multiple duties. As the company's local agent, he sold passenger tickets, handled freight and express, delivered orders to train and engine crews, and took care of any other duties that came his way. Some stations in remote locations were two-story structures, with the upper floor serving as a residence for the agent and his family.

The larger stations, open around the clock, were staffed by several employees who had more specialized duties. In any case, the local railroad station was the place where passengers began or ended their journeys. Express and small freight shipments were handled and in many cases the railroad station also was the local telegraph office. U.S. mail was handled at the station for further movement to or from the local post office.

All these people and facilities existed for one purpose—so that the trains could run and move people and goods. Otherwise, the railroad and all its facilities were of no value. Of course, the trains required train and engine crews to man them.

But before the trains could run on the road, their cars were assembled in a yard, thus requiring the services of a yard or switch crew, which normally consisted of a yard conductor, two brakemen, an engineer and a fireman. Typically, under the supervision of a yardmaster, they gathered cars from local industries, the

local freight station, interchange from other railroads and inbound trains. They then classified them on various tracks, built them in blocks by destination and assembled them into an outbound train. Using hand signals primarily and working in all kinds of weather conditions, yard crews switched cars swiftly but carefully and safely. They had to be constantly alert and all members of a crew learned to work together as a team in order to carry out their duties.

Road freight trains were in charge of a conductor. Among other things, before beginning a trip, he was required to see that he had a proper waybill or other authorization to move every car in his train. Once under way, he rode in the caboose with the rear brakeman or flagman, keeping a constant lookout for any defects that might develop in cars on their train. When the train stopped en route, the rear brakeman went back with flagging equipment to provide protection against following trains. The front brakeman rode on the locomotive, observed his portion of the train while moving and coupled or uncoupled cars picked up or set off en route.

Under some conditions, as in the case of local or mine switching runs, the crews included a third brakeman to assist in switching and/or to load and unload less-than carload freight en route.

The locomotive engineer—engineman was the more formal term—was perhaps the most recognized of all railroad men. Children—and others—loved to wave at a passing train and have a friendly engineer wave back. Perhaps such an exchange of greetings was one of the “fringe benefits” of a demanding job, because an engineer had many duties. Before a run began, he had to know that the locomotive was in proper operating condition. Then, from his seat on the right side of the cab, he had all the power of the locomotive at his disposal. With the throttle lever, he controlled the flow of steam from the boiler to the cylinders. With the reverse lever, he regulated the flow.

One of his crucial duties was to keep a constant eye on the water gauge to ensure that a proper level of water was maintained in the boiler. A high level would impair the efficiency of the locomotive; low water could result in severe damage to the boiler or, in extreme cases, a disastrous explosion. The engineer supervised the work of the fireman to see that a proper fire bed and adequate boiler pressure were maintained.

Meanwhile, he was required to operate the locomotive at the correct speed to maintain the schedule, at the same time not exceeding the speed limit, especially on curves and in other restricted areas. The engineer watched for wayside signals and operated his train in accordance with their indication. He sounded the whistle for grade crossings and at other times as required by rule. In addition, he had to comply with the provisions of train orders with respect to meeting or passing other trains. He observed not only what was immediately within his view but also visualized what was a mile or more ahead. In addition, with a long freight train, he had to be aware of the profile of the line a mile or more to the rear in order to avoid excessive slack action.

In the case of a freight train, the engineer sometimes had to contend with handling a train of as many as 175 cars weighing 16,000 tons or more. In the mountains, he had to be especially skilled in the operation of the train's braking system. Going downhill safely was often more challenging than going up.

Passenger trains, sometimes consisting of 18 or more cars operating at speeds of more than a mile a minute, had to be handled with exceptional smoothness in order to avoid injury to passengers or damage to the chinaware in the dining car. Skilled experienced engineers could make it look as easy as driving an automobile, but, as we have seen, there was much more to it than that.

The fireman's position was on the left side of the locomotive. In the days of hand-fired locomotives, however, he had little time to occupy his seat there when the train was moving. Instead, he was busy conveying coal from the tender to the firebox by means of a hand shovel, an often strenuous task. However, his job required more than simply shoveling; he had to know where and when to place the coal in the firebox so that the fire would burn evenly and would make a minimum of smoke. He carefully coordinated his work with that of the engineer, such as anticipating stops or slowdowns and handling the firing accordingly.

As locomotives grew increasingly larger and heavier during the early part of the 20th century, they exceeded the ability of a man to fire them. As a result, mechanical stokers came into use. Although they

relieved the fireman of much of the drudgery of his work, it was still necessary to control their operation manually in order to obtain an even firebed and maintain the proper steam pressure. Locomotives could sometimes be quite temperamental, especially with respect to their steaming qualities, and their proper firing was part art and part science. Whether hand or stoker-fired, the efficient operation of a locomotive required

teamwork on the part of the engineer and fireman as well as the locomotive itself.

Passenger trains probably provided members of the general public with their most familiar contact with railroads. Passenger trains were in charge of a conductor, who was responsible for the overall safety and operation of the train. Among his other duties, he lifted (took up) tickets from passengers or collected cash fares and properly accounted for them. The trainmen—one or two depending on the length of the train—announced stations, opened and closed doors and helped passengers on and off the train. A porter assisted passengers with luggage and kept the interior of the cars clean. A baggage master or equivalent position took care of checked baggage in the baggage car.

Trains with sleeping cars had a Pullman conductor, who supervised the Pullman porters and handled tickets and reservations for passengers occupying sleeping car space. Pullman porters—one per car—handled luggage, made up berths, shined shoes on overnight trips and called passengers in the morning, on request.

On trains with dining cars, a steward supervised their operation and was in charge of the chefs and waiters. Cooking and serving appetizing meals on a moving train was an art in itself. The results, however, were thoroughly enjoyed by the traveling public. Veteran travelers can remember breakfast on Norfolk & Western dining cars as the trains rolled through the Shenandoah Valley or glided alongside the banks of the New River in Southwestern Virginia. Smithfield ham and eggs,



Brakeman James A. Cook appears ready for duty on the N&W. (History Museum photo)

fried apples and hot biscuits were among the more popular items.

Passenger trains generally carried express by means of the Railway Express Agency, an entity jointly owned by most of the major railroads. An express messenger handled the loading and unloading at various stations.

Although not railroad employees as such, railway postal clerks were closely associated with the industry and were carried on many passenger trains. They were actually employees of the Railway Mail Service, a division of the U.S. Post Office. They rode in cars designated as "Railway Post Offices," which in fact they were. The cars contained boxes into which mail could be deposited and postmarked by that particular post

office.

Railway Post Offices could be as short as 15 feet in length, occupying only a section of a larger car and often manned by a single clerk. Or they could be as long as 60 feet, stretching the full length of a car and manned by as many as 10 or 12 clerks.

One of the more dramatic moments for bystanders in small towns was the fleeting glimpse of a postal clerk in the doorway of a Railway Post Office car on a fast-moving train as he manipulated a hook to catch the mail hung on a trackside crane while simultaneously throwing off a bag of inbound mail for the local post office. In those days, long before the use of zip codes, Railway Post Office clerks sorted mail en route and in some cases even pre-classified it for destination cities. Many people would agree that over moderate distances, say up to 500 miles, mail moved faster and more consistently under the RPO system than it does today.

Rank and file employees were generally paid by the hour as covered by labor agreements, with provision for overtime after a certain number of hours per week. They generally had fixed duty hours on various shifts.

Train and engine service employees, however, were paid on a complex system based on mileage, with 100 miles being a basic day in road service and with provision for overtime when appropriate. The pay for engineers and firemen varied according to the weight on driving wheels of their locomotive, and for conductors and trainmen according to the number of cars in their train. Various arbitrary payments were made for extra duties not considered to be connected with the direct operation of their train.

Train and engine crews were subject to the Federal Hours of Service Law, which for many years generally limited them to 16 continuous hours of duty, later reduced to 12. There was no distinction between night and day or any day of the week. Older employees with sufficient seniority could usually hold down assigned runs with more or less fixed reporting times. Others, though, were generally subject to call on one hour's notice at any time of the day or night after having had eight hours' rest from their previous tour of duty.

Before commercial telephones came into general use, most train and engine crews lived within close proximity of their reporting point. They were called for duty by a "call boy."

Minute-by-minute operation of trains was controlled by dispatchers. The training and general supervision of train crews, however, was the responsibility of a division trainmaster and his assistants. These division supervisors traveled over their respective territories, rode trains as necessary, observed the work of their crews and acted as troubleshooters when needed. They were subject to call at all times, day or night and often worked long and unpredictable hours.

The operation of the railroad required a voluminous amount of record-keeping, handled by a multitude of clerks with varying levels of skills and responsibilities. Originally done mostly by hand, clerical work was gradually mechanized through the years. At smaller stations, the local agent was his own clerk. At larger ones, clerks had more specialized duties. Other clerks worked in division offices and in the various departments of the general offices. Clerk-typists were required to be able to type a specified number of words per minute and stenographer-clerks were required to be proficient in shorthand.

The Engineering Department was headed by the chief engineer, who had a number of assistants specializing in various areas of civil engineering. These included roadway maintenance, track construction, bridge design and maintenance and building design and maintenance (architecture). In the field, survey parties obtained data from which draftsmen in the office could prepare drawings. A system material yard supplied track and bridge material for the system. Track maintenance at the division level was supervised by roadmasters. The N&W had its own plant at Radford for creosoting crossties. The Engineering Department had its own test department for evaluating materials and processes.

The Telegraph and Signal Department was responsible for designing and maintaining the company's communications and signal systems. Signal circuit designers were among the specialists employed to design the complicated circuitry required for railroad signal systems.

The Motive Power Department, headed by a general superintendent, was divided into two main areas: locomotive and cars. Shops at outlying points performed routine maintenance on locomotives and cars. Heavier work, however, such as overhauling locomotives and rebuilding cars, was performed at a centralized location: N&W's Roanoke Shops. In addition, for a number of years the N&W designed and built many of its own locomotives and cars.

This required a skilled group of mechanical engineers who specialized in various phases of design work. The several departments of the shops were part of a manufacturing facility that worked not only to produce replacement parts but also components for new equipment.

The foundry produced castings of iron, steel, brass and bronze, thus requiring patternmakers, coremakers, molders and others to tend the furnaces and cupolas. The work was hot in the summer, cold in the winter and potentially hazardous. Even so, skilled and experienced foundrymen could make the spectacular sight of pouring red-hot molten metal into a mold appear almost as effortless as pouring batter into a waffle iron. It wasn't that easy, of course, but they could make it look that way.

The blacksmith, or forging shop, carried on the ancient process of pounding metal into various shapes. Although it had been partially mechanized, the "large and sinewy hands" and "brawny arms" described by Longfellow in "The Village Blacksmith" were still useful characteristics for blacksmiths. In some of the more dramatic operations of the shop, red-hot steel billets were methodically pounded into the desired shapes by massive steam forging hammers manned by skilled hammersmiths and their crews. Again, although it was a process that was a combination of art and science, coupled with hard work, skilled craftsmen could make it look almost as easy as pulling toffee candy.

BOILERMAKER DID LOUD WORK

By its nature, the boiler shop was a place noted for, among other things, its noise. That, however, was simply a byproduct of its work of repairing locomotive boilers and building new ones. Boilermakers could roll heavy steel plates to the proper contour, fasten them together by means of rivets or bolts, and perform the other work required to fabricate a huge vessel that could safely and efficiently generate steam at pressures up to 300 pounds per square inch. It was all in a day's work.

Skilled craftsmen in the machine shop turned out a variety of finished products, ranging from small nuts and bolts to locomotive components weighing several tons. Tool and diemakers were among the most skilled of the machinists. Virtually every part of a locomotive had some work performed on it in the machine shop.

In the erecting shop, locomotives undergoing heavy repairs were lifted off their wheels by massive overhead cranes and stripped of their components, which were overhauled and then reassembled. It was also the location where new locomotives were assembled. Craftsmen other than these who worked in the erecting shop or other areas included welders, sheet-metal workers, electricians and carpenters.

New freight cars were constructed at Roanoke Shops on an outdoor facility known as the "Freight Line." Materials produced in other portions of the shops or purchased from outside vendors were handled by steam-powered cranes and assembled by carmen into the finished product. Passenger cars were repaired in a separate shop. Crafts employed there included cabinet-makers, upholsterers and electricians.

The Test Department was a part of the Motive Power Department. Its staff included several test engineers as well as chemists. Among its responsibilities was the testing and evaluation of materials purchased or produced by the company. From time to time, it performed road tests of locomotives in order to evaluate their performance and improve efficiency.

The Purchasing Department was responsible for purchasing and storing the vast amounts of materials used on the railroad. A large general storehouse was located in Roanoke, with smaller facilities located at outlying points, staffed by storekeepers. The Purchasing Department staff also included a lumber agent, re-



Railroad paint shop office workers were on the job, with an upright typewriter and old telephones. (History Museum photo)

sponsible for acquiring crossties and other timber products, as well as a stationer, responsible for purchasing stationery and office supplies for the system.

The Transportation Department had general supervision over system train schedules, locomotive distribution and car supply and it was responsible for car rental payments with other railroads.

Keeping track of all the money collected and disbursed throughout the system was the function of the Accounting Department. It was staffed by numerous accountants, bookkeepers, auditors, agents and clerks, all of whom had their special areas of responsibility.

Other departments related to finance were the treasurer's office, the payroll department and the taxation department. Claim agents and claim adjusters worked in the Casualty Claim Department, responsible for investigating and settling casualty claims. The Freight Claim Department was a separate section, staffed by freight claim adjusters, who handled claims for damaged or lost freight.

The railway had its own police department, usually known as the Special Service Department. Plain-clothes special agents or railway policemen were stationed throughout the system to protect passengers, employees, company property and lading. They generally kept a low profile but were quick to act when needed.

The Public Relations and Advertising Department was responsible for advertising the company's services and promoting its image. It included the editor, writers and photographers for the company magazine.

The Traffic Department was made up of the company's salesmen, although they were generally known as "traffic managers," "general freight agents" or by similar titles. Although the department heads were in Roanoke, sales agents were located in all important on-line cities as well as outlying locations from coast to coast. The Industrial and Agricultural Department assisted in getting new rail-oriented industries to locate in N&W territory.

As its name implies, the Law Department handled the company's legal matters, including regulatory issues at the local, state and federal level.

As in most corporations, the Executive Department consisted of the top officials and department heads of the company. All were located in Roanoke, except for the treasurer and corporate secretary, who had their offices in Philadelphia, apparently a concession to the Pennsylvania Railroad's heavy financial investment in the Norfolk & Western. Most of the executives were N&W veterans who had worked their way up the corporate ladder through many years of service.

Throughout its long history, the Norfolk & Western was fortunate to have men of high integrity in its leadership. Not only did they serve the company well but they were also leaders in the civic and cultural life of the community.

Educational requirements for railroad employees obviously varied with the particular job. Through the years, the company became more selective, especially as the general level of education rose.

Laborers required minimal educational standards; indeed in the early part of the century and for some years later, a few were illiterate. The standards for helpers were somewhat higher. Apprentices for journeymen positions, as well as locomotive firemen and brakemen, were generally required to have a high school education.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

Most railroad training in the early part of the 20th century was on-the-job. In the unskilled crafts, first-line supervisors and more experienced workers taught the new employees. For mechanics' positions, such as machinists and boilermakers, employees served a four-year apprenticeship before establishing their seniority in a particular craft.

Locomotive firemen, after several years of experience, were required to pass an examination on operating rules and locomotive and air brake operation before being promoted to engineer. Brakemen (trainmen) were similarly required to pass an examination for promotion to conductor.

Dispatchers were promoted from the ranks of telegraphers. Yardmasters and trainmasters were usually promoted from the ranks of clerks, telegraphers and trainmen.

The more skilled levels of clerks, such as stenographers, usually had some business school training. Correspondence courses were offered in a number of fields of study for railroad workers, including the shop crafts.

As time went on, a number of middle management positions were filled by college graduates, although some posts continued to be filled from the ranks.

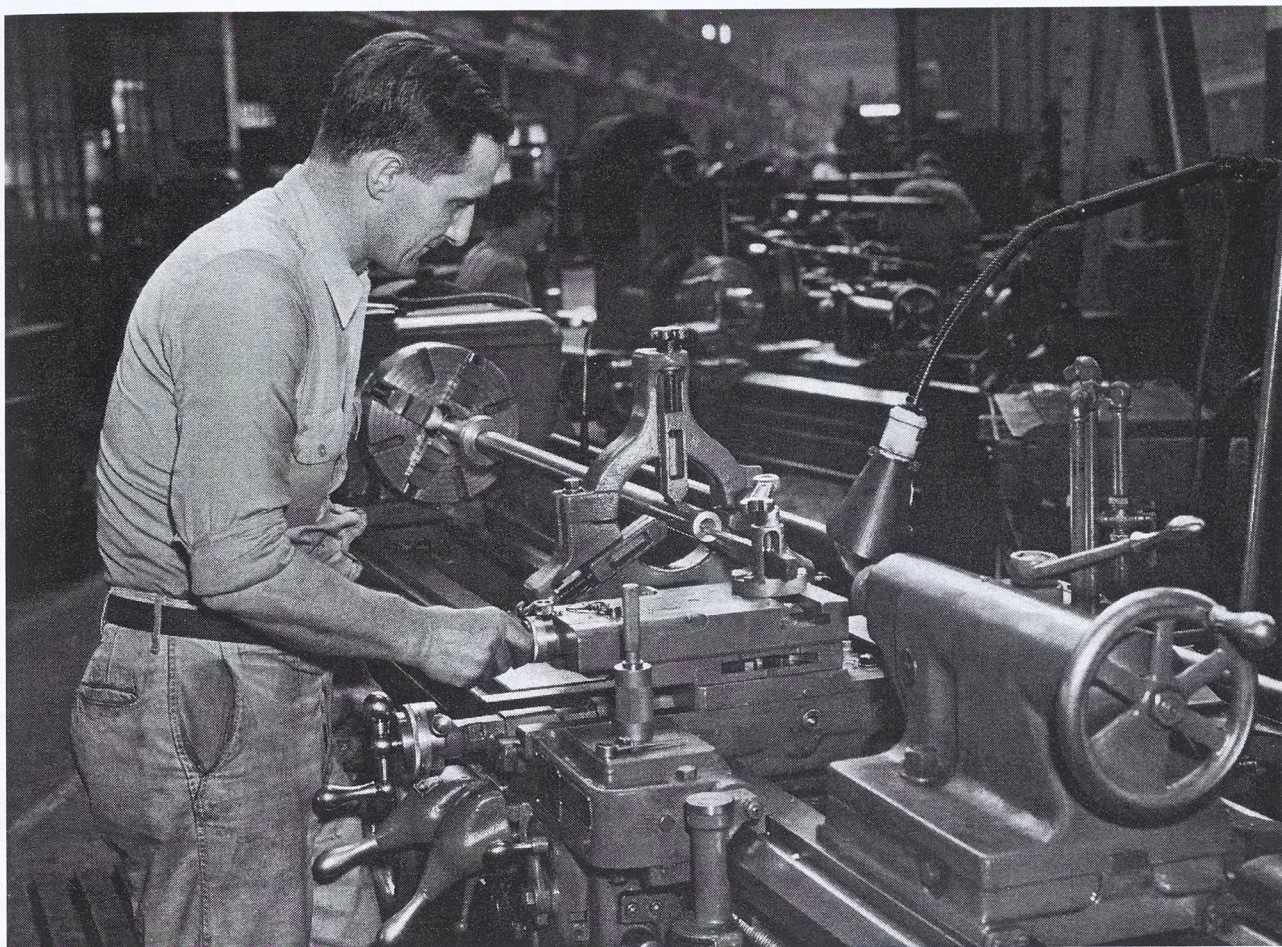
Rank-and-file railroad employees have been organized into craft labor unions for many years. Highly detailed labor agreements covered rates of pay, working conditions and separation of work according to craft.

Employee pensions were covered by a system established by the federal Railroad Retirement Act of 1935. The benefits were somewhat similar to those provided by the Social Security System.

A number of strikes occurred through the years, many of them on one railroad at a time. A nationwide strike by the shop crafts occurred in 1922 but replacement workers were hired and the railroads continued operations.

The passage of the Railway Labor Act in 1926 was intended to avoid strikes by providing for a cooling-off period before a work stoppage could be initiated. However, in May 1946, the nation's railroads were shut down for several days by a strike. A number of threatened strikes in the post-World War II years resulted in temporary government seizure of the railroads. At other times, selective strikes were called against individual carriers or groups of carriers.

In the summer of 1971, the Norfolk & Western was one of several railroads targeted in a selective strike which lasted about two weeks. A more serious situation arose in 1978 when the company was struck by the clerks' union in a work stoppage that lasted for 82 days. During that time, however, the company was able



Precision work was daily routine in the N&W's East End Shops in Roanoke where a worker operated a metal lathe. (History Museum photo)

to operate at a reasonably high level of capacity with two-man supervisory crews and no cabooses. The N&W's success in operating without the cars on the end of trains is generally regarded as an important factor in the eventual elimination of cabooses nationwide and the adoption of two-man crews in freight service.

The second half of the 20th century saw dramatic changes in the railroad industry in the United States. One of the most obvious was the conversion from steam to diesel-electric motive power. Even the N&W, which had remained loyal to steam longer than any other major U.S. railroad, completed the conversion to diesel in 1960. A major result was a substantial reduction in employment related to locomotive maintenance, particularly in such crafts as boilermakers.

After World War II, railroads saw an erosion of much of their business. Jet airplanes took away many of the passengers. Improved highways and particularly the interstate highway system, siphoned off not only passengers but also huge volumes of freight traffic. A number of railroads were forced into bankruptcy; some rather large systems virtually disappeared from the map and a wholesale "rationalization" of the railroads took place. Those factors, coupled with automation and mechanization of many functions formerly handled by manual processes, caused railroad employment to be drastically reduced by the end of the century.

From 1910 until about 1960, there was little change in the railroad map of the United States. Some minor branch lines were abandoned, some subsidiary companies were absorbed by their owners, but only a few new railroad lines were built. In 1959, however, the modern merger movement began when the Norfolk & Western and Virginian railways merged. This was followed in 1964 by an expansion into the Midwest that saw

the Nickel Plate and Wabash railroads included in the Norfolk & Western. In 1982, the Norfolk & Western and Southern railways combined to form Norfolk Southern and the system headquarters was moved to Norfolk.

Meanwhile, most of the other railroads in the Southeast had been consolidated into the CSX system. In the late 1990s, Norfolk Southern and CSX then divided the lines of Conrail between themselves. The result has been that Norfolk Southern and CSX are the two remaining large systems in the East. As for Western Virginia, CSX operates lines in the Alleghany Highlands in the coalfield counties. Norfolk Southern, however, is still the dominant carrier in Southwestern Virginia.

The formation of Amtrak in 1971 relieved most of the U. S. railroads from direct participation in passenger business. As far as the general public was concerned, this action probably removed their most familiar contact with the railroad industry.

Other things have changed as well. Beginning in the 1980s, the nation's railroads were partially deregulated by the government, thus helping to strengthen their ability to compete with other forms of transportation. In an effort to reduce the labor-intensive nature of the industry, the carriers have contracted out some of their maintenance work. Computers and other centralized automatic processes have virtually eliminated agents in the smaller on-line communities and have greatly reduced the number of clerical and accounting positions. Most trains now operate with only two-person crews. And railroading is no longer an exclusive "man's world" as women are now on the payroll in practically all categories of work.

In summary, railroads are now somewhat specialized "wholesalers" transporting freight rather than "retailers" handling a variety of business. They still haul large amounts of certain commodities, such as coal, chemicals, grain, lumber, automobile parts and finished automobiles. By increased involvement in the handling of intermodal traffic, they are endeavoring to relieve some of the congestion on the nation's overburdened highways.

Obviously, the industry is not so prominent in the public eye as it once was. Still, railroads, far from being dead, are vital to the nation's economy. And, even if in reduced numbers, people are still essential to the operations of railroads.

REFERENCES

- Bedingfield, Robert E. The Norfolk and Western Strike of 1978. Roanoke, Va.: Norfolk and Western Railway Co. 1979
- Herr, Kincaid The Louisville and Nashville Railroad. 1850-1942. Louisville, Ky.: L&N Magazine. 1942.
- Lambie, Joseph From Mine to Market. The History of Coal Transportation on the Norfolk and Western Railway. New York: New York University Press. 1954.
- Newton, Louis M. Rails Remembered. Volumes 1, 2 and 3. Roanoke, Va.: Louis M. Newton. 1992, 1996, 1999.
- Powered by People. Roanoke, Va: Norfolk & Western Railway Co. 1957.
- Smith, Robert H. General William Mahone. Frederick J. Kimball and Others. A Short History of the Norfolk & Western Railway. The Newcomen Society in North America. Princeton University Press. 1949.
- Striplin, E.F. Pat. The Norfolk & Western—A History. Roanoke, Va.: Norfolk & Western Railway Co. 1981.

The Virginia & Tennessee Railroad - 150 Years Ago

By George Kegley

The first train "coughed and bellowed" when it reached Big Lick on Nov. 1, 1852

A century and a half ago, on November 1, 1852, the first train, a wood-burning locomotive believed to have been named "Roanoke," pulled into Big Lick from Lynchburg, opening a prosperous era of steam and diesel transportation of freight and passengers. In three decades, Big Lick became Roanoke, recognized as a railroad town, home of the Norfolk and Western Railway.

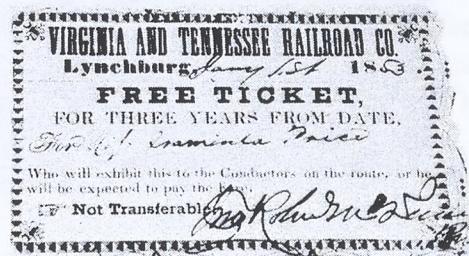
"The road is but completed to Big Lick, and on this day passengers and freights are conveyed at that point," Charles F.M. Garnett, chief engineer of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, wrote to the president and directors in the company's annual report dated Nov. 1, 1852. That proved to be an historic date in Roanoke Valley railroad history.

In this anniversary year, the coming of the railroad was marked by the unveiling of an historic marker at the approximate site of the train's arrival. After the marker ceremony, luncheon talks were given at Hotel Roanoke by John P. Fishwick, chairman of the Norfolk and Western Railway before its merger with the Southern 20 years ago, L.I. Prillaman, vice chairman of Norfolk Southern, successor to N&W, and Louis Newton, a retired assistant vice president of N&W.

Fishwick said that in his time with the railroad (1945-1981), N&W "was a big deal in Roanoke... The East End shops were the blood bank for the community." N&W and Appalachian Power Co. "dominated local politics." Prillaman said that first train in 1852 gave Big Lick a jump start toward becoming the commercial and social center for the western part of the Commonwealth and beyond. Executives of the Virginia & Tennessee were visionaries, but they had no way of knowing just how big their enterprise would become, he said. In the early 1950s, Newton said, N&W was the longest railroad in Virginia, the state's largest taxpayer and the biggest Roanoke Valley employer, with an estimated 9,000 workers, including 3,000 in the shops and another 3,000 in the offices. Norfolk Southern employed about 1,800 in Roanoke in 2002.

Back in 1852, how did residents of the crossroads village of Big Lick see the arrival of the first train from Lynchburg? Charles A. Deyerle of Roanoke County, a small boy at the time, later told a newspaper, "A hush fell upon that assembly when wreaths of smoke were first seen to rise and hover over that cut through which the train was to come. Then the smoke stack came into view, looking like some uncanny and ugly monster, having a small, lady-like waist out of all proportion to its huge bell crown."

Deyerle reported "expressions of awe, fear and consternation... expectancy and wonder" on the



*A free ticket to ride the Va. & Tenn.
for three years, from 1853-1856.
(History Museum photo)*

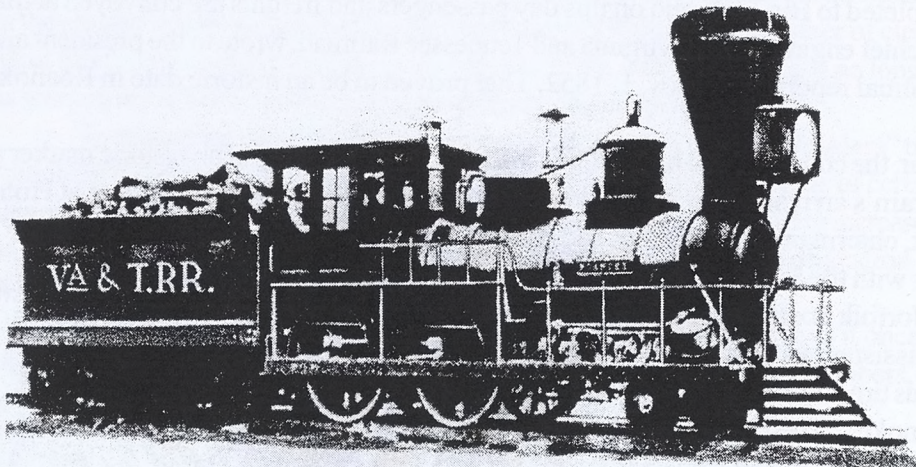
George Kegley, a longtime resident of Roanoke, is a permanent director of the History Museum and editor of the Journal.

faces of the people who had not seen a train before. "Their greatest concern and curiosity centered chiefly in the motive power and its operation," he said. The engine "fainted, breathed, sneezed, coughed, bellowed and complained."

Henry Trout, later mayor of Roanoke, recalled that the first trains were tiny, wood-burning machines, pulling at best three passenger cars and a few freight cars, all they could handle. "But all of us in those days thought they were great machines, and they seemed as big and powerful to the youngsters" as any locomotives the future would bring, Trout said in a reminiscence published in the *Roanoke Evening News* in 1913 and in *Roanoke 1740-1982*, by Clare White.

Another brief eye-witness account came from W.H. Tinsley, son of Benjamin Tinsley, who was an owner of Elmwood, the plantation house once standing above Roanoke's Main Public Library. In a short history of Elmwood by Sydney Taylor Alexander, W.H. Tinsley wrote:

"Our family divided their summers between my Grandfathers Trent in Appomattox and Tinsley in Sydnorsville, Franklin County. That year, 1852, we left our home in Richmond, Va., via packet boat for Lynchburg, where we caught this first train for Big Lick. There we took a stage for Rocky Mount where we were met by a big four-horse 'new town' wagon, filled with straw, and had the time of our life riding to Grand-Pas. The roads were too bad to drive other vehicles."



A Virginia & Tennessee Railroad steam engine was shined and ready to roll in the 1850s. (History Museum photo)

In his annual report for 1852, O.G. Clay, retiring president of the Virginia and Tennessee, rejoiced at the planned completion of the railroad

to Salem, then a 50-year-old town, but he did not mention the Nov. 1 arrival at Big Lick, a small community. Clay said the new railroad was earning revenue of \$9,000 a month after it was built to Liberty (Bedford today) and he anticipated that would rise to \$10,000 when trains began serving Salem.

When the first train reached Salem on Dec. 15, 1852, local townspeople threw a party with oratory, barbecue, a military salute and fireworks, according to Norwood Middleton's *Salem, a Virginia Chronicle*.

In 1952, the centennial of the coming of the first train was celebrated with a week-long observance, featuring a reenactment of that arrival, a \$5-a-plate dinner addressed by former Gov. William Tuck, a display of a miniature railroad in the Roanoke passenger station, exhibits in stores, civic club programs and modern locomotives. A bronze medallion commemorated the event and a plaque was placed in the station.

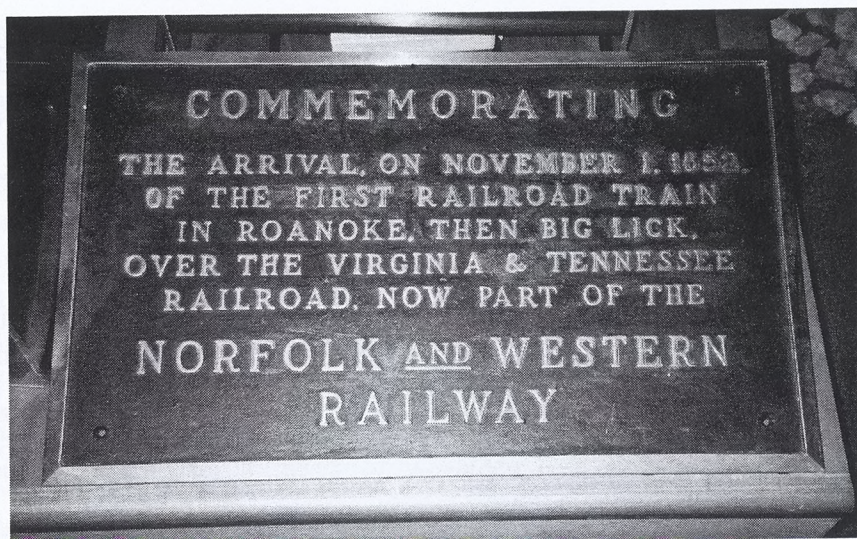
"None of us get too old to enjoy the thrill of a locomotive," Tuck said. "The people of the little village of Big Lick must have been thrilled when the first locomotive came into that town." R.H. Smith, N&W president, talked about the arrival of that first train "over the newly laid and probably somewhat shaky track" of the Virginia and Tennessee. "There wasn't any Roanoke then. From the best record I am able to get, there weren't

even any houses close to the new track...the hamlet was known as Big Lick."

Through the years, writers have not spared language to describe that first train. "...[G]oggle-eyed citizens of Big Lick and the surrounding countryside heard for the first time the shrill whistle of the locomotive echo across the hills and watched with mingled feelings as the puffing monster rumbled into their community," said R.R. Horner, longtime head of the N&W Advertising and Magazine Department, in *The Commonwealth* magazine in October 1938.

Irish immigrants and slaves provided much of the labor for the construction of that first rail line, according to Bedford County census records. Building a railroad was not an easy task through the rocks, hills and streams of Southwest Virginia. Construction of the 204 miles between Lynchburg and Bristol took more than six years. The new line started at an elevation of 767 feet at Lynchburg and reached a height of 2,594 feet near Rural Retreat. Workers built 254 bridges, including one almost a mile long across New River. They built five tunnels; one near Christiansburg was 724 feet long, according to Elizabeth Dabney Coleman, writing in *Virginia Cavalcade*.

When the Virginia and Tennessee was completed to Bristol, John Robinson McDaniel, president of the railroad, happily wrote to his board of directors, according to Horner: "You are not alone in your rejoicing. The merchant, the mechanic and the farmer unite with you. It is a successful termination of one of the mighty struggles of our good old Commonwealth to throw off the trappings of vassalage she has worn so long. It is a great advance up the ascent of commercial independence. The winter of your trouble is passed. A genial spring is now opening with its budding of future prosperity."



A plaque commemorating the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first train was placed in the Norfolk & Western passenger station in 1952. The plaque is in the History Museum collection today.



"A Century of Service to Roanoke" was celebrated on the obverse side of this medallion struck in 1952 for the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first train. The reverse side portrays that first engine. (Medallion is owned by Don Piedmont of Roanoke)



Working with Winston Link at the End of Steam Power on the N&W

By Thomas H. Garver

In the late summer of 1957, Winston Link was looking for a part-time assistant, I was looking for part-time work, and I took the job. I'd graduated from college in suburban Philadelphia the previous year and subsequently moved to New York City to work in business at just about the lowest level (and for a very brief time). Winston had made photographs at the college for an admissions brochure a year before I'd started. A college friend assisted Winston in getting around the campus and setting up his photos and I met Winston through him.

This was the sort of work that provided the bread and butter for Winston's photographic practice, which was a mixture of industrial plant photos, work for corporate annual reports and college admissions brochures, general work for advertising and public relations firms, and product illustrations. He shot a few covers for *Popular Science* magazine, and did a bit of fashion work too, but his real specialty was taking on complex industrial projects which demanded careful planning, precise lighting, and might even be a bit dangerous.

After I'd been in New York about a year, I left my job in business and began studying art restoration at the Brooklyn Museum. This was a part-time activity, and I needed some additional work, just as Winston lost his previous part-time assistant. Our needs dovetailed precisely. His studio was then in a small old building on East 34th Street, just a couple of blocks east of the Empire State Building. He had a floor-through space, with a little reception room, where no one ever sat, a dressing room, large studio at the front of the space and two darkrooms at the back. I worked a couple of days a week, making prints and being a general "gofer" and assistant.

By that time, Winston had been working on his documentation of the Norfolk & Western Railway for more than two years, so he had a very good idea of what he wanted to capture before it was too late. During the summer of 1956, Winston had taken his studio apart so that he could create the first exhibition of photos he'd made along the N&W. These were very large prints, and the installation, influenced by the Museum of Modern Art's "Family of Man" exhibition, was created by Salem Tamer, a graphic designer and old friend of the photographer. It had been a beautiful show, and Winston's intent had been both to generate new business by demonstrating his capabilities as an industrial photographer, and to see if he could sell any of the prints for commercial or advertising use. Winston later talked a bit wistfully about this exhibition, having come to the realization that there was just no real commercial value to the photos he was making of the railroad, particularly as his goal was to document a fast vanishing technology.

Remember that in the 1950s, everyone was striving to be "modern." The idea of historic preservation was reserved for only a tiny fraction of the most important and historic buildings, the use of revival architectural styles was unthinkable, and things old, particularly if they were just moderately old, were of little interest.

Thomas H. Garver of Madison, Wis. gave a talk on his work with O. Winston Link at an April 2002 meeting of the History Museum. He is the organizing curator of the O. Winston Link Museum, now under construction in the old Norfolk and Western Railway passenger station in Roanoke. Garver, who once worked as Link's assistant, is a graduate of Haverford College and the University of Minnesota. He has worked as a museum curator, director and writer for more than 40 years. All photographs used within this article are by O. Winston Link. Courtesy O. Winston Link Museum and O. Winston Link Trust.

Splendid Victorian buildings were coming down all over the country and whole sections of cities were giving way to bulldozer "urban renewal."

There was little concern about the loss of steam on the railroads, and certainly none on the part of the railroads themselves. It was the "price of progress," and progress was moving fast. For me, however, what Winston was doing in making these photographs made perfect sense. Even though I had taken a number of history of art courses in college (and would go on to take a graduate degree in the subject), I had loved machinery from my earliest years. I had watched steam engines on land and on the Great Lakes. I had even collected a few old clocks by then, and would certainly have collected more had my living accommodations permitted it.

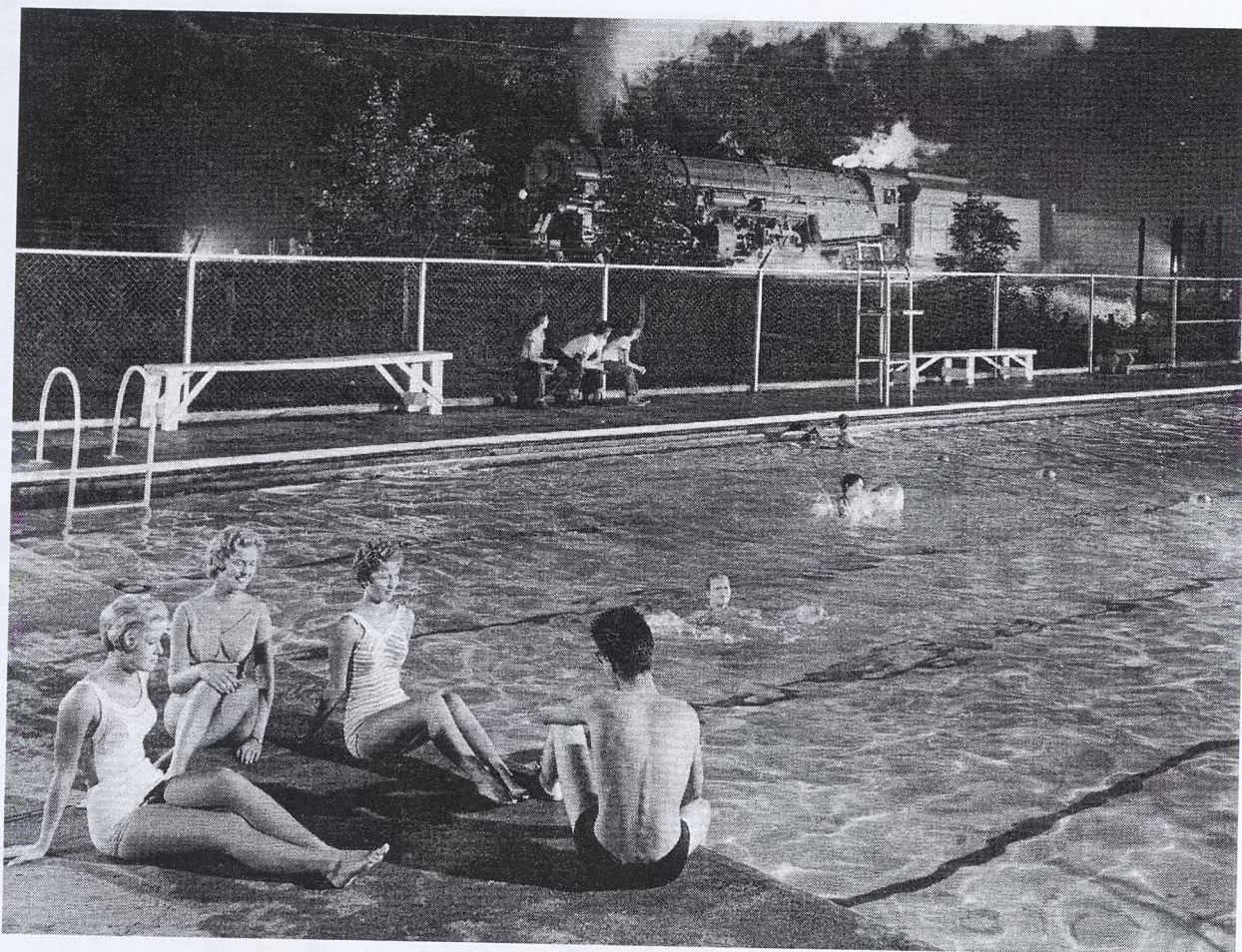
Winston approached the task of documenting the Norfolk & Western Railway with the inevitability of an assignment that he might have received from one of his clients. When he received a job, I do not remember him talking much about whether he liked or disliked what he was asked to do (although he had plenty to say about the people with whom he had to work, some of it not very complimentary). If Winston took on a job for one of his clients, he would give it his best efforts. He seemed to feel exactly the same way about the assignment of documenting the last years of the N&W, only in this case it was an assignment he gave himself. I made three trips with Winston, the first one during the last two weeks of October, 1957.

The N&W had let Winston know that they would be replacing steam on the Abingdon Branch with diesel power as of December 1, and Winston wanted to make more photos there. This was his fourth trip to the Abingdon Branch. He began his record in mid-June, 1955, with a two-day trip, riding the train and using a Rolleiflex, a small, hand-held camera that he carried on a strap around his neck. He produced slightly more than 200 images this first trip, making photos both from the train, and hopping off to photograph when the little engine, with its mixed load of freight cars, a baggage-express car and a passenger car, all ancient, stopped at one of the many stations along the line.

Winston came back three more times, in October of 1955, again in October, 1956, and the final trip of October, 1957. He always came in the fall because of the beautiful foliage at that time of year. While he did not often shoot in color, the photos he took on my first trip with him were almost all in color. He just couldn't resist



Machinist O.N. Carroll (left) and engine hostler R.H. Carrier stand by the huge tools used in the repair of steam locomotives in the Bristol roundhouse in October 1957.



Roy Zider, Winston Link's nephew and a city kid from New York, posed with several young women at a Welch, W.Va. swimming pool as a hotshot freight moved westward on the N&W main line in the background, August 1958.

the image of the black engine and little train moving through such beautiful trees and alongside little streams of clear water that seemed to change names with every turn of the road. Winston brought his two 4x5 view cameras with him, for those were what he used when he was making "serious" photographs.

But he brought along something else this trip, a mammoth and extremely heavy tape recorder. Early the previous year, Winston and his then-assistant, George Thom, had made some recordings on a very modest home tape recorder, to provide "background" for Winston's studio exhibition. The sounds were so effective that Winston, operating as he did when he bought photo equipment, researched the market and bought a very good tape recorder. All the cameras, heavy tripods for the 4x5 view cameras, film, lenses, filters and the tape recorder were packed into the back seat and trunk of his 1952 Buick convertible.

Before leaving for any of these trips, Winston would prepare and check over his supplies with the precision and care of an explorer departing on an expedition. Overnight shipping services didn't exist then, and it would have been a disaster if some important piece of equipment had been left behind for it could not have been replaced in rural western Virginia or West Virginia. It was an overnight trip to Virginia then, down U.S. Highway 11, stopping at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, or Front Royal for the night. On that first trip, we spent most of our time at the Martha Washington Inn in Abingdon, a bit seedy then, and we would be up at dawn or before to head out on the Abingdon Branch to get set up for the first shot of the day. We could get in two or perhaps three photos by setting up in advance, making the photo as the train came by, then quickly putting the equip-

ment in the back of the Buick and rushing on to the next spot Winston had staked out.

He seemed to have them completely memorized, and he knew every turn in the very winding road between Abingdon and West Jefferson, North Carolina, the southern terminus of the Abingdon Branch. He had a remarkable visual memory and could vividly describe the photo he wanted to make, including camera placement and how he had planned the lighting. As the Abingdon Branch never ran at night, we made no night photos that trip, but we put our evenings to good use.

Instead of making photos, we made tape recordings. One of Winston's favorite spots was the roundhouse in Bristol. It was small, and the locomotives for the Abingdon Branch and local freight service were maintained here. Occasionally one of the magnificent J Class engines, used on the through passenger runs that connected with the Southern Railway in Bristol, would be found here, but usually the engines were small and old. We made some wonderful tape recordings here, and several photos as well, including one of my very favorite portraits of two locomotive workers, standing proudly behind their collection of massive tools.

On Sundays, when the Abingdon Branch trains weren't running, we went up to Roanoke and Blue Ridge to make more photos and recordings, for there was no time to waste. I remember stopping at the Roanoke station, not to make photos, but so that Winston could say hello to some of his friends there. At this time Winston had been divorced for almost 20 years, and the people he had come to know on the railroad or along the line had become his surrogate family. In "glamorous" New York City, Winston lived in a furnished apartment in a tatty apartment hotel a few blocks from his studio, and I think he tried to live as simply, inexpensively and conveniently as possible so that he could devote as much money as was necessary for the N&W project.

N.W. 362 / Summer Evening, Lithia, Virginia





In January 1959, near the end of steam on the N&W, this A Class locomotive was working hard as it began ascending the Blue Ridge grade, east of Roanoke.

From time to time, he would grumble about what the project was costing him, but that was just about the only difference I can recall between this “assignment” and the ones he received from others. A few years before he died, Winston told me that he’d spent about \$20,000 on the project, an amount equivalent to about \$125,000 today, a lot of money for a one-person photo studio to provide, without any hope of return, for Winston financed the entire project himself. A recent look through Winston’s carefully maintained expense logs shows that the cost of staying in small southern towns then was modest. A night in a decent motel cost then what a good breakfast might today, and a solid breakfast—country ham, eggs, toast, coffee—was about a dollar or a bit more.

When we came into Roanoke, we took some back roads and headed for the Blue Ridge grade on the main line, near Vinton and Bonsack. Winston had found a place there where he wanted to photograph. It was a narrow road bridge which ran over a cut, so the main line of the N&W was just below our feet. He could also move from side to side of the tracks, thus changing the shooting angles, which was important as the lighting changed. Because it was an upgrade, we knew that any train coming through would be working hard and would be making the wonderful synchronized racket of a steam locomotive pulling upgrade at full throttle which was perfect both for photos and recordings, for the engines would be producing huge clouds of steam and smoke, as well as making loud but beautiful music to our ears.

At first we paid to use some electricity for the recorder from a nearby house, but when the homeowner unplugged us during a nice recording, Winston knew that he had to build a self contained power supply, which was ready for the next trip I made with him, in late May and early June of 1958. By this time, he had released



Old Maude, pulling a load of oak logs, came along in October 1956 just as Link started to photograph the arrival of Train 201, southbound to West Jefferson, N.C., at the little station at Green Cove in Washington county—the last stop on the three percent grade up to White Top Mountain, the highest point east of the Rockies reached by a regularly scheduled passenger train. The West Jefferson line closed years ago, and the rail bed from White Top to Abingdon has been converted into the Virginia Creeper Trail.

his first LP recording, “Sounds of Steam Railroading,” and it had been very well received. It was selling well and making some money, so this trip was devoted specifically to making recordings for the next LP.

Winston had long wanted to document the sounds of an entire trip from onboard the train, so the N&W obligingly allowed us to set up in the baggage car directly behind the engines of Trains 15 and 16, the west- and eastbound Cavaliers. We spent about 15 1/2 hours in that baggage car, from Roanoke to Williamson, W. Va., and back again, first behind the J-611 (now preserved at the Virginia Transportation Museum). After a couple of hours in Williamson, when we recharged our power supply’s batteries, it was back to Roanoke behind J-605, which Winston had photographed so beautifully while it was being washed in the Shaffers Crossing yards a couple of years earlier. It was a magical day, and a powerful vision of another life for me as we wheeled along the Tug Fork and through the gritty mining towns of McDowell County, West Virginia.

My final trip with Winston was in August, 1958, and we again returned to McDowell County, working in Welch, North Fork, and Panther. We were making night photos, and Winston’s teen-age nephew, Roy Zider, was along for extra muscle. Winston Link is best known for the photos he took of the railroad and its surroundings at night, which he did so that he could control the light, and thus focus on the subjects he wished to emphasize, while largely eliminating distracting elements through his selective lighting techniques.

The trip produced two of Winston’s best known photos, “Swimming Pool, Welch, West Virginia,” in

which Roy got to put on his swimming suit and meet some of the local girls at the pool, and "*Main Line on Main Street, North Fork, West Virginia.*" In North Fork the valley was so narrow that a number of the old business buildings (now all demolished) fronted on the main line of the railroad. We were doing two tasks in North Fork, making photos, and sound recordings, too.

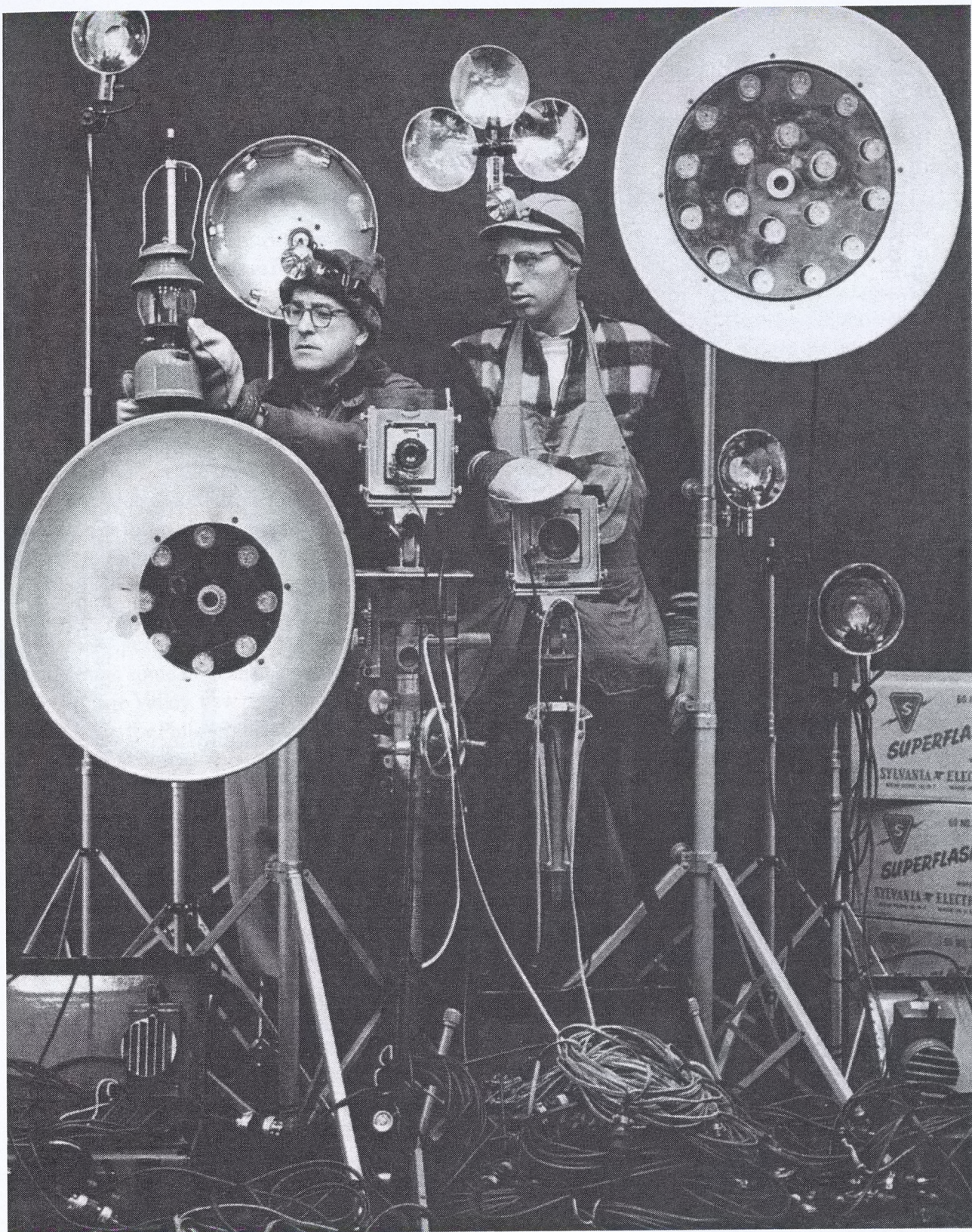
Because this was a trip in which night photos would be made, we had to tow a small trailer behind the Buick, filled with the flash equipment and light stands. Again, Winston had the photos well in his mind, and I recall that in Welch, he must have seen the municipal swimming pool on one of his scouting trips which he took by train, because it was far from any through roads. Setting up was a disciplined business. Winston invariably handled the cameras, tripods and the power supply for the flash units which he had designed and built. It was small, about the size of a woman's makeup case, but it contained sufficient power to fire up to 60 flash bulbs and three cameras at once. Roy Zider and I would handle unpacking the lighting equipment and laying out the electric cables as Winston instructed us to. He would then move in and we would set up the light stands and brace them against any wind, plug in all the cables and fit the reflectors with Sylvania No. 2 flashbulbs (which have not been manufactured in decades).

Calculating the amount of light necessary for each photo was an exacting job, and this was well before the advent of hand held calculators, so it took Winston some time to make his computations. Occasionally, he would set up a portable darkroom so he could develop the sheets of film on the spot if he felt unsure of his figures, but usually the film waited to be processed until his return to New York. Needless to say, our arrival in many of these small towns was a major event, but we were always very warmly received, and everyone was eager to help, although sometimes we had to ask them to keep silent during our recording sessions. That August trip was my last with Winston, and after about a week or 10 days, I boarded the Powhatan Arrow in Welch, and left for Cincinnati, and on to graduate school.

I have been asked on many occasions to describe Winston's rationale for making these photos, which remain unique to this day in their photographic achievement, and I have to answer that I never asked him then why he did it, and he rarely said much about it. We both loved steam locomotives, and places and objects that had a long and mellow history. That was enough for me then, but since that time I have thought about the old saying that one contributes to the world, "each in his own way," and that was true for Winston. He wanted to see this mode of transportation, and the mode of life that it supported, preserved in some manner, and the best way that he could do that was through his skills as a photographer. He even thought about buying the Abingdon Branch, and the N&W said that it would sell it to him for the bargain price of \$2,000 per mile, about \$110,000, total, but they also advised him against doing it. It was a maintenance nightmare. Winston finally had to agree and reluctantly dropped the idea.

Quite simply, the creation of this unique group of photos was a task that Winston Link "just had to do." Certainly he was motivated by a desire to demonstrate his absolutely preeminent photographic technique, and he may have thought about the benefit to history these photos would provide, but there was absolutely no consideration of their being "art." In fact, Winston knew nothing about art or the art world. He might have gone to a museum a few times, and he loved Currier & Ives prints, which he collected in a small way because they were old and often had trains in them, but the idea of "art photography" was highly suspect.

He wanted to make good photos, ones that would be appreciated, and one of his N&W images did receive an award given by a camera company in 1956, but the thought of making a photograph to create or encapsulate "beauty" was completely beyond his ken. That was just as well for the Norfolk and Western project. Winston applied his innate compositional sensibilities (for he never studied photography), and brought his engineering background and almost 20 years of commercial photographic experience to this task in exactly the same way as he might for B.F. Goodrich, Texaco or Volkswagen, which were some of his clients. What we may be especially grateful for is the fact that Winston Link wanted to record "everything," to make a complete statement of what he found in the mountains and valleys of western Virginia and West Virginia through which this railroad passed. And for that we must be grateful.



These are not astronauts in space paraphernalia. In anticipation of an exhibition of early N&W photos in his studio in 1956, Winston Link photographed himself (left) and his assistant, George Thom, with the special equipment needed to make night photos using a synchronized flash.



**ROANOKE PASSENGER STATION
PHASE 2 - RENOVATION
ROANOKE TRAINSTATION, L.P.**



The Turnpikes of Southwest Virginia

By Kenneth W. Keller

In antebellum western Virginia, few subjects raised more debate than the transportation development of Virginia west of the Blue Ridge. Western Virginians realized that the economic prosperity of their region depended upon the construction of an effective transportation network, primarily of roads, to link western Virginia settlement to markets.

Yet eastern Virginians controlled the government of the Commonwealth and most of its capital, so the government at Richmond supported such transportation developments with lukewarm enthusiasm. The Commonwealth's half-hearted support for western Virginia transportation projects did not discourage western promoters from dreaming of a network of toll roads that would help westerners get their products to their customers. So by 1860, the enthusiasm and indignation of the west spurred interest in dozens of projects that honeycombed western Virginia with turnpikes—both planned and completed.

Turnpikes, the favored roads of western Virginia's internal improvement planners, were toll roads, access to which was controlled by a gate made of a long staff or pike. When a traveler paid the toll to travel on the road, the toll collector would raise or turn the pike, hence the name "turnpike." Westerners hoped that trans-Blue Ridge Virginia was well on its way to becoming a "Great Thoroughfare." The turnpike was the key to these aspirations well before anyone had ever seen a railroad in the west.

Developing toll roads as a way to bring market goods to customers probably originated in England in the Middle Ages. The American colonists brought knowledge of English turnpikes with them to North America, and although some English colonists proposed transportation improvements that would link eastern seaports with the Ohio Valley, few projects began until after American independence. The first long inter-city road in America was the Philadelphia-Lancaster Turnpike, finished in 1794; other turnpikes appeared in New England soon after that time.

Coastal Virginia had a toll road near Alexandria as early as 1785. Since up until 1815 the American population concentrated near the seaports, most people used coastal rivers and the ocean for transport. When after the Revolution population began to cross the Appalachians, the spread of interior settlements triggered a demand for roads. Pioneers brought the Philadelphia-Lancaster road west and south to the uplands of the Carolinas before the American Revolution, so that by the end of the eighteenth century, freight wagons, horses, mules, oxen, pioneer families, slaves, circuit riders, artists, cattle herders, con men, and nobility all traversed the unpaved and rutted route from the Potomac to the South.

So many people were moving west from Virginia that easterners began to fear the depopulation of the older settlements. By 1816, these fears led to a drive for "internal improvements," as transportation improvements were called. Eastern Virginians reasoned that they might stem the tide of emigration by promoting the economic development of Virginia through improvements to Potomac River navigation, a canal from the James River to the Kanawha and the Ohio, and interior roadways. In 1816 the Commonwealth created the Board of Public Works to supervise the construction of such transportation improvements.

The Board suggested to the legislature that among the first projects it study should be a number that benefited western Virginia, including the improvement of the navigation of the Roanoke River and the establish-

Dr. Kenneth W. Keller, a history professor at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, gave this talk at the April, 2001 meeting of the History Museum. Keller, who has taught at Mary Baldwin since 1981, holds a doctorate from Yale University. He is researching the Valley Turnpike.

ment of a road from Abingdon to Lynchburg along with one from Salem to Winchester. But despite its suggestions, the idea of a government actively promoting the economic development of a state was alien to the dominant Jeffersonian creed of early nineteenth century Virginia, whose leaders favored states' rights, frugality, limited government, and a strongly laissez faire economy, which the state left alone.

In Virginia, if there were to be transportation projects, private investors, not the state, would have to initiate them, and, although the state might be partially invested in these projects, the primary impetus for

transportation development would have to come from private interests. Accordingly, internal improvements in antebellum Virginia were "mixed enterprises," or ones in which both private stockholders and the Commonwealth were involved.

Soon after the creation of the Board of Public Works, groups of private investors approached the legislature for charters of incorporation for various road projects, many of them in western Virginia. The investors wanted the right to sell stock and to enjoy the protection that corporate status provided. In exchange for their special corporate status, the companies were supposed to report annually to the Board of Public Works and seat representatives of the Commonwealth on their boards of di-

SOUTH-WESTERN ROAD — We announced some time since that nine miles of the South-western Road had been let out to contractors, in sections of three miles each. The road commences at Salem, and the nine miles now under contract will complete it to Lafayette in Montgomery county. One section of the road has already been commenced. We understand that it has not yet been decided which branch of the Roanoke, the road will traverse from Lafayette. It has generally been thought, heretofore, that the Macadamized road would be constructed up the south fork, by way of Christiansburg; but we learn that the Lynchburg Company talk of charging \$7000 for the use of seven miles of their mud pike, over which the road will have to pass; and if such should be the fact, the new Road will most likely take the route of the North fork, by way of Blacksburg.

Fincastle Whig

Announcement of a contract to build the Southwestern Turnpike nine miles from Salem to Lafayette in August 1846, Fincastle Whig. (Archives Research Services, The Library of Virginia)

rectors in proportion to the amount of stock the Commonwealth controlled in the company.

In 1816 the legislature responded by chartering a Valley Turnpike (which would run from Winchester to Harrisonburg, and was later extended to Staunton) and a Southwestern Turnpike (to run from Salem to the Tennessee line). In the following legislative session of 1817-1818, the legislature similarly chartered companies to construct a turnpike from Staunton to the James River and another from Salem to Lynchburg. So many requests for such turnpikes came to Richmond that the Commonwealth enacted a general turnpike law, which set basic requirements that all incorporated turnpike companies had to fulfill and gave to the Board of Public Works supervisory powers over the companies. It also set toll rates for all turnpikes and established rules for the paving, grading, and marking of the new roads.

Unfortunately, the ambitious plans of Virginia's turnpike advocates were soon dashed, for the financial depression of 1819 plunged the newly incorporated turnpike projects into bankruptcy. Moreover, bitter rivalries within the Commonwealth between the east and the west, and between advocates of roads and of canals and railroads, complicated the efforts of leaders to revive the projects throughout the 1820s.

Construction expenses often exceeded initial estimates, so the companies had to seek the legislature's permission to sell more capital stock to finance their operations. Often companies had to be completely reorganized, and the legislature had to enact statutes to reincorporate them.

With the revival of the economy in the early 1830s, interest in turnpike development reawakened, so that the legislature began creating or reviving turnpike companies again. In the legislature of 1829-30, the General Assembly incorporated the Fincastle and Blue Ridge Turnpike Company. Between 1830 and 1838, the legislature chartered routes from Staunton to Jennings Gap in the Alleghenies, to Covington, and to the Potomac; from Fincastle to Blacksburg and Buchanan; from Fincastle to Danville through Rocky Mount; from Clifton Forge to Natural Bridge; from Lexington to Richmond and to the James River; and from Salem to New Castle, to Bent Mountain, and to Buchanan.

By 1840, the legislature had chartered 47 turnpike companies, but construction progress on these roadways stopped because of the effects of another financial depression from 1837 to 1842. When the turnpike craze reawakened, by 1860 the state had chartered 190 toll roads, with many of them in western Virginia. Pikes established in the 1840s and 1850s included the Howardsville Turnpike from southern Augusta to the James; the Salem and Harrisville Turnpike; the Staunton and North River Gap; the Harrisonburg and Warm Springs Turnpike; and the Salem and Rappahannock Turnpike.

Western Virginia seemed particularly adapted to the turnpike. Its needs for roads were great. Once a sufficiently large population had settled west of the Blue Ridge, the land to its west provided ample materials for building the road. Unlike eastern Virginia, much of the west lay on a base of limestone that could be used for building the road and paving it. The best roads in the era of the turnpike were paved according to the specifications of Robert McAdam, a Scottish engineer.

According to McAdam's design, roads were to be paved to the depth of at least one foot by three layers of rock, called "metal." A layer of larger rocks would be put down first, then smaller rocks on top of those, and on top of those yet a third layer of even smaller stones. Road builders would hire companies of workers to break the rock into appropriate sizes, and inspectors would measure the rock with iron rings for each size before it could be laid down. To help drainage, the surface of the road of the "high" way was to be above the sides of the road, which were to be ditched and lined with flat rocks.

All the rocks necessary for the construction of such a "macadamized" surface could be found among the limestone of the west, although in many places it would have to be blasted from the land first. The abundance of paving material made Virginia west of the Blue Ridge the section of the state with the most extensive macadamized roads—both completed and proposed.

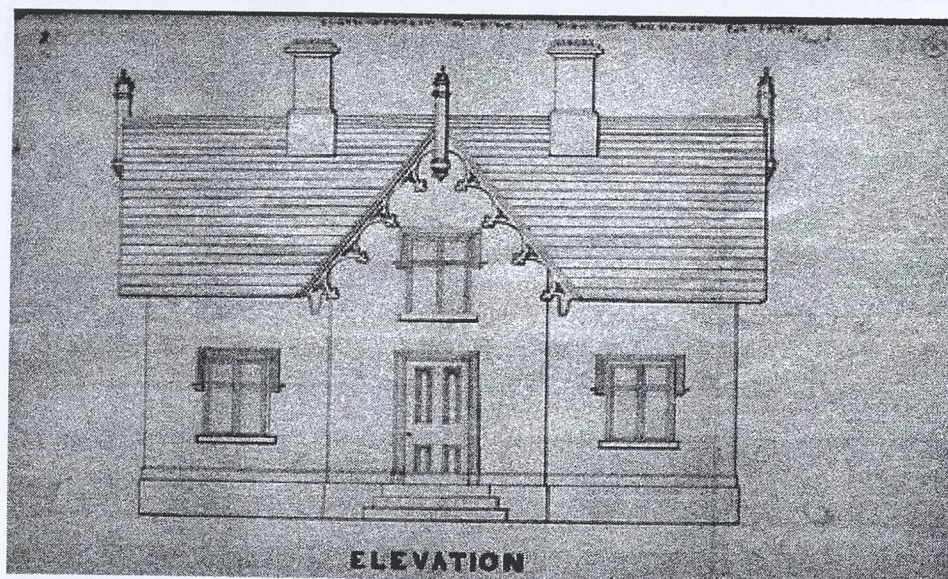
However, other characteristics of western Virginia made it more difficult to build roads there in spite of the availability of building material. There was both a shortage of capital and a shortage of labor in western Virginia. Virginia's wealth was concentrated in the Tidewater, so it was difficult to sell enough stock in the

Rates of Toll ON THE LAFAYETTE AND INGLES FERRY TURNPIKE COMPANY, FOR A SECTION OF 5 MILES.	
For every score of Sheep or Hogs,	3 cents.
For every score of Cattle,	6 "
For every Horse, Mare, Mule or Gelding, 1,	"
For every two wheeled riding Carriage, 10,	"
<small>For every two wheeled riding carriage carriage</small> For every Cart or Wagon, the wheels whereof do not exceed 4 inches in width, $3\frac{1}{2}$ cents, for every four footed animal drawing the same.	
<small>Printed at the Office of the Virginia Democrat.</small>	

Rates of toll on the Lafayette and Ingles Ferry Turnpike, 1848. (Archives Research Services, The Library of Virginia)

turnpike enterprises to properly finance their construction. The scattered nature of western Virginia settlement, and the demands on workers for agricultural labor, construction and other pursuits made it hard to find enough workers to break the rock and to pave and maintain the road. Moreover, the twisting mountain ranges, numerous rivers, and steep grades presented further obstacles to western Virginia road builders. Nevertheless, there was no shortage of projects for transforming western Virginia.

One of the most ambitious was the creation of the Southwestern Turnpike, a road of approximately 150 miles that was supposed to run from Buchanan to the Tennessee line, though it was never completed. Its advocates clearly wished to connect the southwest with distant markets rather than with ones in the southern part of the Commonwealth. It was one of the first projects to be suggested when the Board of Public Works



*Elevation for a toll house on the Southwestern Turnpike, February 1848.
(Archives Research Services, The Library of Virginia)*

began its operations in 1816. First chartered in that year, it faced numerous reorganizations, having been re-chartered in 1831, 1835, and finally in 1846. It was to connect southwest Virginia with the James River, whose canal locks reached Buchanan but were never to go farther west.

The James was supposed to give southwest Virginia access to the "principal markets" of Virginia, according to its supporters, who met in 1841 in a convention in Christiansburg to plead for a macadamized road from

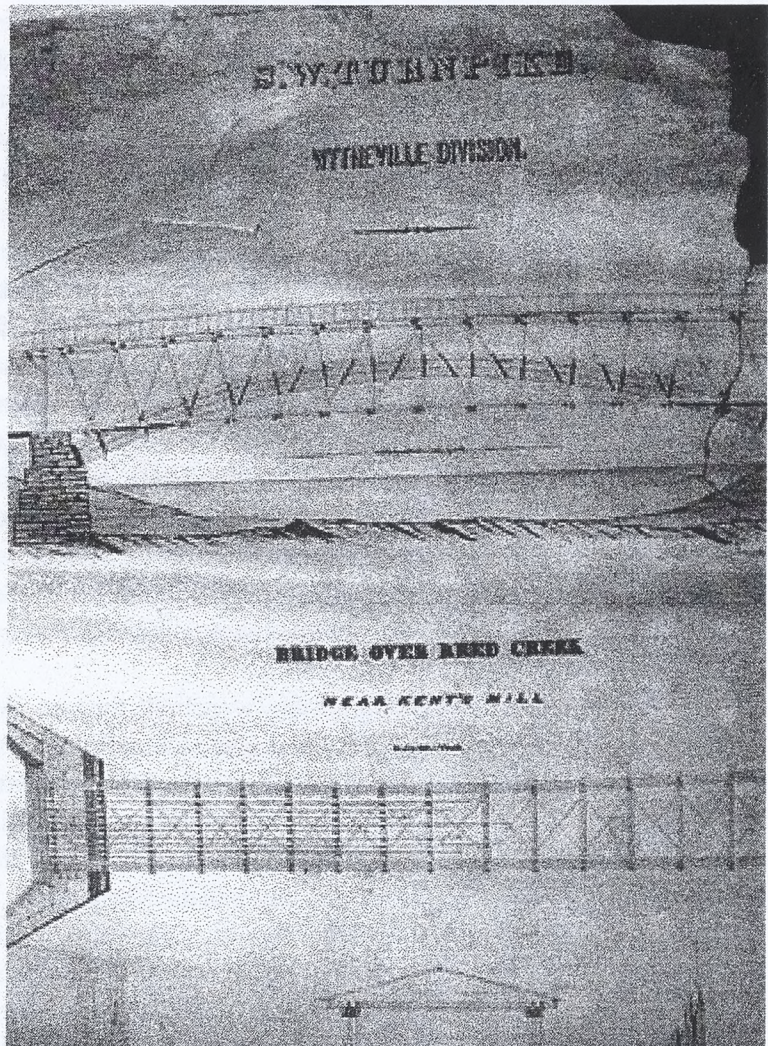
Tennessee to Buchanan. Its promoters, believing that a public necessity should be a public project, urged that the road be built entirely by the state, since all private companies organized to build the road had failed. According to the petitioners, southwestern Virginia suffered from a "destitution of commercial facilities" for its iron ore, salt, lead, and gypsum. Not only would a road provide an outlet for such commodities, but also it would draw trade from east Tennessee to the James and to Richmond.

Other states were surpassing Virginia, the petitioners warned: Tennessee was extending the old wagon road that lay in its right-of-way to Knoxville, and perhaps even to Nashville. A railroad was being built from Charleston, South Carolina, to Augusta, Georgia. It, too, might tap the trade that Richmond would lose without a public road. There were already at least 50,000 tons of freight shipped annually on the crude road that ran through the Great Valley from the southwest. The glittering economic opportunities that lay ahead could hardly be imagined. Apparently not, for it took the legislature another four years to recharter the road, and even with its rechartering, the road was never completed to Tennessee, for construction stopped just south of Marion, and only a small portion of that part of the road that was supposed to be macadamized was ever paved. By 1871 the Southwestern Turnpike Company folded, and the road right-of-way was turned over to the commissioners of the counties through which it ran.

Other turnpikes had less ambitious goals, but experienced even less success. Some towns in the Great

Valley simply needed turnpikes to get their produce to neighboring Virginia cities that had better river or rail connections or to carry travelers to the springs. Botetourt County needed a turnpike to run from Fincastle to Salem so it could carry its goods through Salem across the Blue Ridge to Lynchburg. This route was supposed to provide a means by which the herdsmen of Botetourt could drive their cattle to Lynchburg, Richmond, and Petersburg. It did not pay as a turnpike, so in 1856 the legislature turned over the Lynchburg and Salem Turnpike to Bedford, Roanoke, and Botetourt counties. In 1860, the legislature authorized the counties of Augusta and Albemarle to purchase the Staunton and James River Turnpike, so another of the turnpike projects became a county road. The abandonment of the smaller turnpikes by their companies was becoming so frequent by 1860 that the legislature established a procedure by which an abandoned turnpike could be turned over to the county supervisors of the county through which it ran. Under Virginia's government during the period of the Confederacy, the legislature incorporated no more turnpikes.

The problem of abandoned turnpikes became especially severe after the Civil War, and the legislature itself declared in 1866, "many turnpikes have been abandoned by the chartered companies having charge over them." Although the legislature chartered a few more turnpikes in southwest Virginia after the Civil War, such as the Abingdon and Denton's Valley and the Abingdon and Rich Valley (1867) and the Marion and Jeffersonville (1875), by 1874 only seven turnpikes in the Commonwealth were reporting to the Board of Public Works, and none of them was in Virginia southwest of Staunton.



Engineers' drawings of a bridge for the Southwestern Turnpike over Reed Creek, near Kent's Mill, east of Wytheville. (Archives Research Services, The Library of Virginia)

The most successful of the western turnpikes was the Valley Turnpike, a 92-mile-long road that ran from Staunton to Winchester. It was completed in 1841, had a fully macadamized surface, and remained under the supervision of its company until 1918. It was known as the best extensive road in Virginia. In the words of its last president, Harry Flood Byrd, it was the probably the "best thoroughfare" in the South. Initially constructed to carry the wheat, pig iron, and livestock of the Shenandoah Valley to Baltimore, some Virginians east of the mountains resented the Valley Pike because it drained Valley commerce out of the state to the north.

There were numerous problems in the construction of the road, all of which drove up construction

costs. Many passages through the Valley were too narrow to provide the legally required 18 feet of road. Rocks were hard to blast away. Farmers demanded straight roads so they could get their goods to market quickly and build straight fences that were supposed to harbor fewer weeds. Engineers objected and insisted upon a gently curving road to eliminate the need for steeply graded roadbeds, which the straight road scheme produced. Repairs, bridge washouts, dust produced by the churned up metal, and drainage problems all caused great expense and cut into profits for the road.

Although the Valley Pike carried much freight in the antebellum years, its revenues fell sharply with the coming of the railroad to the Shenandoah Valley, so that by the Civil War it was beginning to lose its function as a freight carrier. The destruction by both Union and Confederate armies played havoc with the surface of the road and the bridges that crossed the Valley rivers. Once the damage the Civil War brought was repaired by the 1870s, the Valley Pike had become a local road, used primarily by neighbors visiting each other, or by an occasional traveling circus, peddlers and gypsies.

But with the coming of the automobile, its promoters tried to popularize it as a tourist highway for northerners visiting Dixie. The Valley Pike paid a few dividends to its investors in the years before the Civil War, but it was unprofitable in the post-Civil War years, and in 1918 the Commonwealth of Virginia took it over to make it part of the recently established state highway system. After the passage of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916, the federal government became increasingly interested in improved roads over which World War I supplies and troops could be moved more quickly. The Commonwealth secured federal grants in aid for building state highways, but eventually turned the Pike over to the federal government, which named the road U.S. 11. It was the first National Highway between New York and Atlanta. Its promoters and the American Automobile Association said it was the first North-South highway, pre-dating the famous coastal highway U.S. 1, that took many a northern tourist to Florida.

Wherever in western Virginia they were built, the turnpikes went through three phases of development. First, there had been freight roads, with stagecoach traffic secondary. Stockmen herded cattle along the roads and heavily laden wagons carried cotton, seneca root, beeswax, feathers and dried peaches, as well as the more typical wheat and pig iron. Next, with the entry of the railroad into the Great Valley, with penetration through the Blue Ridge to Winchester (1836), Mt. Jackson (1853), and Staunton (1854), most of the cattle herds and freight were shipped by rail. Once all the Shenandoah Valley towns west of the Massanutten Mountain were linked by a railway (1874) and another line came down along its eastern side to Luray, Waynesboro and Roanoke (1882), the freight shipping role of the Valley Pike vanished, unless it served as a feeder road to get produce to a railroad depot. Farther south, by 1872 the operations of the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Ohio Railroad between Bristol and Salem provided the shippers of southwest Virginia with a more attractive freight alternative than the still incomplete Southwestern Turnpike.

Moreover, farmers pressed by declining postbellum farm prices began to resent the tolls the turnpikes charged even when they traveled by buggy to church. Some members of farm protest movements singled out the turnpikes as monopolies as bad as the railroads, with whom they frequently battled. The coming of more railroads in the 1870s and 1880s, as well as financial depressions, led to the transfer of such turnpikes as the Southwestern Turnpike (1871), the Junction Valley Turnpike (1873), the Giles and Pulaski (1879), Fincastle and Cumberland Gap (1884), Lynchburg and Salem (1873 and 1886), and the Staunton and Parkersburg (1887) to county commissioners or other local authorities.

Finally, the coming of automobiles led to further outcry against the turnpikes that remained, though few were still operated by private companies by the late nineteenth century. The speeding flivvers tore up the macadam and their drivers became deeply impatient with the frustrations of stopping to pay tolls every five miles or so along the road. In addition, hotel owners maintained that tolls discouraged tourism. Merchants and businessmen seeking to attract northern capital to the impoverished South argued that tolls kept northern

investors out of Virginia. These interests' demands for the end of what some called a "medieval" system of toll roads helped push the Commonwealth into creating a state highway commission in 1906. Complaints about county commissioners' tightfistedness led to further demands for a state-administered system of roads, and in 1918 a state highway system began in Virginia.

The experience of western Virginians with their turnpikes led many citizens to see that in the public interest, the Commonwealth had to take on responsibilities its Jeffersonian founders had not envisioned. There were many people in western Virginia who had long believed that the complacent, eastern-dominated government of the Commonwealth did not have the interests of western Virginia at heart. Even if resources had been adequate for the building of a proper road system west of the Blue Ridge, it would not have been done because the political will was not in Richmond to do it.

Virginians came to see that many people in the Commonwealth who may never have used the western turnpikes benefited from them. Proprietors of resorts and springs, hotel and tavern owners, builders of carriages and coaches, tanners, wheelwrights, and makers of harnesses and bridles all benefited from the roads even though they may not have used them. But the roads also brought investors into the Commonwealth, and they provided opportunities for employment for workers who might otherwise have left the state, thereby draining labor from the pool of workers needed to sustain a complex, modern society.

Roads enabled governments to allocate resources and supplies more efficiently in war time, so when there was a need to defend all who lived in the society, the roads had to become a public concern. No county or private company could manage to collect sufficient tolls from all the people who benefited from the turnpikes to maintain them adequately. The social benefit of these enterprises was so great that they had to be publicly supported, for there was a large public interest in maintaining them, and that realization made it necessary for government to act as it had never done before in Virginia's long history.

The Harris Family Archives and “Ma Sue” Hall

By Kathleen Ingoldsby

A small, slender, leather-bound album filled with brittle, black paper pages, most floating loose from their binding, arrived at the Floyd County Historical Society almost 15 years ago. The collection of photographs was a gift from the family of June Hall (Slusher) Shelor, the adopted granddaughter of the Rev. John Kellogg Harris, Presbyterian minister, missionary, and educator, who had settled his family in Floyd over a century before. Just inside the album's front and back covers, inscriptions and quilled flourishes penned in an opaque white ink told a profound story of one family's enduring affection for their adopted home:

*“(To) Clara Harris Akers from Susan Harris Hall
Scenes from. Floyd, Virginia. Taken October 16, 1912. Court Day.”*

“Sis: —

*I send you these in knowing that they [represent] the town scenes most sacred to us —
Being the last and best loved of our dearly beloved father, John Kellogg Harris.*

Sue”



*Rev. Munsey and Susan Harris Hall (Ma Sue) at Court Day.
(Courtesy Floyd County Historical Society)*

Outfitted with a Kodak Brownie camera, in the tradition of Kodak's pre-war advertising icons, the independent “Kodak Girls,”¹ Susan Harris Hall arrived in Floyd on a visit and photographed the town at its busiest, on Court Day, the one day of the month when the entire community came into town to barter and sell, to see and be seen. Sue completely filled the palm-sized album with scenes of Floyd, fastening one white-edged print to each page, and mailed it to her sister Clara, in Kentucky. The album represented a labor of family love, inspired by the death of their father, John Kellogg Harris, two and one half years earlier. Most of the photographs depict the town and its people, but some show their father's granite memorial, which was

Kathleen Ingoldsby directs the Floyd County Traditions oral history program at the Old Church Gallery in Floyd. She has documented historic soapstone uses and prehistoric quarries, completed an architectural survey of Floyd and photographed county life for a video. A graduate of Massachusetts College of Art and Hollins University, she received the Mimi Babe Harris Art Award from Hollins for her film, “Ma Sue Hall: Living the Legend.”

raised through popular subscription and placed at the new Jacksonville Cemetery with the inscription: "Pastor — Teacher — Friend." A newspaper account (ca. 1910-11) lists donors to the Harris Memorial Fund in amounts of \$1.00 to \$25.00, and a grand total of \$186.50.²

In 1912, "moved by the meaning of the Rev. Harris's work," a committee formed under Rev. Peter Cunningham Clark, Superintendent of Home Missions of Montgomery Presbytery, and the Rev. Edward E. Lane, Pastor of the Christiansburg Presbyterian Church, to build a series of mission schools as a living memorial in underserved rural areas.³ By the fall of 1914, under the auspices of the Presbyterian Home Mission, the Harris Mountain Schools became a reality with the opening of the first school at Shooting Creek on the Floyd-Franklin County line. Soon after, Amos Cannaday offered part of his Floyd farm, and the Harris-Cannaday School immediately commenced operation in a grove of large trees. Students used slab seats, their lessons chalked on a plank blackboard nailed to a "giant chestnut" tree.⁴ After an unsuccessful attempt for more permanence with a large tent, Cannaday donated 14 acres of land, and with the Presbytery's help, construction began on a three-story building for permanent classrooms. By the mid-1930s, with enrollment reaching 500 pupils, eight school buildings, including the 1922-23 Buffalo Mountain Mission School, had been built or brought into the Harris Mountain Schools system in Floyd, Franklin, Rockbridge, Carroll, and Bedford Counties.⁵ The Presbyterian Home Mission created a successful, substantial and meaningful testament to one person's life of selfless enterprise. The Harris Mountain Schools' stationery commemorated the Rev. John Kellogg Harris as "A Man Rich and Unique in Gifts, Character and Devotion."⁶ This benevolent minister, known affectionately as "The Shepherd of Floyd,"⁷ left a lasting legacy to the citizens of his beloved community. Later, when his daughter returned permanently to Floyd from New York, Susan Harris Hall would do the same.

John K. Harris and his wife Chloe devoted their lives and their fortunes to missionary education, each independently holding teaching assignments in Indian Territory during the early 1850s, where both came to revere the particular mission for the education of young women and girls. In 1851, Chloe Bigelow, then a single woman, traveled to what is now Oklahoma to teach for two and one half years at Wheelock Female Seminary, a school for young women of the relocated Choctaw tribe.⁸ Wheelock, established in 1833 by Rev. Alfred Wright,⁹ a dedicated missionary and translator of the Choctaw language, became part of the Choctaw National School System in 1843.¹⁰

It quickly became a progressive educational model for native American education within all of the five tribes. (Wheelock Academy is currently an endangered Oklahoma National Historic Site. See: www.choctawnation.com/wheelock/wheelock1.htm.) Miss Bigelow was associated with Choctaw missionaries, Kingsbury, and Cyrus Byington, who along with Wright developed a phonetic, written Choctaw language.¹¹ John Kellogg Harris was at the same time, 1852-1854, in the same territory, teaching at National School for Choctaws, most likely at nearby Norwalk.¹² After two and one half years' mission service as a teacher, experiencing overwork and poor health, Chloe M. Bigelow prepared to leave the Choctaw Nation and return home to Vermont. She sent her sister, Addie, "probably the last letter I shall ever write you from the



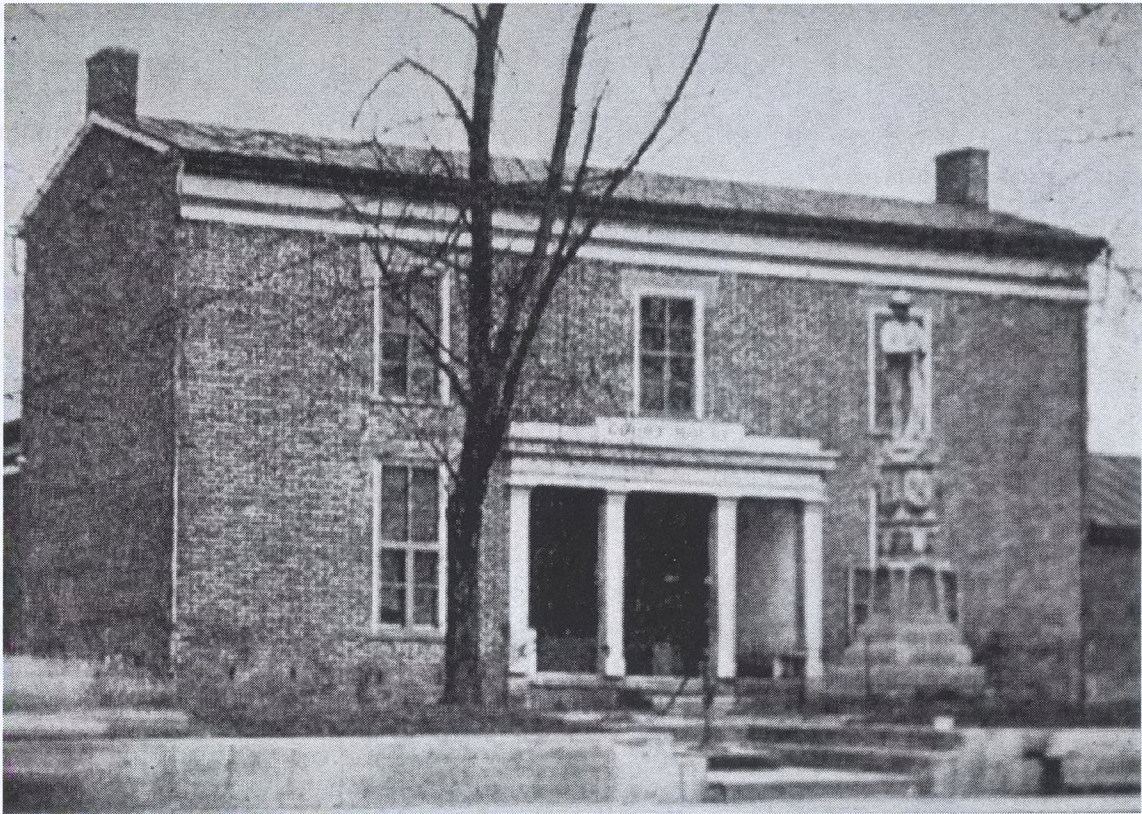
*Old Presbyterian Church, built 1850.
(Courtesy Floyd County
Historical Society)*

Choctaw Nation." This letter contains the only brief mention of her future husband: "Norwalk, Feb. 28, 1854 — When Mr. Harris came in with the mail last evening. . . ." ¹³

Both the Rev. and Mrs. Harris attended New England colleges steeped in the ethical doctrines of benevolence and charitable evangelism. Chloe Bigelow, Susan's mother, studied briefly at Mary Lyon's Mount Holyoke College prior to 1850. The Protestant revival of the 1790s-1820s built its principles on the "Puritan ethic of using education to enhance the experience of God's word." ¹⁴ By 1830-50, women's increased responsibilities in the "maternal vocation" of child rearing necessitated more schools for females. Mary Lyon established Mount Holyoke Seminary for young women in 1837, soliciting private funds after the General Association of Congregational Ministers opposed any support. Her mission of training women for "useful work in society [. . .] imbued [her students] with notions of self-sacrifice; many [Mount Holyoke] graduates became missionaries and teachers." ¹⁵ Teachers in the Choctaw Nation included many graduates of Mt. Holyoke, Dartmouth, and Williams. ¹⁶ John Kellogg Harris graduated from Williams College, AB 1852, belonging to the Philotechnian Society (literary-debating) and the Mills Theological Society, whose members, for the most part, devoted their lives to missionary goals. ¹⁷

The Harris family kept careful written records of their missionary work and studies, though the Harris family journals are sparse and to the point. Illuminating one well-worn diary of John Kellogg Harris is the scrupulous accounting of each of his sermons at various Presbyterian stations in central Virginia, and the poignant listings of his repeated preaching on the march as chaplain for the Confederate Army during more than three years of war service. The journal begins on September 6, 1858 as the recently ordained minister leaves his home state of New York for ministries at Kerr's Creek, Rockbridge County, and New Monmouth, Virginia, positions under the Lexington, Virginia Presbytery. He joined his wife of one year, then teaching at Capt. Gilmore's family school for "10 or 12 young ladies" on Kerr's Creek. ¹⁸ His notes continuously record his godly path through December 24, 1871, along with births, marriages, deaths, unusual weather, and other events. The entries in this diary begin and end with sermon listings: "Monmouth — Sept. 12 (1858) Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart & c." And on the same day "Rehoboth — Unholy Character," through to "December 24 (1871) Humbled Himself. Mt. P." (Mt. Pleasant). But it was the one simple entry in flowing ochre script on February 7, 1869, that caught my attention and my interest: "'Susan Maria' born. A.C.H." (Amherst Court House). ¹⁹ The Harris's fourth child, Susan Maria, was born in Virginia and soon moved away with her family to Kentucky in September 1869. There, the Rev. Harris began his pastorate of the Kirkwood Church in Harrodsburg, and assumed the joint position with his wife as principal of the Harrodsburg Female College. ²⁰

Time and time again, it appeared that Susan Maria Harris was destined to return to Virginia. It is the second diary of John Kellogg Harris, — "John K. Harris — Christiansburg, 1872" — that reveals this providence of the Harris family: Jan. 11, 1872, "I left Harrodsburg —"; Jan. 13, "Reached Cbg 10 P.M."; Mar. 19, "Wife & c. left Harrodsburg"; Mar. 21, "(Wife & c.) reached xtnsbg 4 P.M." While waiting for his family to arrive from Kentucky, and before assuming his new ministry, the Rev. Harris spent the winter preaching in scattered regional locations — Christiansburg, Rocky Mount, Lovely Mount, and New River, Mrs. Hudson's, Mrs. Price's, and Hairston's — in churches and in homes, some listed as "colored," from January to March 1872. His sermons at this time included "Alabaster Box," "Paul May Plant," "Preaching Foolishness," "Wisdom Justified," and "Sins as Scarlet" ²¹ The entry for April 6, 1872, is "Overcometh" — and is the very first mention of Floyd, the place where the Harris family would settle, the place that, over time, inspired a deeply held sentimental attachment in the entire family. The Rev. Harris accepted the pastorate of the Presbyterian Church at Floyd Courthouse officially on June 30, 1872, ²² and excepting an intervening ministry in Red Cloud and Scotia, Nebraska, 1882-1889, ²³ he retained this position until his death at age 78, in 1910. The Harris family, the Rev. John K. Harris, his wife Chloe, and their four living children, Clara Elizabeth, John Leonard, Susan Maria, and infant Mary Adelaide, born in Christiansburg March 27, ac-



Old Floyd Courthouse, built 1851. (Courtesy Floyd County Historical Society)

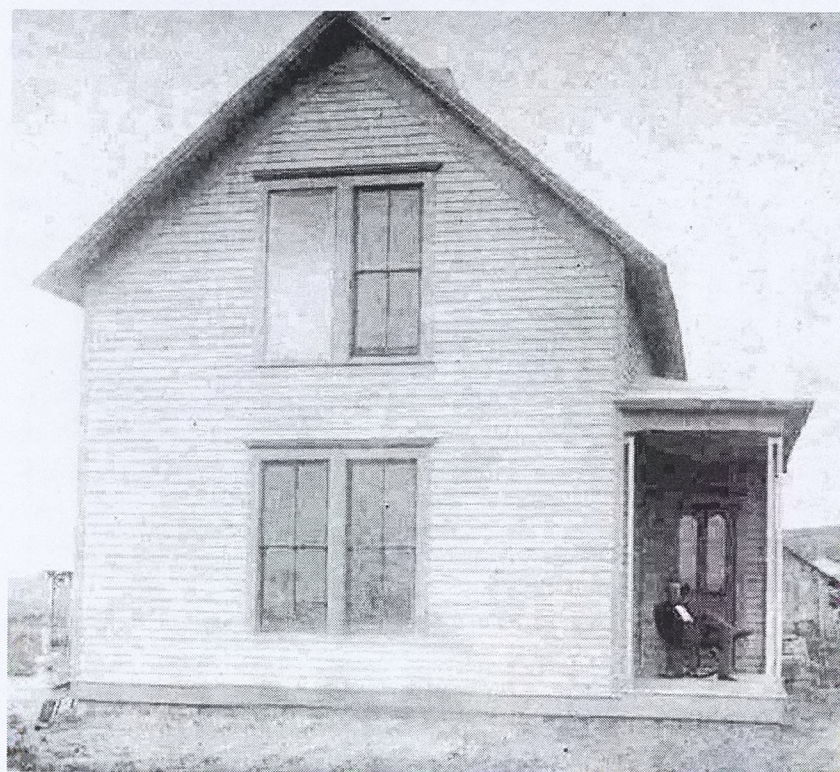
accompanied by John K. Harris's father, John Harris, settled in the Town of Jacksonville (now Floyd), Floyd County, Virginia in the spring of 1872. The relationship between the Harris family and the town was lasting, loving, and beneficial, and it became one that ultimately shaped the growth and spirit of the community.

Susan Maria Harris was born at Amherst Courthouse, Virginia in 1869, coincidentally, the same year as the birth of the two major national women's suffrage organizations, the National Woman Suffrage Association and American Woman Suffrage Association.²⁴ At the age of three, she arrived in Floyd with her parents, who true to their missionary-educators' nature quickly became community leaders. That year, Harris began teaching in the public school at Jacksonville. His records noted on Sept. 10, 1872 that "School opened. Floyd C.H.," and with enthusiasm evident, on Sept. 20, Harris presented a "Speech in C.H. (Court House) on Education." Harris taught at the public free school from 1872 to 1878, as his diary read: "Sept. 12 (1876) 5th School opened. 60." The closing of the public school in 1878 coincided with diminished support payments from the Peabody Fund. By 1877, the fund, which had supported Southern education after the Civil War, had shifted priorities toward teacher education. In 1875, as enrollment at the Jacksonville Academy public school declined, John K. Harris, as principal, and his wife Chloe, as first assistant, began a private preparatory school, Jacksonville High School, teaching the subjects of "Greek, Latin, and higher mathematics."²⁵ This was the beginning of the Harris's coeducational Oxford Academy, which opened sometime between 1876-1878. Their academy enjoyed great success, with an average of 35 to 86 students per year during the period 1892-1901.²⁶ Harris instructed the higher grades: "himself a scholar, Horace, Cicero, and the Hebrew Bible were dear and familiar friends";²⁷ Chloe had charge of the younger students, providing a good elementary education "based on the Bible and the '3-Rs'."²⁸ The couple took personal interest in the pupils, supplementing boarding fees or tuition, encouraging scholarship, and, every spring, taking their "entire school" on overnight wagon trips to Buffalo Mountain especially to watch the sun rise,²⁹ or to the mill pond

at the Phlegar farm for ice-skating, where the students found it as “hard to match” Harris in “playing ‘shinny’ or cutting intricate figures on the ice as to trip him in Virgil or mathematics.”³⁰ Harris held two or more pastorates during his Floyd tenure, one at Floyd Courthouse and another at Turtle Rock Presbyterian Church; he was called on to preach at Dillon’s Chapel, Cannaday, New Haven, Central, and Lovely Mount. The popular minister traveled widely in the region, often preaching three sermons on a Sunday and several during

the week. “Many years” after his death, a Presbyterian memorial pamphlet praised John K. Harris: “So different was he from us, so original, his actions and his humor so full of unexpected quips and turns, that our schoolmaster brought to our ... lives the charm of novelty and romance. ... [W]ell we knew the tender love with which he watched over us.”³¹

Sue accompanied her family west in 1882 and remained with them for most of their missionary stay in Red Cloud and Scotia.³² Sue once wrote that her father had developed “preachers’ sore throat,” and went west for a cure, but mission opportunities on the frontier possibly influenced his decision.³³ Harris built and pastored a church in Red Cloud; his wife taught Sunday School. A family letter in 1883 reported their progress: “Mr. Harris is still worrying with his church. It is about done. He is try-



Red Cloud home, ca. 1882
(Courtesy Floyd County Historical Society)

ing to raise money for the windows now. Our Mission Sab. Sc. is very large and we had a grand supper for it one week ago this evening.”

A decade prior to their trip there were effusive letters from a cousin at the Lincoln, Nebraska, office of the “Burlington and Missouri River Railroad Co., in Nebraska” proclaiming the fertility, desirability, and profitability of western lands. Official government reports at the time read: “Nebraska is . . . richly agricultural and pastoral where millions of acres are almost donated to the brave pioneers of the world.”³⁴ Red Cloud, established in 1870 and named for the Sioux chief, was by 1884 a fast-developing frontier town with a population of almost one thousand. The railroad, encouraging westward expansion, arrived in 1879, and within five years even the town’s outskirts were inhabited. According to Willa Cather’s descriptions of the same period in 1884, the Red Cloud community was a bohemian one, with many foreign immigrants to diversify the frontier experience.³⁵ Scotia supported a Literary Society that Sue and her sister Mayday participated in. Cather wrote perceptively of the Nebraska influence on young women in a character description of the fictional heroine in *Tommy, the Unsentimental*: “that blunt sort of familiarity is not infrequent in the west, and is meant well enough. People rather expect some business ability in a girl there, and they respect it immensely.”³⁶ The Harrises evidently farmed on the plains. Mayday Harris, interviewed in 1919 for the *New*



Oxford Academy, ca. 1897. (Courtesy Floyd County Historical Society)

York Commercial, commented on the Harris farm in Nebraska, mentioning the mechanical expertise required of her and the other children on the ranch there.³⁷

Although Chloe reported home about the beautiful vistas, bountiful harvest, picnics, and the wonderful prairie blooms, Nebraska was not the perfect place. Shaded summer temperatures reached 96 degrees, and the family slept with an open door covered in gauze. On Dec. 31, 1883, Chloe Harris wrote a long letter from Red Cloud to her sister Addie in Brattleboro, Vermont: "We are having our first cold spell. It is so cold we cannot leave the fire ... It is so cold that I cannot think of much beside how cold it is. We have no trees or hills to break the wind and we get the full benefit of it. We do not burn wood but coal."³⁸ Mrs. Harris's health declined severely in the poor climate, forcing the family to depart Nebraska in 1889. That summer, John K. Harris lectured at the Floyd Institute, a month-long, Peabody Fund-sponsored, summer normal session for teachers.³⁹ In September 1889, the Harrises reopened Oxford Academy, which had operated as Oxford Seminary until 1886 with an interim director, the Rev. W.R. Coppedge.⁴⁰ The year after the Harris's return to Virginia, lawyers' letters began to arrive from Nebraska concerning foreclosure of the Harris house in Red Cloud. The letters were interspersed with excuses for tenant problems and rental difficulties on the property. A resulting lawsuit required Mr. Harris to send a \$400.75 mortgage judgment to the Nebraska court.⁴¹

Susan left Nebraska earlier than her parents to stay with her married sister Clara, in Kentucky. In the fall of 1887, at age 19, Sue Harris became one of "eight women in an undergraduate department of about 160 students" at Central University in Kentucky, where her brother-in-law, Dr. James Tazewell Akers, was the Ford Professor of English.⁴² Although Sue Harris completed only one college course, naturally in English, her rigorous youthful education at the classically inspired Oxford Academy prepared her well for a life of learning. At the auction of her belongings in 1974, among the items listed were 1,200 books.⁴³

The Harrises enjoyed a lifelong affection for prolific personal correspondence. Family letters describe past lives and places, enlivened by evidence of the writer in the handwriting's playful or serious mindset or mood. A letter written August 15, 1896, pleads Mrs. Harris's cause for their small, coeducational Oxford Academy in the Town of Floyd: "If I could only get \$500 for the girls of the county to board themselves and come to school. It is their only chance." In 1899, Harris wrote his own particular prescription concerning higher education: "I believe in going to a good college and digging through a good course. But I would tie a plow around every undergraduate's neck — & an axe to his arm. Let him remember where he came from and best go to —." Other letters describe the town's news of the day: "Frid. Jan 22nd, 1908. 8:30 p.m. ... Mr. Sowder is to build a structure between his brick office & Mr. Peter Howard's House. It is to connect with the brick and accommodate better Mr. Sowder and the bank."; "Wed. June 23rd 4 1/4 p.m. 1909 ... Sowder business house (now the Blue Ridge Restaurant) nearly done. Outside stairs gone. Whole thing looks village like & harmonizes." The Harris-Akers collection of nineteenth-century family letters and journals reveals the family's open-minded, unprejudiced, sharp-witted, sentimental, worldly, and "dry, sly and high" humor-laden personality. In 1899, from the pen of Rev. Harris: "Revenues captured 1100 gallons of whiskey last night and put it in Brack. Scott's cellar for safe keeping. Everybody is drinking at it."; "Wed, May 30, 6 p.m., 1906. I am tired. Next time, Sam Swinney [can] preach his own funeral."; and sweetly, in solitude after Chloe's death in 1897, "The wind blows [. . .] The night wind is an old and dear friend. It calls to my very heart. I love it."⁴⁴



*Sally and Betsy Hall, ca. 1898.
(Courtesy Floyd County Historical Society)*

"Papa" wrote to his "dear Sue," on Sat. Nov. 1, 1900: "You have been raised from the dead now about three times — once at Dublin — then on the night of the surgical operation — then on Sab. Night Oct. 28th —. And I don't know how many times in Roanoke — besides once trying to tear up the R.R. in Nebraska." (According to Arthur Akers, Sue was a sleepwalker and climbed off the train in her nightgown; the train departed, leaving her at the station.) Rev. Harris then added: "God does not send such most uncommon deliverances without a purpose —."

MA SUE'S STORY

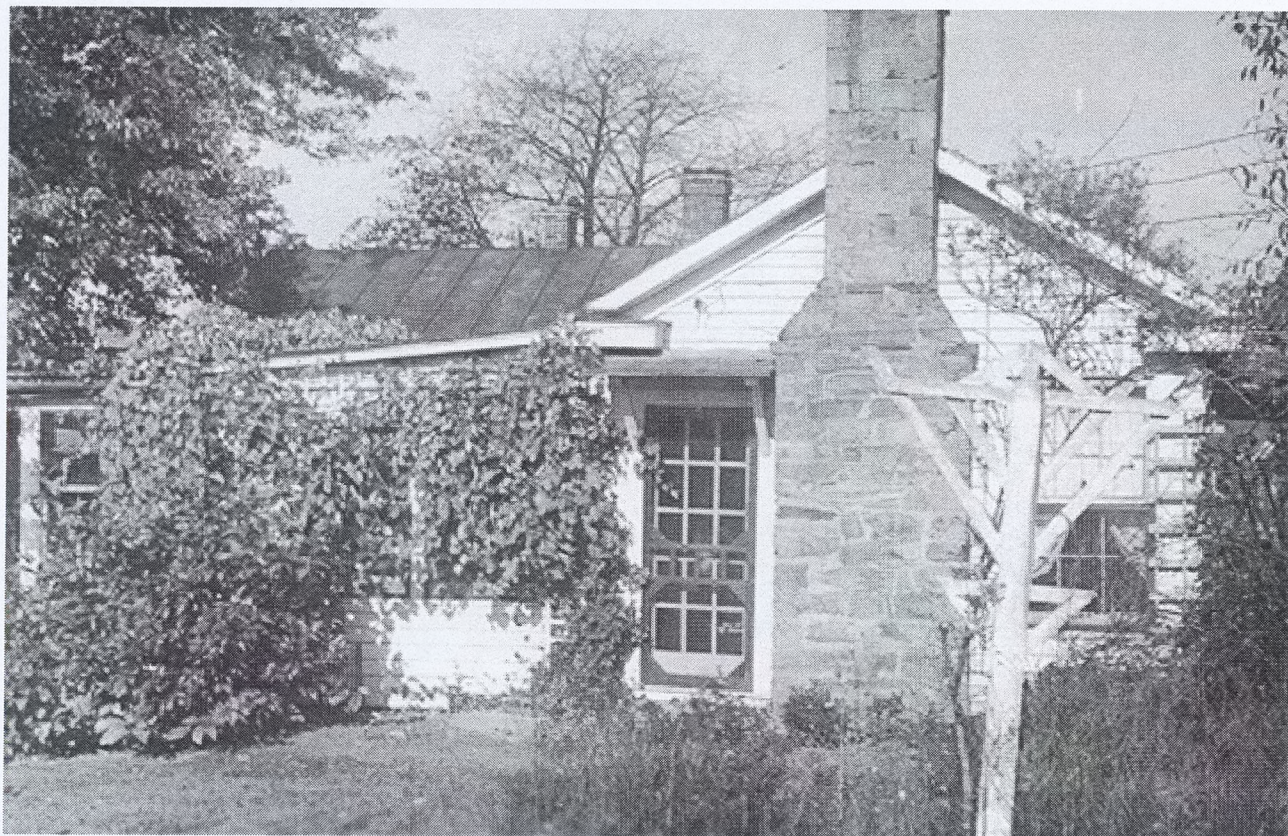
Susan Harris Hall was "something else." Forty-five years after her death, the drop of her familiar nickname "Ma Sue" still sparks a storm of gleeful enthusiasm. Spoken with warmth and genuine affection, adjectives burst thick and fast from everyone she knew. In the tape-recorded interviews, "unforgettable," "irrepressible," "intelligent," "colorful," "fun," "dependable," "tough," "comical," "opinionated," "witty," "well-read," "outspoken," "generous," "obstinate," "well-known," "honest," "sharp," "community-spirited," and "all-'round-good-person" circled Sue Hall like so many stars in a crown. When I asked each respondent to describe Ma in just one word, "caring" topped the list. Bill Hayden, whose mother cooked for Ma Sue's Hotel Brame, related that as a youngster he always knew that Ma Sue "cared *the world*" for him. I heard more than once that Ma Sue had a "heart of gold," tempered, of course, by her "taut," "vitriolic," and "salty" tongue. "You didn't want to cross her; she could tell



Hotel Brame (Courtesy Floyd County Historical Society)

you off in 15 languages,” Bob Shelor confided. Hazel Edwards, who lived with Ma Sue as a foster child, confirmed, “She was tough, but she had to be that way; she would go head to head with the lawyers or anyone, and they were bigger than she was, and she would win!”

During her career at U.S. Steel Products in New York City, Sue lived away from Floyd County. She missed her childhood home and visited frequently, expressing her sentiments on a family postcard, once writing that she just wanted to live up on top of the Buffalo Mountain.⁴⁵ Ma Sue accomplished her dream of returning “home” in 1916, where she remained for the rest of her life.⁴⁶ Susan Harris Hall made her own way, in her own way. Self-supporting throughout most of her adult life, she reconciled personal impulses of progressive popularism and unbounded humanitarian benevolence (wanting to “do” for people), with professional positions that satisfied her instincts of social service. “Her second love was the Red Cross,” Pete Hallman told me, and Sue Hall became best-known for her unceasing work to attain help for people in need. For more than three decades, she led locally administered social welfare programs and wartime family services as the American National Red Cross Executive Secretary for Floyd County.⁴⁷ She “prided herself in knowing everyone in the county,” Maud Shelor recalled. If anyone in Floyd County needed assistance, they were just told, “Go see ‘Ma Sue.’” In 1922, the character of each of the 3,627 Red Cross Chapter offices, small and large, reflected the needs of the local community. Red Cross chapters formed a very loose coalition: “These people do as they please, and the national organization can accept it or not.”⁴⁸ During the influenza epidemic of 1918, Sue Hall stayed with one Floyd family three weeks, nursing them all back to health.⁴⁹ Serviceman Henry B. Shelor received an unexpected call at boot camp during World War II; not knowing that his father was ill, they told him only to return to Floyd. Susan Harris Hall had quickly arranged a furlough on his behalf.



Summertime. (Courtesy Floyd County Historical Society)

Ma Sue Hall *was* out-of-the-ordinary, but I wasn't prepared for the impressive tally of accomplishments as I neared the end of my accounting. At each step along the path of discovery, investigation, and documentation, as I gradually became more involved with the study of her life in a contextual way, my conviction grew, and my research confirmed, that Susan Harris Hall deserved the designation in her front page 1958 obituary: she truly was a "living legend."⁵⁰

Sue Harris married Jacob T. Hall on February 6, 1890, and moved to Roanoke, where he held managerial and editorial positions at the *Roanoke (Daily) Times*, and, later, the *Southern Weekly Journal*.⁵² The couple met at Oxford Academy years earlier, where Sue, age 11, and Jake, age 20, were listed in the roll call of 1880-81;⁵³ it's probable that Jake was then a teacher at the school.

The Halls had two daughters, Mayday Harris Hall (Sally), 1891, and Elizabeth Bigelow Hall (Betsy), 1892. Widowed in 1898, her husband succumbing to heart disease at age 37, Sue Harris Hall left her two small children with family in Floyd, and went alone to New York City to study typewriting and stenography at Packard's, Broadway & 26th.⁵⁴ It wasn't long before she was teaching the course, and by 1902 Sue was fetching her daughters and her sister, Mary Adelaide (Mayday), to New York. Sue soon advanced to an almost 20-year career at U.S. Steel Corp. in New York City.⁵⁵ In his 1974 autobiography, her former son-in-law observed evidence of her social conscience as the humanitarian office manager at U.S. Steel in 1915. He wrote, "She had solved the problem of the handicapped and underprivileged. She grouped them in various departments, all the blind, the paraplegics, and those retarded by language."⁵⁶ She was a single mother in management when women totaled less than 20 percent of the national workforce, at a time when this statistic represented mostly nonprofessional, factory, or teaching positions.⁵⁷

Sally and Betsy stayed with their mother and aunt at 204 W. 114th St. in New York for 14 years. Both children exemplified the Harris family ideals. Betsy founded the City History Club at her high school where she was for four years class President. She graduated from Barnard with many celebrated accomplishments, including President of the Feminist Forum, executive committee member of the Barnard and Socialist Club, literary editor of the Barnard Bear, member of the Columbia Common Sense League, and delegate and elected delegation secretary to Henry Ford's 1915-16 Peace Expedition aboard the Oscar II to Norway and the Hague.⁵⁸ Betsy married a Broadway lyricist, Howard Dietz ("Dancing in the Dark"), and became a published writer with ties to those in the Algonquin Round Table, a literary clique in New York City. Sally attended nursing school in Washington, D.C., returning to Floyd with her mother in 1916 to become manager at the Hotel Brame in Floyd. As did her mother, Sally appreciated and documented local Floyd history; she also possessed a lifelong love of nature. Finding sundry wild critters in residence at their home wasn't unusual. An early photo in the Floyd County Historical Society collection pictures Sally with three other young ladies, all in a pristine white dresses, standing in front of the old courthouse in Floyd. Sally is clutching a large, black duck. A pair of caged grey squirrels, Sally's pets, accompanied Betsy as mascots on her ocean expedition to Norway; reporters and photographers had a field day.⁵⁹

In American social history, Susan Harris Hall's life of self-empowerment stands out as a marker for the turn-of-the-nineteenth century Progressive Era vanguard. This political movement in the early 1900s sought "to increase popular participation in the American system," "to alleviate the ills of society" with a government more responsible toward social welfare and justice.⁵¹ Sue Harris's confident, independent nature, combined with a very unique set of circumstances — the personalities, principles and experiences of her parents, her upbringing in the small community of Floyd, the freedoms experienced by women in the west and in the progressive areas of New York City where she lived — all influenced Sue's path.

In 1916 at age 47, when Susan Harris Hall returned to Floyd from New York, she did so with a single-minded desire: to purchase the landmark Brame Hotel on the town square. She owned and ran this establishment and its dining room with her daughter Sally for more than 12 years, retiring (if that term is applied loosely) in 1929 to a cottage compound named "Summertime." She took in boarders there and hosted entire road and Parkway crews during their work tenures.⁶⁰ One story tells of a local person getting a speeding ticket in South Carolina a few years ago; taken to the magistrate for processing, his home of Floyd was noted. The judge only asked, "Does that old lady still live up there? Does she still have that parrot?" Ma Sue's place was the stuff of legend, a powerful presence even as I watched it decline.

After World War I, Ma immediately involved herself in county affairs, assuming hands-on nursing and family assistance responsibilities as Floyd's Red Cross Secretary.⁶¹ Her work continued through all of the depression era 1930s; at a time when social services sat solely under local control, she was *the* county welfare worker, oftentimes without pay. Sue traveled anywhere there was a need, or wherever someone needed help. She would just go. She held the post of Probation Officer from 1930-31, and at age 65 had her own office as County Relief Director under FERA funding.⁶² Her varied roles included being a news reporter for the *Floyd Press*, a stringer (paid by the inch) correspondent for the *Roanoke Times*, a contributor to The Commonwealth, Red Cross liaison for soldiers' families during World War II, official U.S. weather observer,⁶³ a country midwife or mortician when necessary, and, at the age of 51, an adoptive mother of a 13-month-old baby girl. My favorite of Ma Sue's news headlines was in the *Roanoke Times*, September 1937: "Frost and Prosperity Hit Floyd Together."

My first encounter with Susan Harris Hall occurred more than fourteen years ago. I have the penciled-in paper that started my quest: "Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks: Historic District: Brief Survey Form: 28 Mar. 1988." In the middle of the work on the Virginia Department of Historic Resources historic buildings survey in the Town of Floyd, someone pointed to an old house hidden beyond the back of the Jacksonville

cemetery. "Summertime," they said, "Ma Sue Hall's house." Beating my way through the brambles, I snapped three black and white photos and drew a sketch of the cottage and site plan. The architectural details are few, but under landscape features, I listed the formidable remains of her gardens: "Overgrown specimens: rhododendron covering front; flowering bulbs; crocus; narcissus; star of Bethlehem; yucca; huge yew tree; remains of flagstone edging; old rose trellis; stone steps to a depressed abandoned roadway at arched trellis entry."⁶⁴ I kept returning to take more photographs. Over time, the building collapsed inward, crushed by debris from Hurricane Hugo, and, in 1995, all perishable evidence of "Summertime" burned to the ground in a suspicious fire.

In 1990, as a means of preservation and with historic importance in mind, I made negatives of many images in her albums at the Floyd County Historical Society. In 2001, I produced a short computer-generated film on the life and times of Susan Harris Hall,⁶⁵ and included a sampling of photographs from the

collection. Using a camera lens, video footage, tape-recorded interviews, and period music, the final film sketch features the lady who, in 1912, came to town with the Kodak Brownie: the indomitable, irrepressible, and principled "Ma Sue" Hall, pictured within the sounds and sights of the Floyd County settings in which she thrived. Narrated entirely by those who knew and remembered Ma Sue, the recollections endorse this grand lady and her family with first hand impressions and connections not possible in more formal accounts. The nature of oral history, as Pete Hallman, former editor of the *Floyd Press* explained in his interview, may not "be exactly the way it happened, but it *was* the way it was told."



MRS. SUSAN HARRIS HALL

... "Ma Sue" and Polly at work

"Ma Sue" Hall Laid to Rest in Jacksonville Cemetery; Life Was One Of Service to People of Floyd County

NOTES

- ¹ Nancy Martha West, Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000) 53-60.
- ² Harris-Akers collection of family papers.
- ³ R. Gamble See, letter to Miss Blanche Sprinkle, original Harris Mountain Schools letterhead, "Early History of the Presbyterian Missions, or Mission Schools in Franklin and Floyd" Floyd, VA, March 14, 1947, The Harris Mountain Schools Collection, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic and State U., Blacksburg.
- ⁴ See 3-4.
- ⁵ Goodridge Wilson, "The Harris Mountain Schools," "Southwest Corner" column, Roanoke Times 1 June 1958: n.p., clipping, Harris-Akers Collection.
- ⁶ See stationary letterhead.
- ⁷ Margaret Welch, "The Shepherd of Floyd," Presbyterian pamphlet, n.d., The Harris Mountain Schools Collection, Special Collections Virginia Polytechnic and State U., Blacksburg.
- ⁸ Mt. Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, "Alumnae who were missionaries to Native Americans," LD 7092.8 (South Hadley: Nov. 1992).
- ⁹ Grant Foreman, The Five Civilized Tribes (Norman: Univ. Oklahoma, 1934) 39.
- ¹⁰ Foreman 80.
- ¹¹ Mt. Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections, student file: Chloe Minerva Bigelow Harris — non-grad. '50, Mt. Holyoke [directory] 1837-1937 (South Hadley).
- ¹² John Kellogg Harris, letter to Bro-[ther] McAllister, Floyd, 23 Nov. 1906, Harris-Akers collection of family papers.
- ¹³ Harris-Akers.
- ¹⁴ S.J. Kleinberg, Women in the United States 1830-1945 (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1999) 61-62.
- ¹⁵ Kleinberg 64.
- ¹⁶ Foreman 85.
- ¹⁷ Williams College Special Collections, "RE: Collection Archives," e-mail to author, 1 May 2001.
- ¹⁸ Chloe Minerva Bigelow Harris obituary, handwritten by John K. Harris, 16 Aug 1897, Floyd, VA, Harris-Akers collection of family papers.
- ¹⁹ Harris-Akers.
- ²⁰ Susan Grey Akers, "Oxford Academy Founded 1875," 31 Oct. 1962, The Floyd Press 1 July 1976: 12B.
- ²¹ Harris-Akers.
- ²² Amos D. Wood, Floyd County: A History of Its People and Places (Radford: Commonwealth Press, 1981) 336.
- ²³ S.G. Akers.
- ²⁴ Kleinberg 193.
- ²⁵ Sarah James Simmons, "The Development of Schooling in Floyd County, Virginia; 1831-1900" Diss. Virginia Polytechnic and State U., 1987, 117-122, 224.
- ²⁶ S.G. Akers.
- ²⁷ Welch.
- ²⁸ Susan H. Hall, "Three Floyd County Teachers. . . ." Roanoke Times 14 Oct. 1950, clipping, Harris-Akers collection of family papers.
- ²⁹ Wood 283.
- ³⁰ Welch.
- ³¹ Welch.
- ³² Susan Harris Hall, handwritten notation in frontispiece, Mildred Bennett, The World of Willa Cather (NY: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1951).
- ³³ Susan Harris Hall, letter to Nancy Akers, 27 Nov. 1945, Summertime, Floyd, VA, Harris-Akers collection of family papers.
- ³⁴ Harris-Akers.

- ³⁵ E.K. Brown, Willa Cather, A Critical Biography (NY: Knopf, 1953) 21-26.
- ³⁶ Brown 79.
- ³⁷ NY Commercial, clipping with date in pencil notation, 23 Oct. 1919, Harris-Akers collection of family papers.
- ³⁸ Harris-Akers.
- ³⁹ Tom Hunt, and Sarah Simmons, "The 1899 Floyd Institute," Journal of the New River Historical Society, V5. No. 1 1992: 24.
- ⁴⁰ Wood 360; Sarah Simmons, "Legacy of John K. Harris," Journal of the New River Historical Society, V4. No. 1 1991: 18.
- ⁴¹ Harris-Akers.
- ⁴² Central University Annual 1887/1888, (Richmond, KY: 1888); Bob Glass, "Re: Bob Glass - Special Collections," e-mail to author, 11 Oct. 2001, Doherty Library, Centre College, Danville, KY.
- ⁴³ "Auction Sale of Valuable Antiques and Real Estate," The Floyd Press 25 July 1974: n.p., Harris-Akers collection of family papers.
- ⁴⁴ Harris-Akers.
- ⁴⁵ Susan Harris Hall, Harris family postcard collection, Floyd County Historical Society Archives, Floyd, VA.
- ⁴⁶ Ben Beagle, "'Truth, Decency Same in Any Age,'" Roanoke Times 18 Nov. 1956: F 1.
- ⁴⁷ American Red Cross, NARA, "Record Group 3, 1935-1946 Floyd Co., VA, Box 1154; Record Group 4, 1947-1964, 200-85-10, Box 88," Brenda Pruitt, "RE: Am. Red Cross FAQs," e-mail to author, 16 May, 2001.
- ⁴⁸ Charles Hurd, The Compact History of the American Red Cross (NY: Hawthorne, 1959) 191.
- ⁴⁹ Ora Brammer, personal interview, audiocassette, Floyd, VA, 26 Apr. 2001.
- ⁵⁰ "'Ma Sue' Laid to Rest [. . .]," The Floyd Press 27 Feb. 1958: 1.
- ⁵¹ Daniel Rankin, "U.S. Progressive Era Outline 1900-1920," Austin State Univ., 1996, 10 Sept. 2001 <<http://www.progressivism.org/pera.html>>.
- ⁵² "Death of J.T. Hall," Roanoke Times 29 June 1898: 4.
- ⁵³ Sue Jefferson Shelor, Pioneers and their Coats of Arms of Floyd County (Winston-Salem: Hunter Pub, 1961) 144-145.
- ⁵⁴ John Kellogg Harris, letter to Mrs. Lathrop, Floyd, VA, 21 Oct. 1899, Harris-Akers collection of family papers.
- ⁵⁵ "'Ma Sue' Laid to Rest [. . .]".
- ⁵⁶ Howard Dietz, Dancing in the Dark. Words by Howard Dietz (NY: Quadrangle, 1974) 38.
- ⁵⁷ Kleinberg 105.
- ⁵⁸ Henry Ford's Peace Expedition, Who's Who (Christiania, Norway: Aas & Wahl, 1916) 12; Elizabeth Bigelow Hall, personal scrapbook, 1915-16.
- ⁵⁹ E.B. Hall.
- ⁶⁰ "Bridge Party [. . .]," newspaper clipping, 18 Sept. 1937, Harris-Akers collection of family papers.
- ⁶¹ Am. Red Cross.
- ⁶² Floyd County Board of Supervisors Minutes, Book 7 (Floyd: 1930-1943)
- ⁶³ "Veteran Observer," Roanoke Times n.d., n.p., Jessie Peterman scrapbook collection, Floyd County Historical Society Archives, Floyd, VA.
- ⁶⁴ VA Dept. of Historic Resources, "Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks: Historic District: Brief Survey Form," Summertime, Susan Harris Hall, Floyd, VA (Richmond: DHR, 28 Mar. 1988).
- ⁶⁵ Ma Sue Hall: Living the Legend, Quicktime movie file, CD, dir. Kathleen Ingoldsby, Allemande Arts, 2001.

What Do We Leave Behind?

By Anna Fariello

For four hundred miles through Virginia, the Blue Ridge is essentially a single long fin, only a mile or two wide, notched here and there with deep, V-shaped passes called gaps but otherwise holding generally steady at about 3,000 feet, with the broad green Valley of Virginia stretching off to the Allegheny Mountains to the west and lazy pastoral piedmont to the east. So here each time we hauled ourselves to a mountaintop and stepped onto a rocky overlook, instead of seeing nothing but endless tufted green mountains stretching to the horizon, we got airy views of a real, lived-in world: sunny farms, clustered hamlets, clumps of woodland, and winding highways, all made exquisitely picturesque by distance.

- Bill Bryson, *A Walk in the Woods*

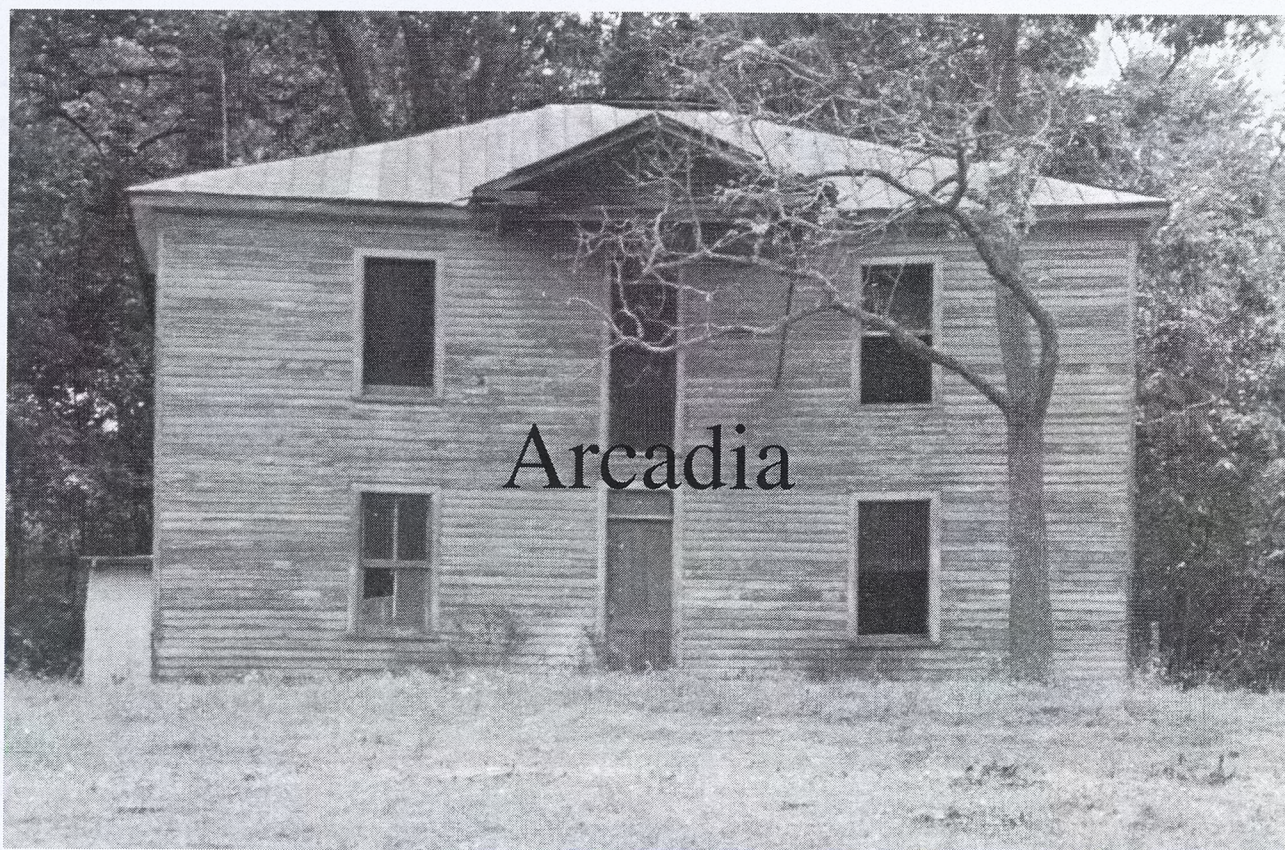
The exhibition, "Arcadian Monuments," organized and circulated by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Statewide Exhibitions Program, was on view last spring at the History Museum and Historical Society of Western Virginia. The color images displayed in the Shaftman Gallery were intentionally romanticized images of the "real, lived-in world" viewed by Bill Bryson from his hike along the Appalachian Trail.

The 30 photographs that made up the show were selected from a larger body of photographs that I began making in the early 1990s as a silent protest in the face of a not-so-dignified end to a magnificent antebellum homestead. I first saw it alone on a bare hillside, a two-story homeplace with columns and a small portico. By the time I encountered that lonely mansion at the end of the 20th century, no one had lived there for years. The building was beyond habitation, light piercing its empty interior.

"Rock Road" seemed a fitting address for the venerable structure, surely the *bedrock* of a long-faded community. The house stood apart from the ever-widening asphalt road before it. It stood in stark contrast to the new homes springing up around it. It stood proudly as a stately reminder of another century. It stood simply as a monument to generations of lives lived and lost along the way. The Rock Road house continued to intrigue me until, one day, I decided to make its portrait. I spent an afternoon exploring its far corners with my camera. I recorded its dark interior, its faded exterior, and its sunny surroundings. During that afternoon, I imagined the many generations of children who played among the wildflowers and woods surrounding a small space claimed from Nature by their forebears.

After seeing the initial photos, I planned to return to shoot a couple of more rolls of film. At the time I could not have known that the fate of that Rock Road house would be the catalyst for what would amount to a decade-long photographic preoccupation. One day I happened to be driving along Rock Road and glanced to the place where the house stood. My plan of re-photographing it idly passed through my mind and I mentally

Anna Fariello is owner of Curatorial InSight, a consulting firm providing research, development and curatorial services to non-profits and private collectors. She is currently doing research for the 2003 Smithsonian Folklife Festival and is on the faculty of Virginia Tech.



calculated how long it had been since my first visit. My reverie was interrupted by not seeing the house immediately. I looked again and doubled back, believing I was at the wrong place in the road. But the fact was, the house was gone. Where once stood a two-story homeplace was nothing but a grassy field. The Rock Road house had completely vanished, without a trace of its presence in evidence anywhere. To me this seemed the cruelest fate, to be erased from history so completely, to be gone from all memory, for all eternity.

The photographic series *Arcadia* documents the cultural landscape at a single point in time. It is intended to capture the fading presence of a regional identity that is quickly being replaced by a national facade of fast-food franchises, suburban tract houses, and multinational businesses. Small creeks and roads meet this same fate and, as we develop the technologies to carve away at the steepest of our mountainsides, we enter a new era of destruction. As we turn the pages of our calendars, we will just as surely witness the continued destruction of our natural and built landscape as I had witnessed the destruction of the Rock Road homestead. As we make room for expanded interstates and "smart" roads, will we remember where we are or who we are?

Rural heritage has been overlooked at a time when the culture of "other" has been celebrated; we overlook other-ness close to home. After the disappearance of the house on Rock Road, I became aware of the importance of these fading — and faded — surroundings, not for their actual worth, but for their metaphysical worth. I decided to record the presence of rural Appalachian architecture while there was still some left to record. Agrarian homesites are found in ever decreasing numbers. Once common and unique to the region, vernacular agrarian architecture — structures that create a visual *sense of place* — is eroding. Ironically, rural America is endangered.

Agrarian architecture grew from physical necessity. It is understated. Its design is an expression of function. Its stark exterior and lack of superfluous decoration is sometimes confused with poverty. But it is this very simplicity and lack of pretense that defines the beauty of this regional form. There is something wonder-

fully small about human-made structures built into the rural landscape. They blend into their environment and underscore the majesty of Nature by their smallness and their humility. They are the architectural opposite of skyscrapers, which appear to dominate the landscape and proclaim an indestructibility. In contrast, rural homesteads allow us to feel the expanse and power of Nature, evoking feelings of awe and grandeur.

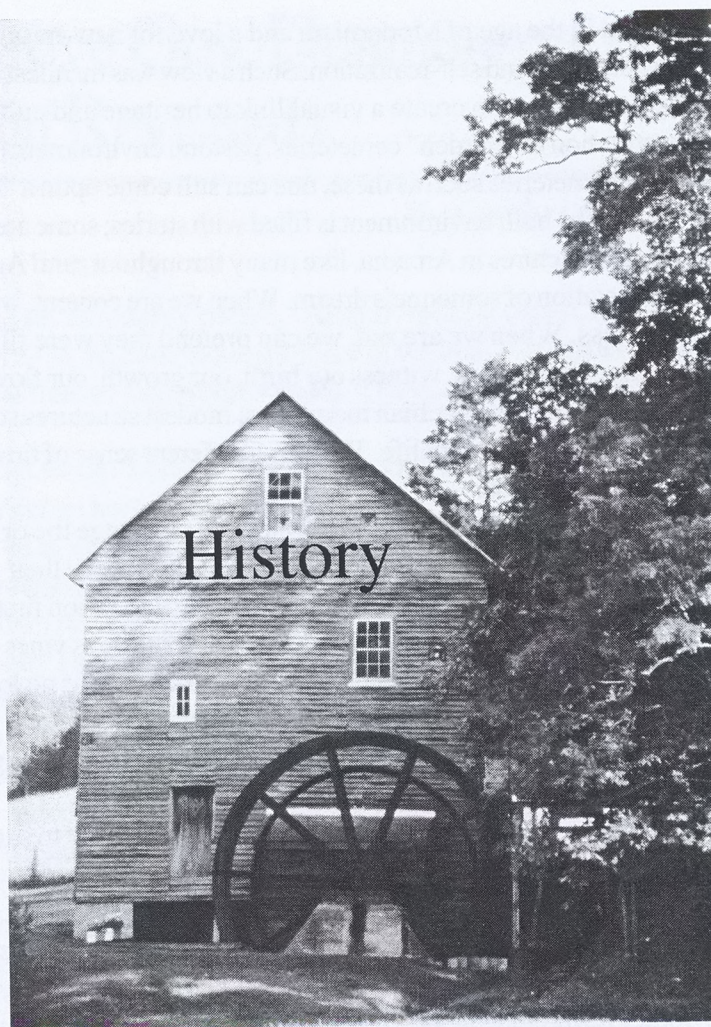
Aesthetically, pioneer homesteads and the landscape they inhabit are one; they look as if they grew from the soil. They appear integral to the landscape, a wooded trunk supporting a canopy of tin. The oldest of these are reverting to Nature. No longer human-ized, they revert to the Wild. Their sole inhabitants are cows or bales of hay. They are abandoned, discarded, soon to be destroyed. They are worthless architecturally, worthless commercially, and worthless financially. They can neither contain anything of value, nor keep out the elements.

My version of Paradise exists in the rural landscape and *sense of place* found in the southern Appalachians. It appears to me a place with fluid geographic boundaries spilling from modern-day Virginia into neighboring

states, meandering across ridges and dipping into dark hollows. Arcadia refers to an ancient land of milk and honey, a paradise lost. According to legend, peaceful peoples once lived free from strife and care, in perfect harmony with their environment and the animal community. Nature retained her character as Mother and benevolent friend. In those halcyon days, humanity was unobtrusive and in keeping with the elements. Traditional mythologies and religions are filled with such places called Eden, Atlantis, or Peaceable Kingdom. Did such places exist in the physical world? Can such a place exist today? For me, Arcadia exists in the present as it did in the past, as a place of the mind and spirit, rather than an actual place on the planet. It continues to exist today in childhood, in dreams and reverie, and in hopeful imaginings.

Through my photographs, I attempt to take the viewer on an imaginary journey through a pastoral and meditative space inhabited by understated monuments to the rural and natural world, remnants of an old world imposed upon the new. The images in *Arcadian Monuments* are intended to sharpen one's awareness to the experiential perception of *seeing*, a process I sometimes call "deep seeing." It is important to recognize Arcadia in our own lives, whenever or wherever we may stumble into it. The sublime could be right next door and many of us would pass without notice.

While it is important to dream a grand future and mind-walk in the reverie of our past, our present is made more meaningful by threads of material culture which form the connective tissue of our humanity. During the latter half of the 19th century, the physical remains of culture were valued, no matter how tattered or worn. These lost favor in the 20th, as the new century came to represent a clean break from the past. But before we



ushered in the age of Modernism and a love for new-ness, Western culture revered the past as a window to understanding and self-realization. Such a view was manifest in English gardens in which "ruins" were intentionally constructed to create a visual link to heritage and culture. In America, we picked up this thread in the construction of "garden" cemeteries, pastoral environments visited by harried urban citizenry in the Victorian era. In cemeteries such as these, one can still come upon a "broken" column or "vine-covered" monument.

The built environment is filled with stories; some are real, some imagined. Shelter came in the form of modest structures in Arcadia, like many throughout rural America today. In their time, each was the physical manifestation of someone's dream. When we are content, we pretend these rural homesteads were filled with happiness. When we are sad, we can pretend they were filled with melancholy. Small dwellings watch as mortals come and go, witness our birth, our growth, our flowering, our withering, our decay. Dwarfed by the majesty of the Appalachian mountains, modest structures stand patiently in contrast to busy inhabitants who scurry like ants through life. Theirs is a different sense of time, a time not measured in days and months, but in centuries and eons.

Gravity works around the clock to rearrange the original composition designed by some unknown craftsman. Slowly and relentlessly the elements invade their space. Time takes its toll. Nature reclaims what is left of their grandeur. Tendrils of fast-growing vegetation first spread along foundations, catching fast like little children's fingers at Mother's hem. Soon the tenacious vines enfold the clapboard sides, weaving in and out of windows, eventually laying claim to the roof. The roof no longer keeps out the rain, the floor meets the earth below, the walls lean this way and that. Overtaken by nature, vines intrude into its privacy, clawing at its faded domesticity. The floor no longer promises support, becoming precipitously dangerous, discouraging all but a few brave souls who dare to enter.

Dirt floors sprout new saplings which reach out to sunlight through broken windows. They are in ruin, yet live on, becoming more and more a part of the landscape with each passing day. The view from each window is transformed. It is magical to look up and see a piece of sky surrounded by a picture frame of rafters. In some ways, the transformation of these decaying, hapless buildings elevates them from the realm of the everyday to the realm of the sublime. Once stout structures are pulled downward into the waiting arms of Mother Earth, like the body of a loved one laid to rest in warm ground.

In late afternoon, when the sun is low and light cuts across the landscape, homesteads which dot the rural Appalachian countryside are bathed in a warm, yellow glow. Like richly encrusted Byzantine icons, they are hallowed and halo-ed. They are the wizened, martyred saints of our communities. This is our Herculaneum, our Paradise, our Arcadia. Our mountainous landscape is itself weathered by time and elements that cycle round — spring rain, summer heat, autumn drought, winter freeze. But the hills are not the worse for wear. Tucked among them are a few remaining regional, vernacular homesteads, containing remnants of past lives. They are relics of our own near past. They are our archeology. We exit their doors as we leave this life, leaving behind the fruits of our labors and loves. What have we made? What do we leave behind as a mark of our passing through this place?

How Andrew Lewis Drove Gov. Dunmore out of Virginia (Gwynn's Island Revisited)

By Candy Daugherty

The Roanoke Valley's favorite son of the revolutionary period, General Andrew Lewis, is remembered for two crucial battles. At Point Pleasant in 1774, he commanded a force of western Virginians against the Shawnee, and in victory secured the Ohio River frontier from further attack. The story of Point Pleasant has been well documented in the history books.

But less well remembered is the Battle of Gwynn's Island, wherein the General who had ended the Indian threat evicted from a newly independent Virginia her last British governor.

John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, had arrived in Virginia, the largest and wealthiest of the 13 colonies, in 1771 following a governorship in New York. Although initially unhappy with his reassignment, Dunmore embraced his position and used his authority for his own personal gain. Westward expansion was forbidden to the colonists by British authority and strictly enforced by Dunmore, but settlement of new territory was inevitable. For even the governor himself was speculating on land claims.

In 1774, following violent Indian raids on white settlements, Dunmore ordered an expedition into Western Virginia. In Dunmore's War, or the Battle of Point Pleasant, Andrew Lewis, resident of Richfield on the Roanoke, led the defense, while Dunmore failed to arrive in time for the fight. Unbeknownst to Lord Dunmore, the next time the two comrades would meet on the field of battle, they would be adversaries.

Over the next year, relations between the British and the colonists rapidly decayed. In response, Dunmore in July 1775 gathered what British forces were available, as well as loyalist supporters, and housed them in vessels harbored in Hampton Roads. Using this as a base for operations, Dunmore dispatched privateers to patrol the bay. The Chesapeake Bay, the mouth of which was controlled by Virginia, provided deepwater access ideal for sailing large trade vessels into Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland, as well as Virginia.

The Tidewater region included some of the colonies' largest port cities -- Norfolk, Hampton and Portsmouth -- and was the outlet from which most of the colonies' tobacco was shipped to the West Indies in exchange for necessary staples. Dunmore realized that if the very wealthy and persuasive Virginia colony were loyal to the King, then it could quite possibly curb the pending rebellion throughout the region. Seizing colonial vessels on the slightest of pretenses, privateers confiscated needed supplies and brought them back to the governor. With the support of Britain's Royal Navy, most notably Commodore Andrew S. Hammond, Dunmore controlled the waters in which his "floating town" disrupted trade from Pennsylvania to Georgia.

Tensions ran high in Hampton Roads in the summer of 1775. Militia forces had gathered in an attempt to fortify the city against raiders in search of necessities. With more and more Loyalists loading their most beloved treasures onto vessels and joining Dunmore's fleet, the need for staples and supplies increased. Raids were more frequent and increasingly violent. Vacated Loyalist homes and businesses were often vandalized and in some cases torched by hostile patriots. In October of 1775, British reinforcements arrived from St. Augustine; however, as Dunmore's forces grew in numbers, so did colonial militia troops. In November, Dunmore acted on Virginia's biggest fear and issued the first ever emancipation proclamation, stating:

Candace "Candy" Daugherty, a Roanoke County library assistant, is a regular contributor to Salem Historical Society's quarterly publication, Guide to Historic Salem. She home-educates her two daughters and has attended Virginia Western Community College.

"And I hereby further declare all indentured Servants, Negroes, or others (appertaining to Rebels) free, that are able and willing to bear Arms, they joining his Majesty's Troops."

Those freed slaves willing to take up arms and fight alongside of the British were recruited into Dunmore's Royal Ethiopian Regiment. Viewed as an act of war, Dunmore's tactic angered and frightened most Virginians already fearful of a slave uprising. Northerners and Southerners alike thought Dunmore's tactics to be extreme.

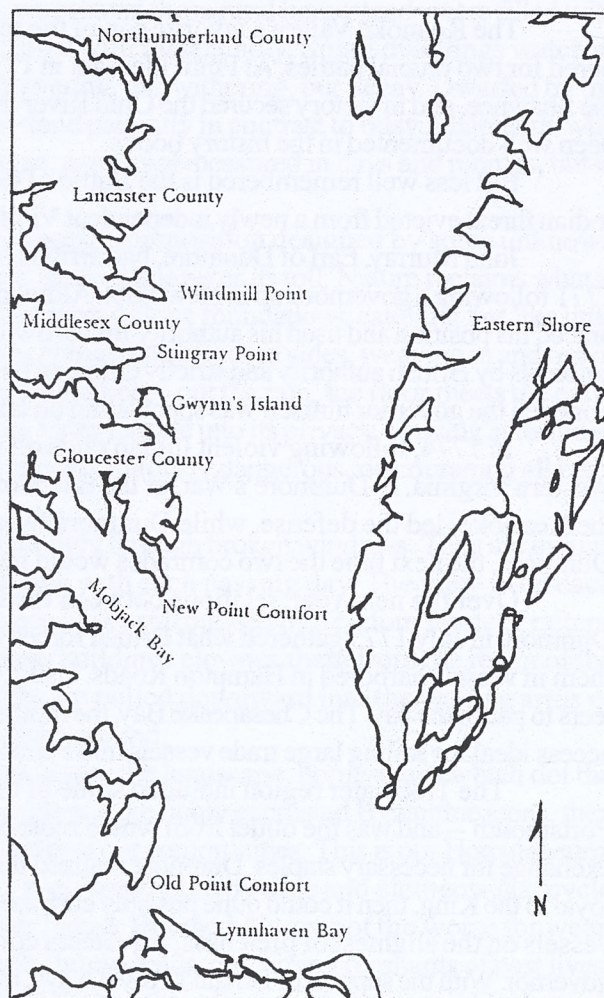
Loyalists aboard the "floating town" still had strong family and economic ties to Norfolk and were frequently coming to shore for necessities. Sporadically placed snipers concealed in vacated buildings along the wharf did little to discourage the raids. Patriots reasoned that if the city were destroyed, Dunmore and his forces would have to move on. The opportunity presented itself New Years Day, 1776.

British troops landed under a cover of naval gunnery and set fire to 19 vacated buildings known to have harbored militia snipers. Chaos and confusion followed. Patriot forces, seizing the moment, either burned or allowed to burn 863 buildings. With powerful coastal winds to fan the flames, the fifth largest city in all the colonies disappeared in three days. As word of the conflagration made its way to the Northern cities, the British were blamed, though patriot commanders were also culpable in Norfolk's destruction and used the tragedy to great advantage as propaganda.

While Norfolk was burning, Colonel Andrew Lewis was attending the fourth Virginia Convention in Williamsburg. Previously in August, Patrick Henry had been appointed commander of Virginia's regiment, an appointment based more upon popularity than capability. Lewis, whose military experience far outweighed that of Henry, declined the offer of a subservient command. However, not long after the Fourth Virginia Convention had adjourned, Henry's regiment of 1,300 volunteers had been accepted as Virginia's quota for the Continental Army and on March 1, the newly commissioned officers were announced.

The Philadelphia Congress had appointed Major General Charles Lee commander of the Southern Department of the Army and named Andrew Lewis and Robert Howe of North Carolina brigadier generals beneath him. Henry, furious that Lewis and Howe were promoted above him, resigned immediately. Lewis's appointment put him in control of all the Virginia troops and on March 18, 1776, he assumed command.

Just lingering off Norfolk's coast loomed Lewis's adversary and his fleet of over 80 Tory ships, includ-



The location of Gwynn's Island, between Gloucester and Virginia's Eastern Shore, is shown in this map of the lower Chesapeake Bay. (From The Governor's Island, by Peter Jennings Wrike)

ing the warships *Fowey* and *Otter*. Lewis arrived in Hampton in May, just in time to find Dunmore and his fleet preparing to sail. Initially, he saw them “stand out to sea, but instantly tacked about and ran up the Bay...” Dunmore’s suspected destination was Gwynn’s Island, a 2,200-acre island on the northern end of Gloucester County. In a report to Lee, Lewis was critical of the local civilians, who had failed to tell him of the fresh water and livestock available on the island so that it could be removed before Dunmore reached it. Before Lewis

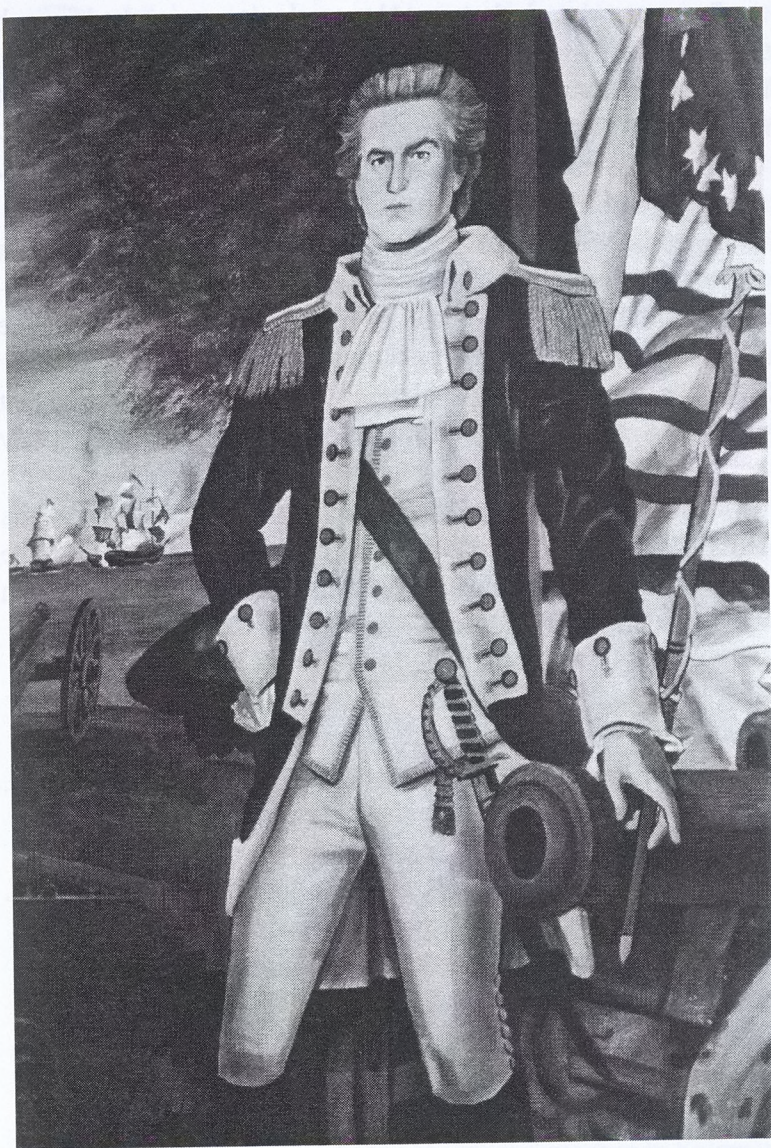
could finish the report, a messenger arrived to confirm that three to four hundred of Dunmore’s troops had just taken up residency on Gwynn’s Island.

While Dunmore waited there, events in Virginia moved rapidly. Virginia’s leadership unanimously adopted a resolution for independence and began the process of forming a new state government. The Convention appointed Patrick Henry governor of the newly established Commonwealth June 29, the same day Virginia’s state constitution, written by Thomas Jefferson, was recorded. These resolutions, radical and revolutionary, were the beginning of the end of nearly 170 years of British rule. Soon after the Continental Congress adopted Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, General Lewis decided it was time to rid Virginia of the last vestiges of royal control.

The morning of July 9 arrived with a low tide and little breeze. At approximately 8:30 a.m., General Lewis himself aimed and fired the first 18-pound cannon directly at the *Dunmore*, the governor’s flagship, hitting the stern and traveling the entire length of the vessel. The second shot to hit the *Dunmore*, also fired by Lewis, again hit the stern, killed the governor’s sailing master instantly, and destroyed Dunmore’s fine china. Shrapnel from these attacks slightly injured the governor’s legs.

The low tide caused several vessels, including the *Otter*, to be grounded; thus they were vulnerable to attack. At the

first shot, Hammond ordered the *Rowbuck*’s boats to tow these vessels out of cannon range; simultaneously, General Lewis ordered the American battery to begin firing on the island. The already heavily damaged *Dunmore* was hit by nearly every patriot shot aimed at her. Amazingly, Dunmore’s crew was able to return fire, but the cannons were too small and the American troops were too fortified for their shots to be effective. Dunmore, in retreat, ordered the anchor cables cut and his vessel towed out of range.



A painting of Gen. Andrew Lewis at Gwynn’s Island, by Anne Bell, hangs in the Salem Civic Center.

General Lewis's patriot batteries had the advantage that day. From "Cricket Hill," the height advantage made Dunmore's ships easy targets and retaliation difficult. (The name "Cricket Hill" derived from Dunmore's likening Lewis' troops to "Crickets on a Hill," for they disturbed his sleep with their cajoling.) With a low tide and no breeze, the only effective way to move the "floating town" from such confined waters was towing. Few loyalists wanted to row a boat to safety in the midst of all the gunfire.

That night, under cover of darkness, loyalists gathered what supplies they could in preparation to sail the next morning to St. George's Island in the Potomac. Vessels that could be repaired were patched enough to make a day's journey north; those deemed not seaworthy were burned. At dawn on the morning of July 10, as Dunmore and his "floating town" sailed up the Chesapeake, General Lewis gave the order for Lieutenant Colonel Alexander McClanahan and his battalion of the 7th Virginia to go ashore. What they found that morning greatly disturbed them. McClanahan's troops "were struck with horror (sic) at the number of dead bodies, in a state of putrefaction (sic), strewed all the way from their battery to Cherry Point."

Small pox as well as jail fever had ravaged the "floating town" and a lack of clean water, nutritious food, and adequate medical treatment allowed disease to flourish. The dead and dying as well as those quarantined and too ill to travel were simply left behind. Due to fear of contamination, the troops burned the quarantine camps with many dying still inside.

General Lewis ordered troops to follow the exodus of ships up the Chesapeake to be assured that Dunmore would not land elsewhere in Virginia. As Dunmore and his loyalists sailed into Maryland waters, they had become exiles.

Few people today have ever heard of such a place as Gwynn's Island and fewer still can testify to its significance. General Andrew Lewis had successfully dislodged Lord Dunmore from his temporary post on the island and was able to prevent his "floating town" from reestablishing itself elsewhere. This victory then began Virginia's independence, and a resident of our own valley had made it possible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Johnson, Patricia Givens. *General Andrew Lewis of Roanoke and Greenbriar*. Christiansburg: Johnson. 1980.

Selby, John E. *The Revolution in Virginia, 1775-1783*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. 1988.

Wilkerson, Gene. *Guns on the Chesapeake: The Winning of America's Independence*. Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books. 2000.

Wrike, Peter. *The Governor's Island*. Lively, Va.: BrandyLane. 1997.

Who Named Salem?

By John Long

Our Salem can claim many special distinctions, but a unique name is not one of them. The name Salem for a town or city is one of the most common in the U.S.—some 35 other states feature Salem on their maps. Some states can claim more than one, including Virginia. Marshall in Fauquier County was originally named Salem; there are parts of the Virginia Beach area, and Culpeper and Page counties, that bear this venerable name. The origin of the word is Biblical, an abbreviation of Jerusalem, and it means “peace.” The traditional Jewish greeting, “Shalom,” is a variant of the same word.

Salem, Virginia is neither the oldest nor the youngest place to bear this name. The town was founded when James Simpson, a somewhat murky character in the historical record, laid out a grid of lots on 31 acres of his land astride the Great Wagon Road. He began selling these lots in 1802, but in 1804 divested himself of most of his Virginia holdings and moved for unknown reasons to Alabama.

Perhaps because of his sudden disappearance from the area, a great mystery has always surrounded the origins of the name of Salem. Who named the town 200 years ago? Why? Apparently no one deemed these questions important enough to record an answer.

However, there is a traditional account of the naming of Salem that has been repeated many times; often enough to be considered dogma by many local history buffs. It appears in the two most recent surveys of local history: Norwood Middleton’s *Salem: A Virginia Chronicle* and Deedie Kagey’s *History of Roanoke County* (Kagey cites her information back to Middleton). According to the prevailing theory, the name Salem was imported from New Jersey by the Bryan family. William Bryan, known as The Emigrant, and his son, William Jr., moved to this area in the 1740s from Salem, N.J. They settled along the Great Road where a fresh spring bubbled to the surface—the area known today as Lake Spring Park in Salem. As far as many are concerned, they brought the name Salem with them.

This is an entirely plausible theory; however, it has always seemed to this researcher that it presents a problem: it virtually bypasses James Simpson, Salem’s founder. Did he have no role in naming the town he laid out himself on property he owned? What evidence is there to support the “Bryan theory” of the name’s origin? What can we deduce from the scant documentary evidence of Salem’s early days?

The first question to ask is the genesis of the “Bryan theory.” The originator seems to be a Salem native by the name of Thornton Whaling. After growing up here, Whaling became a Presbyterian pastor, serving the Jackson Memorial Church in Lexington and eventually serving as president of the Union Theological Seminary in Louisville. He had a particular interest in local history and genealogy, especially the Bryan family, from which he was a descendant.

In 1926, Whaling helped to place a marker in Salem’s West Hill Cemetery to mark the graves of William Bryan, his son, and his son’s wife, Margaret Watson. On the dedication day, Whaling gave a speech which (as far as I can tell) was the earliest public appearance of the Bryan theory: “the lovely old town of Salem... whose very name [the Bryans] brought with them.” (quoted in *The Roanoke Times*, Sept. 9, 1926) The same basic information appears in the *Salem Times Register* edition commemorating Roanoke County’s centennial on May 27, 1938, quoted as a recent letter from Whaling on page 127. Whaling does not identify a

John Long, director of the Salem Museum, is a graduate of Roanoke College and holds a master’s degree in history from the University of Virginia. He is an adjunct history professor at Roanoke College and the author of South of Main: A History of the Water Street Community of African Americans in Salem.

source for this information, but seems to hint that it was a family oral tradition.

That the theory was not in vogue earlier than 1926 is evidenced by its omission from the earliest sources for local history. William McCauley, in his chapter on Salem's founding in the 1902 *History of Roanoke County*, prepared for Salem's Centennial, wrote, "it would be a matter of interest to know who suggested the name of the town, but on this point, tradition is silent." (page 138) It is interesting to note that Whaling was invited to be a speaker at the Centennial Celebration, but had to decline at the last minute. Otherwise, he may have provided an answer to McCauley's question.

Nor is the Bryan theory mentioned in George Jack's 1912 *History of Roanoke County*.

What actual evidence, then, is there to support Whaling's hypothesis? Scarcely any. For one thing, the most prominent Bryans may have been dead several years before Salem was laid. William Bryan the Emigrant died in 1786, and William Bryan Jr. died in 1796, assuming that the dates on Whaling's aforementioned 1926 grave markers are accurate. Some sources give William Jr.'s death as 1806, but this may have only been the year his will was probated. Many of the other Bryans in the area moved west, and of the relatives who remained in the area, none appear to have been leaders of early Salem, since their names are not among the early settlers of the town.

Nor was the Bryan land part of the original town. Rather, it was about a mile up the road, a considerable distance considering Simpson's town was only a few blocks long.

Furthermore, it stands to reason that if the Bryans brought the name with them, it would have been in use prior to Simpson's creation of the town. But their land was always referred to as "Bryan's on Roanoke," a reference to the river that adjoined the farm, and an examination (although not an exhaustive one) of early deeds for the area fails to show an appearance of the name Salem prior to 1802.

So, if the Bryan theory seems tenuous at best, who named Salem? A good candidate, though not a proven one, would be Simpson himself, based on a number of pieces of circumstantial evidence.

First, it is worthwhile to find the earliest use of the name Salem. It appears to be the deed which is Salem's "birth certificate." On June 4, 1802, Susanna Cole purchased from Simpson a lot of land in the newly laid-out town along the Great Road, a transaction traditionally taken as the founding of the town. The lot is described as such: "which Lott or piece of Ground is in a plan of a Town laid off by the said James Simpson near where sd. Simpson now lives *which Town is now known by the name of Salem.*" (Botetourt County Deed Book 7, page 731; italics mine)

Interestingly, the word "now" was edited in with a caret. What does this signify, if anything? If nothing else, it seems reasonable to assume that this indicates the area had not previously been known as Salem.

Second, in December of 1805, residents of the new Salem petitioned the Virginia legislature to officially establish the town, which for three years had apparently had no official existence. In their application, they note that "a Certain James Simpson laid off a Town in his land... *which said Town he designated by the name of Salem...*" (quoted in Stoner, *Seedbed of the Republic*, page 244; italics mine). Simpson, by the way, had left Virginia the year before, according to the weight of the evidence. The signatories of this petition (which the legislature passed in January 1806) seemed to know nothing of a Bryan connection to the name, and no Bryan was among the petitioners.

This document, incidentally, also provides the earliest description of the town. Only three years after her founding, Salem was in a "fertile part" of Botetourt County where a number of "proprietors have made good buildings and settled, and sundry others are now building—which from the present appearance must make it in a short time a flourishing place—as it lies on a very eligible spot and in the midst of a wealthy and populous part of the said county—being at the junction of the roads from your seat of government and from the northward leading to the western country and where the farmers and others may find a market for their produce and be conveniently supplied with such materials as they may be in need of as there are a number of mechanics and some vendors of merchandise resident therein."

Third, there is some Simpson family tradition which may be relevant. Theodore Simpson, a genealogist, produced a manuscript in 1990, entitled "Some preliminary data on James Simpson, the founder of Salem, Virginia, and related Simpsons." In it, he notes a strong connection between the Simpson name and the name Salem. One branch, it seems, can be traced back like the Bryans to Salem, N.J. (although not the branch affiliated with Botetourt's James Simpson). Another Simpson lived near Salem (now Marshall) in Fauquier County, and another apparently near Salem, W. Va., where a Simpson Creek is found. While all this is conjecture, it seems possible that the name Salem follows the Simpsons. (To be fair, it should be noted that in a later letter to Salem historian Norwood Middleton, Theodore Simpson indicates that he had never heard of the Bryan theory, and notes that he did not have "sufficient information to say one way or the other.")

What then are we to deduce from this evidence? Following are the conclusions I have drawn from my research into this matter:

- 1) There is no documentary evidence to support Thornton Whaling's hypothesis that the Bryan family named Salem. Nor is there such a preponderance of evidence that it can be rejected outright.
- 2) At the same time, the weight of the early documentary evidence gives much more credence to the idea that James Simpson named his own town.
- 3) The possibility cannot be dismissed that someone in the Bryan family made the suggestion to Simpson that Salem would be a good name for a new town. Such an idea would in effect harmonize the two accounts.
- 4) Thus, it would seem reasonable to include both theories in future discussions and writings about Salem's history as unproven possibilities.

In the end, we are left to agree with McCauley — "on this point tradition is silent" — and remain satisfied that Salem is Salem, regardless of the origins of the name.

Regional manuscript guide completed

Dr. Charles Bodie of Lexington has completed his draft of a manuscript guide for the Roanoke and New River valleys, sponsored by the History Museum and Historical Society of Western Virginia. Funded by a grant of \$10,000 from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, this project was also part of a larger program of speakers who explored neglected facets of the region's history.

Dr. Bodie undertook his research to locate manuscript collections in public repositories pertaining to the counties of Botetourt, Craig, Floyd, Montgomery, and Roanoke, as well as their municipalities. His work required travel to scores of libraries around Virginia and among neighboring states, and to extensive searches of internet library sites. By March 31, 2002, he had compiled a descriptive list of 1,604 collections located in 61 libraries. Among these libraries, 26 are in Virginia.

The diverse content of the collections spans the period from the colonial era to the 20th century. The published guide, with diverse references to private correspondence, diaries, business ledgers, legal material, maps and photographs, will offer abundant information to researchers interested in fresh directions. These items touch on the lives of people on farms, in stores, at homes, in schools, and in professional work. They document the lives of people neglected by many historians, including women, children, African-Americans, small farmers, and workers in extractive industries. Overall, the guide should stimulate new approaches to the region's history, reveal new themes, and help to foster a better understanding of its development. This understanding, in turn, can help members of the region's communities to address contemporary issues.

The Museum meanwhile sponsored a set of speakers during the second half of 2001 who touched on a range of seldom-visited topics of Southwest Virginia history, including archeological evidence of aboriginal settlements, aspects of railroad development, African-American entrepreneurs, and ways of conducting family and community history.

The final step for the Museum is to raise the necessary funding of about \$8,000 for the publication of the guide to make it available to individuals and to libraries as a strong addition to its current publications program. Another idea being explored is to also produce an on-line version that will greatly increase its access. The guide will be available in the spring or summer of 2003.

Oliver Hill's Home May Become Human Rights Center

By George Kegley

Friends and admirers of Oliver W. Hill Sr., prominent desegregation lawyer, organized a foundation to acquire his boyhood home in Northwest Roanoke and develop it as a center to foster human rights. Hill, now 95 and blind, recalls his Roanoke years from 1913 to 1923 and again when he began practicing law in 1934 in an autobiography, *The Big Bang, Brown v. Board of Education and Beyond*, published in 2000. His home is in Richmond.

Hill was one of a team of civil rights lawyers who won the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregation suit before the U.S. Supreme Court. In the Jim Crow era, Hill's NAACP legal team filed more civil rights law suits in Virginia than were filed in any other Southern state. They led to landmark decisions on voting rights, jury selection, access to school buses and employment protection.

In a recent telephone interview, Hill said 99 percent of his recollections about Roanoke are good. He had "a wonderful time as a child" and then he came back and started his law practice in Judge Lindsay Almond's Hustings Court in Roanoke.

"We've made a whole lot of progress" on race but "there is a whole lot of work to be done, not just black and white in the United States but in the whole world. We need to think differently on a lot of things," he said. "People are more sophisticated today. They don't come out and say they are segregationist. They are more subtle."

"All segregationists need to look at the situation from a realistic view and get over all this nonsense related to skin color," Hill once told an Associated Press reporter. "There's no basis for thinking there's anything other than a human ethic. If God had intended for people to be defined as races and separated, we would assume God had sense enough to give them different means of procreation."

In his autobiography, Hill said, "I arrived at the conclusion that it was just as stupid for me to hate white people because they were white as it was for white people to hate me because I wasn't white. Consequently, I began to judge people as people on the basis of my experience with them."

Lawyer Hill has a lifetime of accomplishments. After that landmark legal victory almost 50 years ago, he was elected as Richmond's first black council member. His awards are many: the Chicago Defender Merit, American Bar Association Commission on Opportunities, Walking History Millennium, Thomas Jefferson Award for Public Service, the American College of Trial Lawyers Award for Courageous Advocacy, the Virginia Commission on Women and Minorities in the Legal System, and the Freedom Fighter Award of the Virginia State Conference of NAACP branches. In Richmond, the former Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Building was named for Hill. And foremost, in 1999, he received the Medal of Freedom from President Bill Clinton.

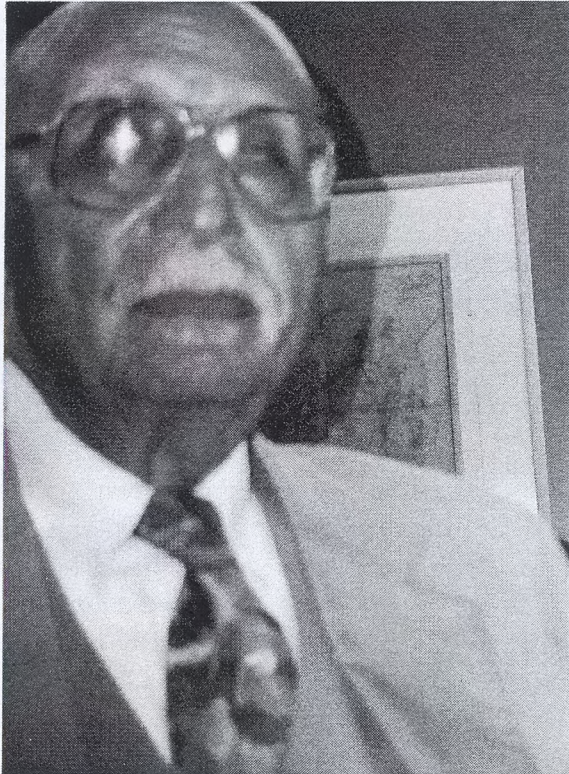
On Feb. 5, 2003, Virginia's General Assembly honored Hill as this year's Outstanding Virginian. He was recognized as a Virginian "whose dedication and service are an inspiration to all civic-minded citizens."

After graduating from Howard University and its law school in Washington while working as a waiter in a restaurant, Hill passed the bar examination and in 1934 he began practicing law in Roanoke with J. Henry

George Kegley, a longtime resident of Roanoke, is a permanent director of the History Museum, and editor of the Journal since 1968.

Claytor in an office at the present site of the new parking garage for the Higher Education Center, near the railroad. He was one of fewer than 40 black lawyers in the state.

"In those days," he wrote, "most Negro lawyers had a solo general practice. Like general medical practice, our general legal practice required us to make house calls. People in real serious condition needed you to visit them at home. I frequently went to clients' homes to talk to them." While looking for ways to generate income, Hill typed chain letters and represented workers who gave him wage assignments, and some



Oliver Hill of Richmond, noted desegregation attorney, attended a reception at the Transportation Museum in Roanoke in June 2002. (Photo by George Kegley)

Negro professionals gave him their unpaid debts to collect, but his criminal practice was "almost entirely pro bono." When these activities failed to produce a reasonable amount for upkeep, Hill discontinued his Roanoke practice and returned to Washington in June 1936. He later spent most of his career in Richmond. He had taken many pictures of the interior and exterior of Roanoke County one-room schools to use as evidence for community education and for litigation.

The Oliver Hill Foundation was established in October 2000 with the goal of carrying on the work of Hill and his associates in civil rights, according to Clarence M. Dunnaville Jr., a law partner of Hill. Its purposes are to function as an educational and policy center for the promotion and study of human rights, as well as developing the onetime Hill home at 401 Gilmer Avenue, NW, as a center for human rights.

Kay Strickland is president of the foundation. Others on the board are Cabell Brand, Alice Roberts and Ed Barnett, from the Roanoke Valley; Clarence and Norine Dunnaville and Jonathan K. Stubbs, Richmond; and Esther Vassar, Norfolk.

The first project of the foundation was to obtain a grant from the Virginia Law Foundation enabling the Roanoke group to sponsor two law students as interns with public interest law firms devoted to civil rights.

In his autobiography, *The Big Bang*, Hill said when he was a child, "people in our social circle used to call Roanoke 'little New York.'" Few cars were owned in the Negro neighborhood, he said. "I noticed that each make of car had a different sound. Accordingly, because of the scarcity of cars and distinctive sounds, I know everybody's car a block before I could see it."

His stepfather, Joseph C. Hill, operated a pool parlor. "He even built a little stand for me to stand upon so that I could see over the pool table. He started teaching me to play billiards and pocket pool. Before he could teach me much about the art of playing billiards or shooting pool, Virginia went dry and that closed the saloons and killed the neighborhood in which his pool parlor was located. He tried to find another location. Unfortunately, at that time in Roanoke, the locations where a Negro could operate a business were very limited. He didn't see anything he wanted to do in Roanoke. Accordingly, he decided to go back to Hot Springs to work. That terminated my career as a potential professional pool player. Who knows, that may have kept me from becoming a 'Virginia Fats.'"

As a boy, Hill lived at 401 Gilmer Ave. with his mother and stepfather in the home of Bradford and Lelia Pentecost. In those days, Negro children couldn't go to public school until they were seven. People were

work-oriented in his boyhood days. His daily chores were bringing in coal and wood for stoves and washing dishes. Once a week, he had the responsibility for dusting furniture, mopping the floor and cleaning common areas of the house. Hill also worked at an ice cream parlor where he was paid in ice cream for his services. The firm was cited for violating child labor laws.

During World War I when he was 10, Hill woke up at 3 a.m. to deliver newspapers. He began selling the *New York Examiner* on Saturday afternoons. When he walked through white neighborhoods, "I knew that you had to be very, very careful that you didn't get caught as you might be cuffed around... If white boys came along, I had to run like hell. They would cuff me and when we would catch them in our neighborhood, we would cuff them too. It was sort of tit for tat... But nobody shot anybody or broke their arm or anything like that. They let us know that they didn't care anything about us and we let them know that we didn't care anything about them. This was one of the unfortunate results of racial segregation."

Roanoke was a railroad town, Hill wrote. "In our circle, practically everybody either ran on a railroad or worked for the Norfolk and Western or Virginian in such capacities as cooks, waiters, porters, trainmen, brakemen, firemen and messengers at the main office." Hill started at 16 as a laborer at N&W, earning 25 cents an hour for such jobs as mixing concrete, transferring shippers' claims from one office to another and guiding rails to a "frog shop." (Holes where rails were connected were called frogs.) He worked on an ice wagon and in a shoe shine parlor. In his school days, Hill played football, baseball, basketball and shot marbles.

Commenting on the Negro class structure he saw in Roanoke, Hill said it was more democratic in the sense that African-American people from various social strata mingled freely. Mrs. Pentecost, his friend and landlady, said that in Washington at that time, "there was more division: a kind of 'pecking order' based upon skin color and economic status."

Hill had a brief movie career in Roanoke. In the 1920s, he said, Oscar Michaux, a prominent Negro film producer, persuaded a group of Roanoke Negroes to invest in a film, "House Behind the Cedars," about middle class Negroes here. Hill had a role, walking among guests at a lawn party filmed in his front yard, at the northwest corner of Gilmer Avenue and 4th Street. In 1991, many years later, when a Richmond professor heard of his movie role, Hill was invited to appear at the Virginia Festival of American Film in Charlottesville to discuss Oscar Michaux and his work

House at 401 Gilmer Ave., NW, boyhood home of Oliver Hill. (Photos courtesy of Ed Barnett)



What Victory May Mean:

A History of Ensign Horace A. Bass Jr., USNR, and the USS *Horace A. Bass* APD-124

By Roy C. Baugher III

Horace Ancel Bass Jr. was a Roanoke citizen who served as an aviator in the United States Naval Reserve during the Second World War. He served as a fighter pilot in the Pacific Theater, participating in the Battle of Midway and the Battle of Eastern Solomons in 1942. During the Solomons battle, Bass was declared missing in action and he was never found. He was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his actions at Midway.

Two years later, the Department of the Navy announced it would name a ship in honor of Bass: the USS *Horace A. Bass* APD-124. The high-speed transport ship with her officers, crew, and embarked servicemen served the Navy from 1944 to 1959, when it was decommissioned. For its Second World War service, *Horace A. Bass* earned two battle stars and was credited with shooting down two Japanese planes and sinking one enemy submarine. The ship earned the Navy Unit Commendation and six battle stars for its extensive service during the Korean War.

It is a rare honor for a ship to be named after a person of Bass's rank of ensign, rarer still for that ship to render distinguished service and to garner accolades during its career. Both the man and the ship are to be recognized for their contributions to the traditions of the United States Navy.

Horace Ancel Bass, Jr. was born in Roanoke on September 22, 1915. He was the first child of Horace A. Sr. and Minnie K. Bass. Bass's father worked as a draftsman in the engineering department of the Norfolk & Western Railway, based in Roanoke. About three years later, his sister, Minnie King Bass, was born. The Bass family lived on Woods Avenue, in what is now Roanoke's "Old Southwest." In the early 1920s, the family moved to Madison, North Carolina and lived there. Bass, however, still worked at Norfolk & Western in Roanoke, and he visited with his family on the weekends. The family moved back to Roanoke eventually and lived in a house on Allison Avenue. Horace Jr. attended Jefferson High School. In his senior year, he participated in the senior play, and he served on the staff of the school's annual, *The Acorn*. Bass graduated from Jefferson in the spring of 1933. Next to his senior portrait in the yearbook, he is described as "artistic, versatile, reserved."

In the autumn of 1933, Bass began studies at Roanoke College in Salem, attending for two years. While at Roanoke, he was a member of the Chemical Society, Sigma Delta Pi (an academic classics fraternity), and Kappa Alpha fraternity.

It was around his time in high school and college that Bass developed a serious interest in art. Besides doing artistic projects at home, he was art editor of the Roanoke College annual, *Rawenoch*, in 1934-1935, and he contributed pen-and-ink drawings for that year's edition. By 1935, Bass decided to leave Roanoke College to attend Richmond Professional Institute in Richmond, to further his studies in art. RPI was then a division of the College of William & Mary, and at the time was the premier art school in the state. Bass earned

Roy C. Baugher III, administrative assistant at the History Museum and Historical Society of Western Virginia, was the curator of an exhibit on Ensign Horace Bass and the Navy vessel named for him and he also founded an archives collection devoted to Bass, the ship and its crew. Baugher is a graduate of Roanoke College.

a bachelor's degree in art from RPI in June 1937.

Bass returned to live with his family in Roanoke, and he became an art teacher at his alma mater, Jefferson High, in the autumn of 1937. Besides teaching art classes, he was faculty advisor for the school's drama set productions, the student newspaper, and *The Acorn*. One of his students, Ken Platt, remembers Bass fondly as a teacher. Platt did not consider himself a very good artist, but he said that Bass had a great deal of patience with him in his art class.

In 1940-1941, Bass became interested in aviation and learning to fly an airplane. He took flying lessons at College Air Express, a flight instruction school operating at the Roanoke Municipal Airport. He also became a member and shareholder in the Sportsmen's Flying Club. Members owned shares of a Piper Cub J2 airplane, kept at the airport. Members would sign up to schedule their time to fly the plane. Usage fees were charged to offset costs for fuel and maintenance.

In February 1941, Bass decided to leave his teaching position at Jefferson, and enlisted in the United States Naval Reserve with hopes of becoming a naval aviator. During his tenure at Jefferson, Bass improved the school's art department by procuring new art desks, a worktable and an airbrush painting system. He also expanded the art curriculum from just two classes when he began teaching, to six classes. On his last day of teaching at Jefferson, Bass's fourth period art class threw a farewell party for him, complete with a cake bearing the inscription "Happy Landing."

Bass reported to the Naval Reserve Aviator Base in Washington, D.C. in March 1941. From March 6 to April 24, he underwent flight training at the base. He was appointed an aviation cadet on May 15. He completed further training at the Naval Air Stations at Jacksonville and Miami, Florida until late October 1941. Bass was designated officially a Naval Aviator (Heavier Than Air) on October 27, and he received his commission as an ensign on November 7, 1941. One month later, Japanese naval forces attacked Pearl Harbor, and the United States entered the Second World War. Bass went on to receive aircraft carrier training when he reported to the Advanced Carrier Training Group-Atlantic at Norfolk on January 5, 1942. In March of that year, he married the former Sarah S. Miley, who was also from Roanoke.

Bass was assigned to Fighting Squadron Three (VF-3), commanded by Lieutenant Commander John S. "Jimmy" Thach. He arrived at Kaneohe Air Station, Hawaii with six other rookies on May 20, 1942. He and others conducted flight and gunnery exercises with the squadron's new Grumman F4F-4 single-seat fighter planes, also known as "Wildcats." By late May, VF-3 was assigned to the USS *Yorktown* CV-5. The squadron consisted of 27 pilots, some of whom were veterans from Fighting Squadron 42 (VF-42), which had just returned from the Battle of the Coral Sea in early May.

The *Yorktown* and her task force sailed from Pearl Harbor on May 30, two days after USS *Enterprise* CV-6 and USS *Hornet* CV-8 and their task forces departed Pearl. Navy Admiral Chester Nimitz



*Ensign Horace A. Bass, Jr., USNR,
Roanoke, Virginia, December 1941.
(Photo courtesy of Minnie King Thomas)*

ordered the carrier groups to meet north of the island atoll of Midway, to counter the suspected mounting threat to the island and its important airfield and seaplane base by Japanese naval forces. In fact, four aircraft carrier task forces under Imperial Japanese Navy Admiral Chuichi Nagumo were indeed sailing to attack Midway.

The Battle of Midway occurred on June 4, 1942. On board the *Yorktown*, Bass was assigned to the Fourth Division of VF-3 comprised of six pilots. At 6:30 a.m., the 4th Division was launched to fly the second combat air patrol, or CAP. They returned to land on *Yorktown* by 9:25 a.m., after the third CAP was launched to relieve them.

The 2nd and 4th Divisions of VF-3 were launched at 11:50 a.m. to fly the fourth CAP. Bass and the rest of the 4th Division were ordered straightaway to intercept "bogey," or unidentified aircraft, contacts west of their position, about 32 miles away. The 2nd Division soon joined them. Around noon local time, the 12 F4Fs intercepted 18 Aichi D3A1 Type 99 carrier bombers (later known as "Vals") and six Mitsubishi A6M2 Type 0 Model 21 carrier fighters (later known as "Zekes" or "Zeros") that were en route to attack the *Yorktown*. These groups of enemy planes were from the Japanese carrier *Hiryu*. In defense of the *Yorktown*, Bass and the rest of the fourth CAP engaged the Japanese planes. During the melee, Bass and his section leader, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Edward D. Mattson, USN (a veteran of VF-42), came under attack from a Val and a Zero. Although his plane sustained damage from several hits, Bass maintained formation and protected Mattson from the rear, shooting down eventually both the Val and the Zero.

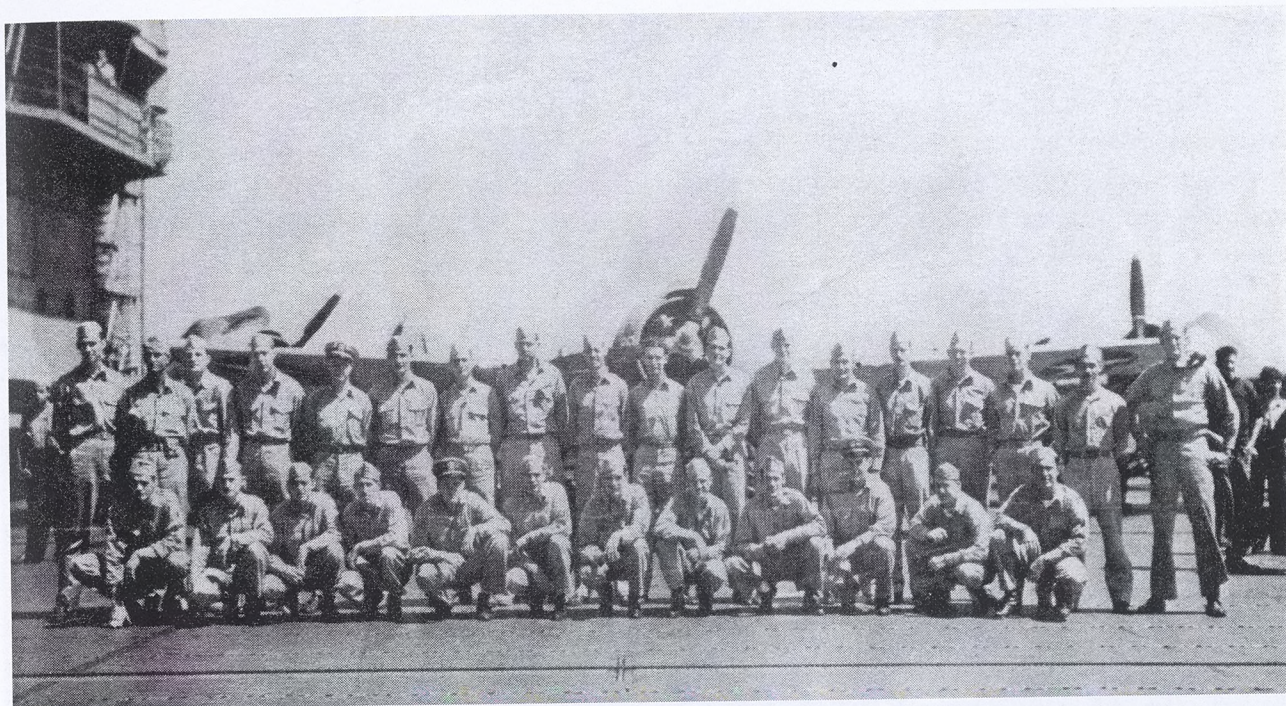
Type 99 bombers were still able to get through, and three scored hits on the *Yorktown*, one tearing an 11-foot hole in her flight deck. As a result, portions of VF-3 already aloft had to land on either the *Enterprise* or the *Hornet*. Mattson landed on the *Enterprise*, while Bass landed on the *Hornet* by 1:00 p.m. The *Yorktown* suffered another attack from the *Hiryu*'s planes at 2:43 p.m. Japanese torpedo planes scored two hits, and the ship began to list to its port side. Efforts to repair and keep afloat the *Yorktown* were made. However, she was attacked by the Japanese submarine *I-168*, and she sank a day later on June 7.

The Battle of Midway, however, was won. Even though outnumbered, the U.S. forces were able to sink all four of Nagumo's aircraft carriers: *Akagi*, *Hiryu*, *Kaga* and *Soryu*, compared to the Navy's one-carrier loss of the *Yorktown*. After Midway, Bass and the rest of VF-3 were ferried back to Pearl Harbor on board the *Hornet*. Bass wrote in a letter to his parents that he had seen "plenty of action," and that his Japanese counterparts were "good fighters." He post-scripted his letter with, "I shot down two Jap planes."

The North American Newspaper Alliance, though not verified, reported one interesting story about Bass, shortly after the Battle of Midway. The account begins after Bass landed on the *Hornet*, when those of VF-3 could not land on the *Yorktown* because of her damaged flight deck. Bass was lounging in one of the *Hornet*'s pilot ready rooms when he was asked if he could help respot airplanes on the deck. Bass agreed to assist, and he jumped into an F4F with only his helmet. He did not even wear his standard life preserver. Bass began to taxi the plane, as directed by the deck crew. He thought he was heading to respot the plane, but the flight deck crew stopped him at the take-off line instead. The dispatcher then gave Bass the hand signal to rev the plane's engine for launching. Bass shook his head vehemently and yelled back at him, trying to explain he was only there to respot the plane. The dispatcher misunderstood Bass's protests, and gave Bass the signal to take off. Bass obeyed grudgingly, and he took off, probably very mad and frustrated with his predicament. However, he returned to the *Hornet* to land. Realizing their mistake, the flight deck crew apologized to Bass, promising him that would not happen again.

Sometimes promises are not kept. About an hour later, Bass assisted the flight deck crew again with respotting planes on the flight deck, and again, he was launched by mistake. It was reported that Bass was so angry, he shot down a Japanese Zero before he landed back on the *Hornet*.

Bass remained with VF-3 at Maui Naval Air Station until July 2, 1942, when he was transferred to Fighting Squadron Five (VF-5), commanded by Lieutenant Commander Leroy C. Simpler, USN. VF-5 was



Fighting Squadrons 3, 42 and 8 aboard USS Hornet after the Battle of Midway, 10 June 1942. Bass is kneeling in front row at far right. (Photo courtesy of Minnie King Thomas)

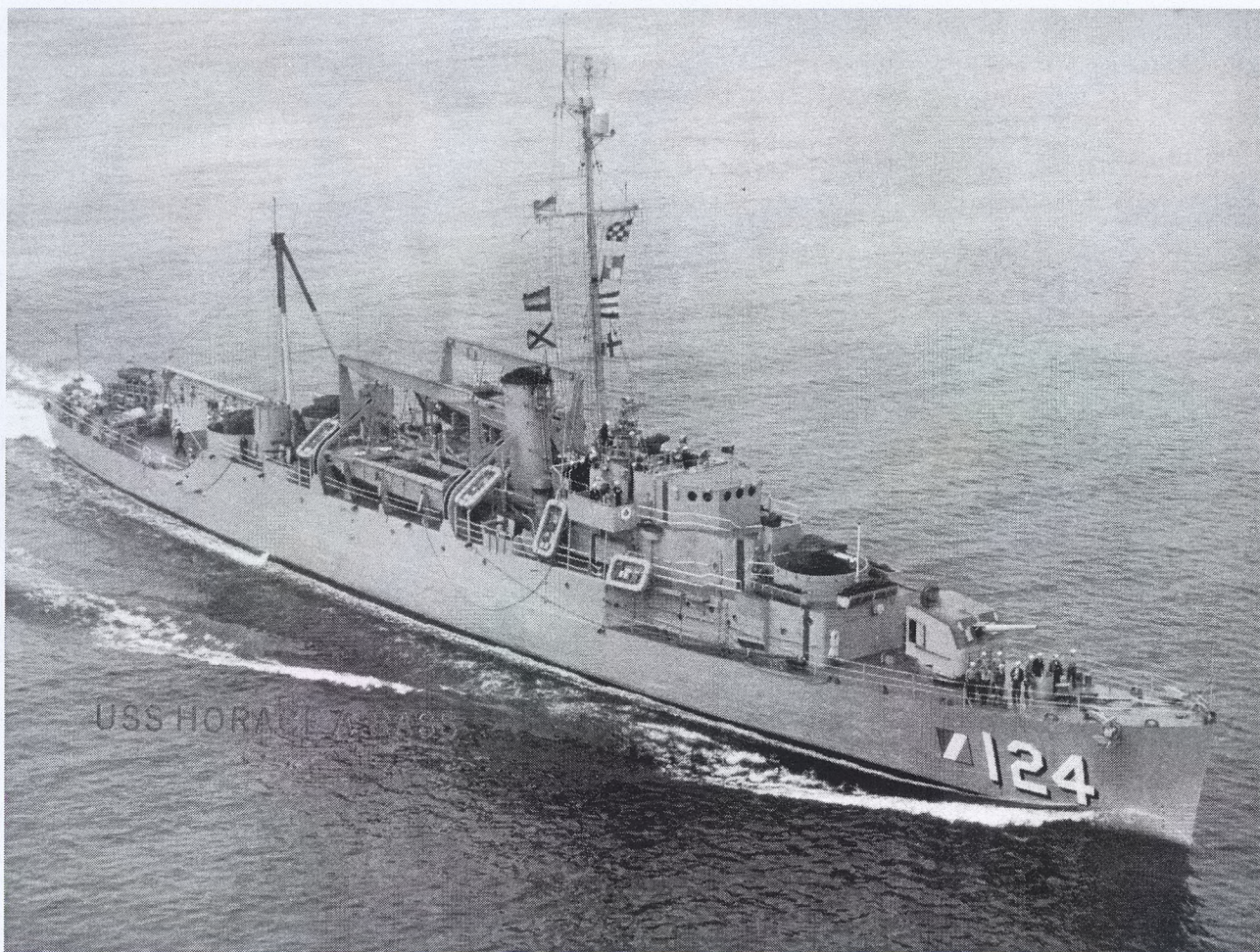
assigned to USS *Saratoga* CV-3. The task forces of both the *Saratoga* and the *Enterprise* sailed from Pearl Harbor on July 7 toward the Solomon Islands for the upcoming Guadalcanal Campaign, the first counteroffensive in the Pacific by U.S. forces.

On July 11, the *Saratoga* and the other task forces neared crossing the equator in the vicinity of the island of Palmyra. For such a momentous occasion, every Navy ship holds a traditional ritual to "initiate" those who have not crossed the equator while at sea. Bass himself was among those uninitiated "Polliwogs" who endured unconventional capers from the veteran "Shellbacks." Such antics included physical exercises in cold-weather flying suits, all in the tropical heat on the *Saratoga*'s flight deck, and pushing shoe polish tins down the flight deck with only their noses. By the next day, the carrier crossed the equator and Bass and his fellow Polliwogs became Shellbacks themselves.

The *Saratoga* and *Enterprise* then sailed south to the Fiji Islands to rendezvous with the other task forces. On July 30, Bass and others of VF-5 participated in a practice air strike and combat air patrol exercises around the Fijian island of Koro, where the amphibious task force practiced landing U.S. Marines onto its beaches. Bass, being the consummate artist, captured a scene of that day in a color pastel drawing he completed shortly afterwards. He titled it "We Dove on Koro Island." The drawing shows four F4F Wildcats practicing a strafing run; some are pulling out of their dives while some are just starting theirs.

VF-5's exercises were soon put into actual use on August 7, 1942. Bass and the rest of VF-5 and the *Saratoga*'s air group flew constant combat air patrols, inner air patrols and ground support operations in support of the First Marine Division's amphibious landings on the island of Guadalcanal. The next day, VF-5 flew CAPs around Tulagi, a small island north of Guadalcanal, from noon to 1:30 p.m.

From August 9-21, the *Saratoga* and *Enterprise* refueled and maintained a presence south of Guadalcanal while the marines were still making inroads against the Japanese on the island. They were then dispatched 170 miles east of the island of Malatia to search for Japanese carriers coming possibly from the north. They arrived on August 23.



USS Horace A. Bass APD-124, San Diego, California, circa 1951-1953. Horace A. Bass garnered two battle stars and three kills during World War II. During the Korean War, the ship earned six battle stars and the Navy Unit Commendation, the first U.S. Navy ship to earn the NUC of that conflict. (Original photograph gift of Jesse Montemayor)

The Battle of Eastern Solomons occurred on August 24, 1942. The *Saratoga* and *Enterprise* received word that enemy carrier task forces were indeed in the region north of Malatia. Admiral Chuichi Nagumo again led the Japanese forces, with the carriers *Ryujo*, *Shokaku*, and *Zuikaku*. Around 2:30 p.m. local time, Nagumo had found where the *Enterprise* and *Saratoga* groups were located, from a report by a Japanese reconnaissance seaplane. A half-hour later, 27 Val carrier bombers and 10 Zero escort fighters were en route from the Japanese carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* when they were spotted by *Enterprise* around 4:00 p.m.

Bass was assigned to the VF-5 combat air patrol division SCARLET STANDBY, with division leader Lieutenant (Junior Grade) James C. Smith and Ensign Charles E. Eichenberger. Fighting Five divisions SCARLET 6 and SCARLET STANDBY, with three F4Fs each, were launched from *Saratoga* to fly CAP at 4:10 p.m.

At 4:38 p.m., 18 Vals with four Zeros from *Shokaku* and nine Vals with six Zeros from *Zuikaku* deployed to attack the *Enterprise* and *Saratoga*, respectively. At this point, SCARLET 6 spotted this group and entered into combat with the enemy group attacking *Saratoga*. Fighting Squadron Six's (VF-6) division RED 4 from the *Enterprise* joined VF-5's SCARLET 6 and SCARLET 5 divisions. Within minutes the Vals

and Zeros came under intense fire and they decided to abandon their attack on *Saratoga* and proceeded to attack *Enterprise*, which was closer.

Around 4:43 p.m., SCARLET STANDBY, still flying CAP, entered the fray as the Vals and Zeros headed toward the *Enterprise*. Moments later, both the Japanese planes and F4Fs entered within range of the *Enterprise* task force's anti-aircraft fire. Though not known exactly, it is probable that Zeros brought down both Smith and Bass of SCARLET STANDBY. They were not found or recovered afterward, and both men were later reported as missing in action. Eichenberger, the sole survivor of SCARLET STANDBY during the battle, perished later on September 12, 1942 in continued fighting around Guadalcanal.

The Battle of Eastern Solomons was a marginal, yet strategic, victory for the U.S. Navy. The *Saratoga* remained unscathed after the battle. The *Enterprise*, however, was hit three times from Japanese carrier bombers, but she was able to sail back to Pearl Harbor under her own power for repairs. The Japanese carrier *Ryujo* was at least damaged heavily or sunk, and the carriers *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* were neutralized as a result of their air groups being decimated.

Bass was declared missing in action after the battle. The Department of the Navy soon sent this word to his wife and family. His drawing of Koro Island, probably among his other belongings, was sent back to Roanoke. On November 14, 1942, Bass was awarded the Navy Cross, the Navy's highest decoration, for his heroism and "superb airmanship and unyielding devotion to duty" at the Battle of Midway. The U.S. Navy pronounced Bass as "presumed dead" in 1943. He was awarded the Purple Heart posthumously on October 22, 1943. During his service Bass also earned the American Defense Service Medal and the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal.

On August 3, 1944, the keel of a new destroyer escort (DE) of the *Rudderow* class was laid down at the Bethlehem Steel Fore River Shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts. Though it was unnamed, its hull number was DE-691. However, during the ship's initial construction, the Navy decided that this ship was to be converted to a high-speed transport (APD) of the *Crosley* class, with the hull number APD-124. The Navy announced on August 29, 1944 that this new high-speed transport would be named in honor of Ensign Horace A. Bass Jr. The USS *Horace A. Bass* was launched and christened in a ceremony at the Bethlehem Steel shipyard on September 12. Bass's widow, Mrs. Sarah Miley Bass, christened the ship. Her mother, Mrs. Martha Miley, and Bass's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Horace A. Bass Sr., attended the ceremony as well. Afterward, they were the guests at a reception and breakfast held at the Neighborhood Club in Quincy, Massachusetts.

A high-speed transport such as the *Horace A. Bass* served as a small amphibious troop transport. The ship's crew consisted of 12 to 15 officers and up to 192 enlisted personnel. The ship's length was 306 feet, its beam, or width, was 37 feet, and its maximum speed was 24 knots. The *Horace A. Bass* could embark a company-sized group of Marine or Army troops, as many as 150 enlisted and 12 officers, and all their necessary equipment, rations and ammunition. The *Horace A. Bass* had an enlarged superstructure deck for troop berthing space. Two davits were built on this deck to house the ship's four amphibious landing craft, usually LCVPs (landing craft, vehicle/personnel, the famous "Higgins boats") or LCPRs (landing craft, personnel/ramped). These landing craft were used to transport the embarked troops and their equipment to shore. A cargo crane was placed on the aft of the ship, and the fantail area was used to stow troop equipment and ammunition. For armament, the *Horace A. Bass* had one 5-inch/38 caliber enclosed dual-purpose cannon, and 40mm and 20mm guns, as well as depth charge racks.

The *Horace A. Bass* entered into service of the U.S. Navy when the ship was commissioned on the cold day of December 21, 1944 at Quincy. Lieutenant Commander F. W. Kuhn was the ship's first command-

ing officer. The ship entered the Pacific Theater during the Okinawa campaign by April 1945, and it served in the anti-aircraft/anti-submarine screen around Okinawa and escort convoys around Ulithi, Saipan and Guam. The *Horace A. Bass* and her crew were credited with three "kills" during the war for two Japanese planes and the Japanese submarine *RO-109*. After the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan capitulated on August 15, 1945. The *Horace A. Bass* was among the ships of the U.S. Navy that entered Tokyo Bay on August 29. The ship and her prize crew took over and accepted the surrender of the Japanese battleship *Nagato*, the last remaining battleship in the Japanese navy, on August 30. The ship would serve in the occupation of Japan until 1946.

The *Horace A. Bass* served the ensuing years in the Western Pacific. In November 1948, the ship helped in the evacuation of American civilians from the U.S. Embassy in Nanking to Shanghai, China during the Chinese Civil War. The ship served as station ship in Hong Kong in late 1949. It also served as the flagship of the U.S. Seventh Fleet for Vice Admiral Russell Berkey on his official visit to Bangkok, Thailand in January 1950. The *Horace A. Bass* was the first U.S. Navy ship to visit Bangkok since 1941. For this occasion, the Thailand government presented the *Horace A. Bass* with a neillo-design silver box.

At the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, the ship was thrown immediately into service. It transported elements of the First Provisional Marine Brigade from California to Korea. In August, the ship's U.S. Navy Underwater Demolition Team One (UDT-1) and a U.S. Marine element of Reconnaissance Company, First Marine Division, were designated the Special Operations Group (SOG). From August 12-16, the SOG performed amphibious demolition raids against transportation and supply targets on the eastern coast of the Korean peninsula. The ship also effected offshore bombardments on railroad yards, bridges, a factory and warehouses. In planning the counteroffensive against North Korean forces, the SOG played an important part in reconnoitering alternative landing sites to that of Inchon during August 20-25. For these operations, the SOG was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation. The *Horace A. Bass* was the only high-speed transport to earn this commendation in the Korean War.

For the amphibious assault at the port city of Inchon, the ship embarked the Marines of H "How" Company/3rd Battalion/5th Marines and departed Pusan, Korea on September 12, 1950. The LCVPs of the *Horace A. Bass* put her troops of How Company ashore in the first wave onto the island of Wolmi-Do, code-named "Green Beach," on the morning of September 15. The ship then served as the landing craft control vessel for the assault landings at "Red Beach" that afternoon, where 1st and 2nd Battalions/5th Marines landed. The successful offensive at Inchon led to the recapture of the capital of Seoul and put North Korean troops in disarray, changing the course of the war.

In early October 1950, the ship embarked Royal Marines of C Troop, 41 Independent Commando for demolition raids along the northeastern coast of Korea. The next months were spent in minesweeping operations at Wonsan and Chinnampo with UDT-1 embarked. By January 1951, the *Horace A. Bass* completed her first tour of the Korean War.

The *Horace A. Bass* returned to the Korean Theater in late 1951. In early December, the ship embarked B Troop of 41 Independent Commando Royal Marines for raids near Tanchon. From mid-April to early May 1952, the ship carried the Special Mission Group (SMG), an assembly of Korean partisans trained in combat, amphibious landing, sabotage and intelligence-gathering techniques by various U.S. military advisors under the Joint Advisory Commission-Korea, known as JACK, of the Central Intelligence Agency. The SMG conducted a series of eight raids from the *Horace A. Bass* along the northeastern coast of Korea during this time. Later, a second series of four raids was conducted by the SMG in mid-June 1952. The ship and her crew completed a second tour of duty in Korea in July, and she returned to the U.S. A year later in 1953, the ship again returned for a third tour of Korea. The *Horace A. Bass* became a flagship for an amphibious control squadron. The ship maintained its presence in the Western Pacific until early 1954. For its service during the Korean War, the ship earned six battle stars, in addition to her Naval Unit Commendation.

In early 1955, the *Horace A. Bass* helped in the evacuation of Chinese Nationalist troops from the Tachen Islands to Taiwan, and it also supported Operation *Passage To Freedom*, in which U.S. Navy ships assisted in the evacuation of Vietnamese from Communist North Vietnam to Saigon, South Vietnam.

In mid-1955, the ship had returned to the U.S., and was transferred from the Pacific Fleet to the Atlantic Fleet, with its home port at Philadelphia. For the next three years, the *Horace A. Bass* served as a Naval Reserve training ship in the waters as far north as Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, to as far south as the Caribbean. In November 1958, the ship was transferred to the Atlantic Reserve Fleet at Orange, Texas, and was decommissioned on February 9, 1959. In 1969, the ship was reclassified as an amphibious transport/small, or LPR, and she spent her last years as the *Horace A. Bass* LPR-124 at Orange. The ship was struck from the Naval Vessel Registry on September 15, 1974, and was disposed for scrapping on July 1, 1975. The ship was sold at the auction price of \$79,002.00, and she was towed from Orange to Brownsville, Texas to be taken apart.

The histories of Horace A. Bass, Jr. and the USS *Horace A. Bass* APD-124 are forever bonded with each other. The heroic service and sacrifice of one man would inspire and lead the service of the ship's officers and crew, and those of the U.S. Navy Underwater Demolition Teams, U.S. Marines, Royal Marines and the Special Missions Group that served from her decks. Nothing reflects this better than the following poem, written by David C. Holly, who was a lieutenant and executive officer of the *Horace A. Bass* from 1949 to 1950. He wrote this poem for the ship's cruisebook, *The Wake of the Horace*:

A Sonnet to Ensign Horace A. Bass, USNR

If from your paradise of Fiddler's Green,
Where pilots in the endless setting sun
With folded wings when the cry of battle's done,
May contemplate what victory may mean —
You ventured forth to view this spray-bound scene,
And there among your Fleet you came upon
A salt-stained APD, the very one
They named for you, hero, sight unseen —
What think you of this vagrant cockleshell;
A ferret of the lurking deep; a guard
To hold the flag 'neath Oriental cloud;
Chinese bazaar; evacuee's hotel;
An AVP; and Admiral's barge three-starred!
Proud of you are we! Aren't you as proud?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Documents

All are in the Bass/USS *Horace A. Bass* APD-124 Collection, History Museum and Historical Society of Western Virginia, Roanoke.

Biography placard of Ensign Horace A. Bass Jr., USNR from USS *Horace A. Bass* APD-124. Circa 1951. Captain Alan Ray, USN (Ret.) Collection.

Knox, Frank, Secretary of the Navy. Ensign Appointment of Horace A. Bass Jr. Citation. 7 November 1942.

Knox, Frank, Secretary of the Navy. Navy Cross Citation of Ensign Horace A. Bass Jr., United States Naval Reserve, 4 June 1942. Citation. 14 November 1942.

Knox, Frank, Secretary of the Navy. Purple Heart Citation of Ensign Horace A. Bass Jr., U.S. Naval Reserve. Citation. 22 October 1943.

Matthews, Francis, Secretary of the Navy. Navy Unit Commendation, Special Operations Group, Amphibious Group ONE, 12-25 August 1950. Citation. 8 June 1951.

Unpublished Sources

Horace A. Bass, USS, APD-124, Officers and crew of. "The Wake of the Horace." Cruisebook of the USS *Horace A. Bass* APD-124. 1949-1950. Bass/USS *Horace A. Bass* APD-124 Collection, History Museum and Historical Society of Western Virginia, Roanoke.

Peters, Bobby. Telephone interview. Vinton. 5 March 2001.

Platt, Ken. Telephone interview. Roanoke. 6 March 2001.

Swank, James R. Personal communication. Tomball, Texas. March-April 2001.

Thomas, Minnie King Bass. Personal communication. Roanoke. 2001.

Weinstein, Sidney. Telephone interview. Roanoke. March 2001.

Published Books and Articles

Adcock, Al. *Destroyer Escorts in Action*. Carrollton, Texas: Squadron/Signal Publications, 1997.

Cagle, Malcolm W. and Frank A. Manson. *The Sea War in Korea*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1957.

Dwyer, John B. "Any Purpose Designated." *Naval History*, May/June 1996, pp. 22-25.

Dwyer, John B. *Commandos from the Sea: The History of Amphibious Special Warfare in World War II and the Korean War*. Boulder, Colorado: Paladin Press, 1998.

Dwyer, John B. "Special Operations Group, Korea, 1950." *Leatherneck*, July 1994, pp. 18-23.

Haas, Michael E. *In the Devil's Shadow: UN Special Operations during the Korean War*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2000.

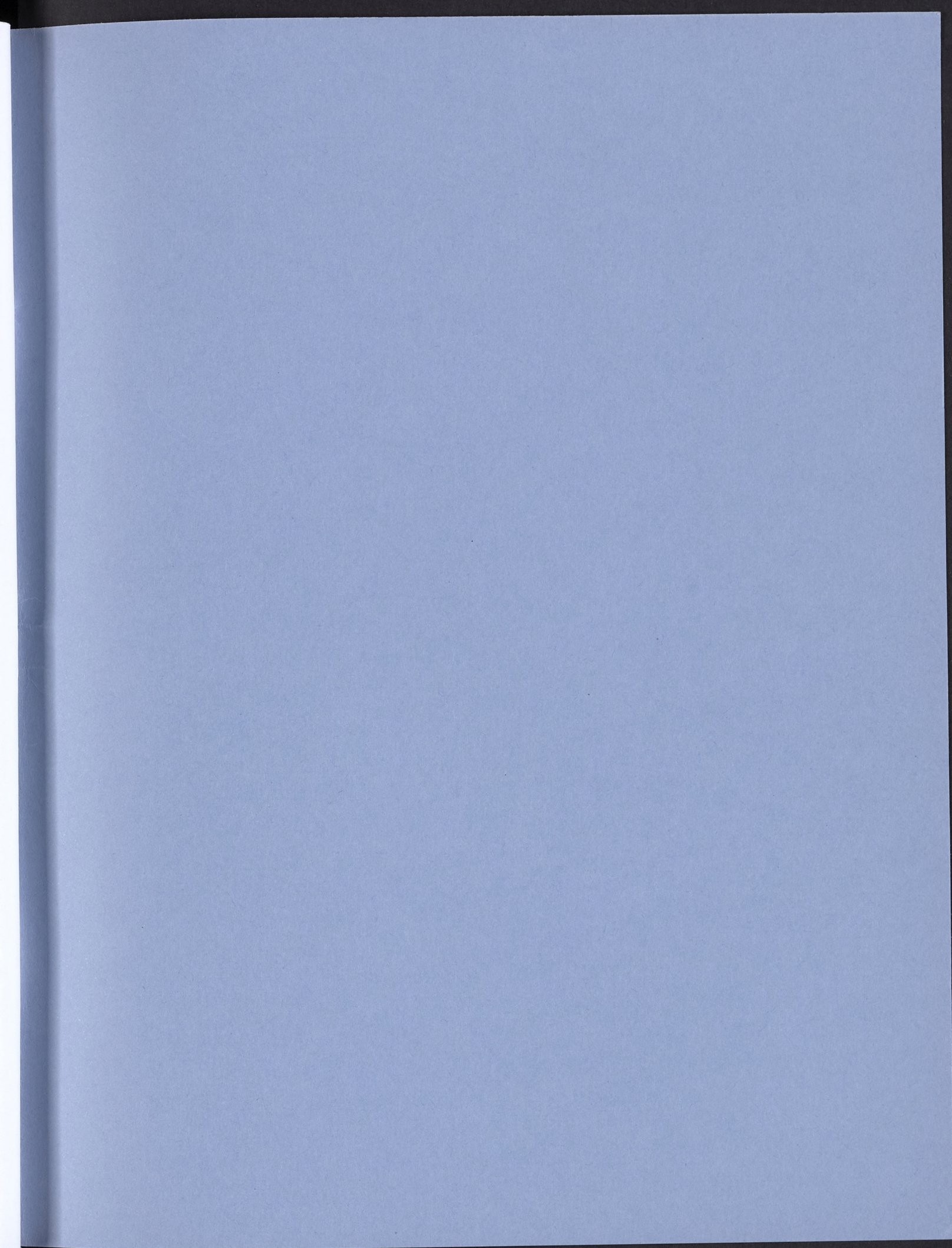
Hayhurst, Fred. *Green Berets in Korea: The Story of 41 Independent Commando Royal Marines*. Cambridge, England: Vanguard Press, 2001.

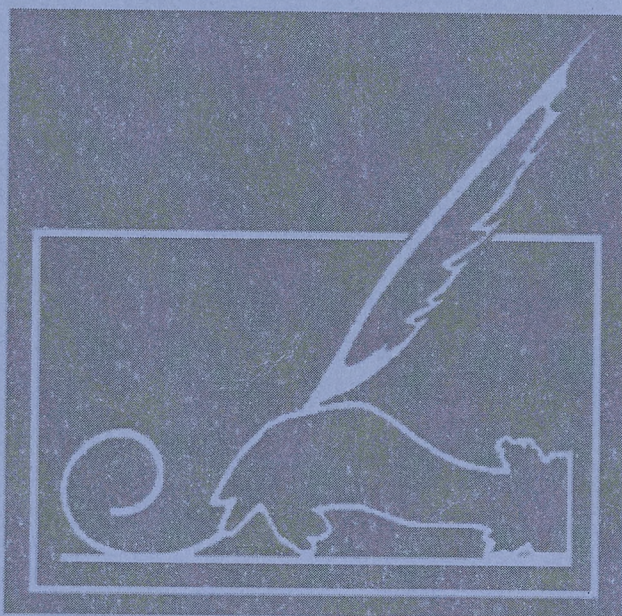
Heinl, Robert Debs, Jr., Colonel, USMC (Ret.). *Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign*. Baltimore, Maryland: The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1979.

Jefferson Senior High School. *The Acorn*. Roanoke: Jefferson Senior High School, 1933.

Lundstrom, John B. *The First Team and the Guadalcanal Campaign: Naval Fighter Combat from August to November, 1942*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1994.

- Lundstrom, John B. *The First Team: Pacific Naval Air Combat from Pearl Harbor to Midway*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1984.
- Mooney, James L., ed. *The Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Vol. 3. Washington, D.C.: Ships History Branch, Naval Historical Center, 1968.
- Navy, Department of. "Horace A. Bass (LPR 124)." *Naval Vessel Register*. Internet document. 23 February 1999. Internet site: www.nvr.navy.mil/nvrships/details/LPR124.htm.
- Roanoke College. *Cherobiblos*. Salem, Virginia: Roanoke College, 1935/1936.
- Roanoke College. *Rawenoch*. Salem: Roanoke College, 1934, 1935.
- "Art Teacher Volunteers." *Jefferson News* [Jefferson Senior High School, Roanoke], Vol. 5 no. 13, 7 March 1941, p. 4. Memorabilia Room, Jefferson Center, Roanoke.
- "Class Clippings." *Jefferson News* [Jefferson Senior High School, Roanoke], Vol. 5 no. 14, 21 March 1941, p. 4.
- "Ensign Bass, Sent Off Carrier By Mistake, Shot Down Zero." *The Roanoke World-News* [Roanoke], 19 February 1945, p. 7.
- "Mrs. Bass Honored." Newspaper clipping (Roanoke), n.d. (circa 12 September 1944). Bass/USS *Horace A. Bass* APD-124 Collection, History Museum and Historical Society of Western Virginia, Roanoke.
- "Naval Vessel Will Bear Name Of Roanoker Lost in Pacific." *The Roanoke World-News* [Roanoke], 29 August 1944.
- "Roanoke, Salem Men See Action in Mediterranean, Pacific." Newspaper clipping (Roanoke), n.d. (circa June-August 1942). Bass/USS *Horace A. Bass* APD-124 Collection, History Museum and Historical Society of Western Virginia, Roanoke.
- "Seven Instructors Add To Faculty Of School." *Jefferson News* [Jefferson Senior High School, Roanoke], vol. 2 no. 1, 1 October 1937, p. 1. Memorabilia Room, Jefferson Center, Roanoke.
- "That Artistic Touch." *Jefferson News* [Jefferson Senior High School, Roanoke], Vol. 4 no. 10, 20 December 1939, p. 1. Memorabilia Room, Jefferson Center, Roanoke.
- "The Carriers Meet Again: The Battle of the Eastern Solomons." Internet article. n.d. Internet site: www.microworks.net/pacific/battles/eastern_solomons.htm.
- "Vessel Is Named For RPI Graduate Killed in Pacific." Newspaper clipping (Richmond), n.d. (circa 12 September 1944). Bass/USS *Horace A. Bass* APD-124 Collection, History Museum and Historical Society of Western Virginia, Roanoke.





History Museum & Historical Society

OF WESTERN VIRGINIA

Center in the Square, One Market Square, SE
Roanoke, VA 24011

Tel: 540/342-5770

Email: history@roanoke.infi.net

Web Site: www.history-museum.org

ISBN #: 0-9710531-2-X