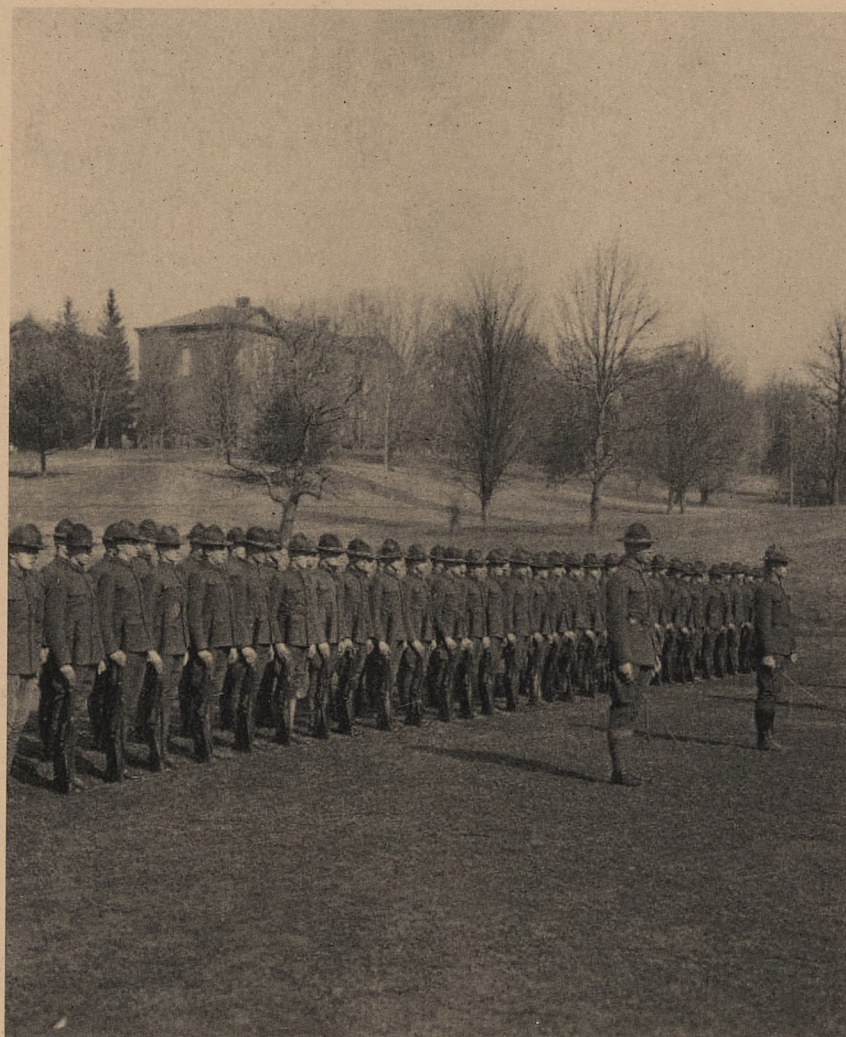


Historical Society of Western Virginia

2016-2017

Journal



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And more...

Vol. 22 | No. 2

Historical Society of Western Virginia

Amor montium nos movet

(For the love of mountains inspires us)

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On the cover: ROTC Company A on the Virginia Tech Drillfield in 1918.

Message From the President

Welcome to our latest annual Journal – a compendium of research and history from the Roanoke Valley region and Western Virginia.

Despite what many have called a “terribly challenging year,” I consider it my good fortune to have served as your society’s president for 2016-17. We can credit a strong board of directors, and a highly motivated leadership team for meeting the great difficulties of 2016. We can also credit our long-standing members and financial supporters who stood by us and made contributions when it mattered the most. In looking back, we can all take a bit of the credit for helping to “save history!”

We now know that many other historical societies in the United States have gone through similar challenges: diminished funding, changes in demographics, and declining trends in membership among younger audiences. What seems to bind us together in Western Virginia is a determination to make our history relevant again – even in these difficult times. We are seeking to preserve the history of a region we deeply love, and to preserve our collective story for generations to come.

So... despite the challenges of 2016, I can honestly say that being president of this society has been my unofficial “dream job” outside of my normal full-time work. Since my “real job” is situated nearby, I have been able to drive over to the museum frequently to meet with volunteers and staff. One perk I enjoy is being able to preview any new changes to the galleries, as well as meeting the visitors to the museum.

As happened one day early this summer, I was looking over the newly installed Soapbox Derby exhibit in our Trackside Gallery (*facing page, bottom right*). A retired couple was visiting the museum on their way from Montclair, New Jersey, to their new home in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I struck up a conversation and found that the man had just retired from a New York advertising agency. He told me how impressed he was with our museum, and was especially drawn to our Raymond Loewy exhibit on industrial design. He then complimented us on how we presented the material in our various galleries. “For example, the way you present these Link images draws me in,” he said, pointing to a wall in the adjacent gallery. “I have a chance to spend time with each item, and before I know it, I’m drawn into the story. I really like that.”

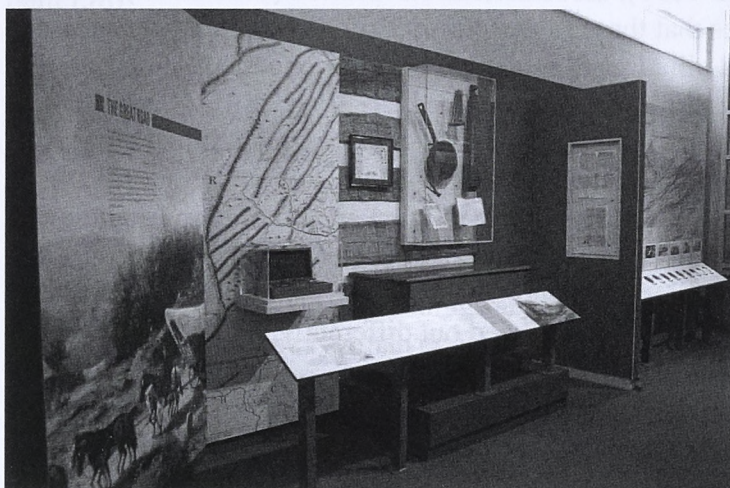
“You won’t believe this,” he added, “but we’ve spent much more time here today than we expected!”

That unsolicited feedback was welcome news to this board member! After a year of hard work by so many of us, it was terrific to hear that we had succeeded in creating a single-destination museum that presents our diverse history in a pleasing way.

On behalf of all of us here at the Historical Society of Western Virginia, I personally want to thank you for helping us save history for another generation!

Stephen Warren, President

'...a single-destination museum...'



Virginia's Western Counties and the Making of America⁽¹⁾

by Jim Glanville

Introduction: The Triumph of Anglo-America

We live today in a world dominated by Anglo-America. How did this situation come about? In his book "The Cousins' Wars — Religion, Politics, & the Triumph of Anglo-America,"⁽²⁾ Kevin Phillips asks the question: "How did Anglo-America evolve over a mere three hundred years from a small Tudor kingdom into a global community with such a hegemonic grip on the world today, while no other European power — Spain, France, Germany, or Russia — did?"

The Cousins' Wars of Phillips' title were two English-speaking civil wars and an English-speaking revolution: the English Civil War (1642-1651), the American Revolution (1775-1781), and the American Civil War (1861-1865). Phillips argues that through these wars Britons and Americans hammered out competing religious, ethnic and social alliances to seize first place among the world's nations and bring about the triumph of Anglo-America in the years that followed.

Of course, the triumph of Anglo-America was not just dependent on three wars. It had a myriad of causes, going far beyond these wars, and at least as far back as Anglo-Saxon England. Some causes resulted from the unique characteristics of Anglo-American culture, religion and politics and some were simply lucky accidents of history. For example, one lucky accident can be counted as the outcome of the French and Indian War (1755-1761) and the subsequent Treaty of Paris (1763), that lay the whole North American continent open to British assimilation. Had things worked out differently, we could easily live today in western Virginia speaking French or Spanish.

We can identify many fields of human activity in which the Anglo-American triumph is manifested. Politically, it is manifested by the constitutions of modern states. Most constitutions are written of fundamental principles about how a government must operate. England made a written constitution in 1653 during the period of the short-lived Cromwellian republic that ended in 1661 with the restoration of Charles II to the throne.⁽³⁾ The great American republic was born in 1788 with the ratification of the United States Constitution. Today, about 200 nations have written constitutions, all derived from the U.S. Constitution.⁽⁴⁾

Today, about one human in four (about 1.9 out of 7.5 billion humans) speaks English, with about one in every five of those being a native English speaker. English in the modern world is the language of science and the language of banking and commerce. All computer languages are written in English. Journalism is an Anglo-American invention.⁽⁵⁾

In an op-ed article in the Roanoke Times in 2012 the author wrote: "The history of eastern Vir-

Jim Glanville of Blacksburg, a retired chemistry professor at Virginia Tech and Virginia Western Community College, has done extensive research and writing on settlement in Southwest Virginia. (Copyright © Jim Glanville 2017. All rights reserved.)

ginia is perhaps most significant for the history of the state. However, it is the history of western Virginia that is most significant for the history of America.”(6)

It is the purpose of this article to argue that one significant factor in the demonstrated triumph of Anglo-America has been the historic process of the formation of American counties, and that of particular significance has been the formation of western Virginia counties and their many descendant counties.

The English County System from William I to Elizabeth I

This section describes the English county system prior to the settlement of Virginia at Jamestown in 1607.

The process of county formation began over 900 years ago in Norman England and with modification became the fundamental framework for most of the United States’ local government via transmission through Virginia. Arguably, the Norman Conquest beginning in 1066 was the single most important event in English history: It happened when a self-aggrandizing Norman French duke named William invaded and conquered Anglo-Saxon England, that was at that time the most powerful kingdom in Christendom. He became King William I.(8)

The Norman government system proved to be exceedingly efficient and Anglo-Saxon England was soon organized into a series of counties, with each having a local lord sheriff as William’s personal representative.

In 1085, William commissioned the preparation of the Domesday Book. This famous document cataloged the land holdings and other assets in the thirty-nine Norman counties. The Domesday Book became the basis on which most of the Anglo-Saxon land was transferred to Norman ownership.

In 1089, at his castle at Old Sarum near Salisbury in the county of Wiltshire, King William accepted the fealty of his nobles and ceremonially accepted the Domesday Book written during the preceding four years. By accepting and endorsing the detailed land ownership recorded in the Domesday Book, William regularized the almost total revolution in English land holding that the Conquest brought about.

Henceforward, recorded land ownership became central to power and authority in the English state and its spin-offs. The elements of William’s county government system remain with us in Anglo-America today.(9)

From the 12th to the 16th centuries English county government evolved. Figure 1 shows the 39 traditional English counties. During the settling of Virginia, the names of many of these English counties were adopted for the newly created Virginia counties and about a dozen counties, such as Bedford, Essex, Lancaster, and Middlesex share names.

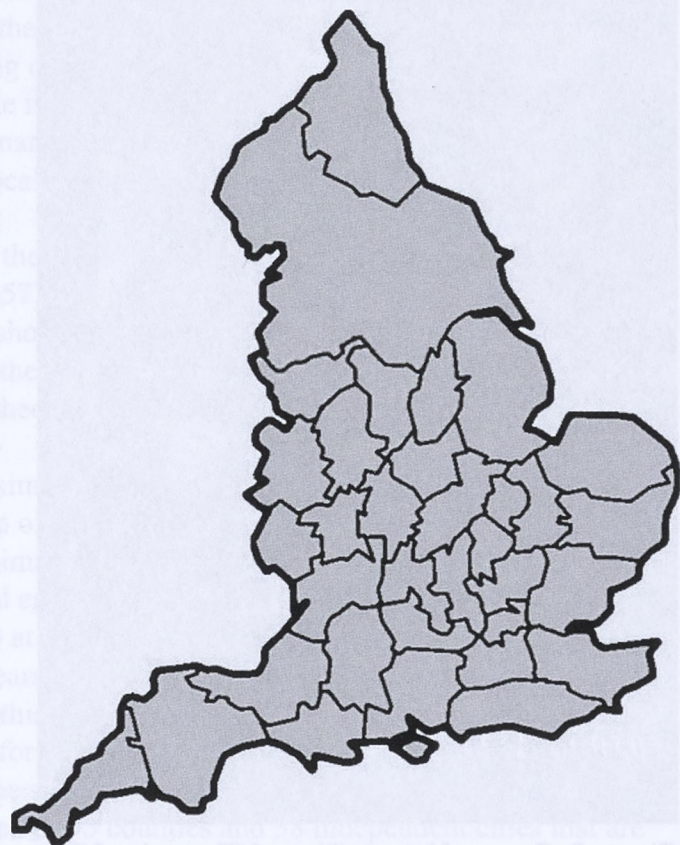


Figure 1. A map of the 39 traditional counties of England.(7)

The exact number and the boundaries of the English counties have changed many times over the passage of nine centuries. Modern England has an area of 50,346 square miles, which for thirty-nine original counties averages about 1,300 square miles of area for each.(10)

From Norman England to the present-day, there are two particularly obvious historical parallels that have endured over the centuries. The first is the office of the sheriff that has lasted for 950 years, though with changing responsibilities. (Author's note: My Norman supposed ancestor Ranulf de Glanville was at various times during the reign of Henry II the sheriff of five different English counties, including Yorkshire and Lancashire. He was also the chief justice of England in the 12th century. See Figure 2.) The second parallel is the recording of land. Thus, the lands records of the Domesday Book

closely match in concept the GIS (geographic information systems) of today's Virginia county governments.(11)

By the time of Queen Elizabeth I (lived 1533-1603, reigned 1558-1603), English local government administered through the county system and based on land holding had become particularly effective in balancing the needs of county governments with the needs of the central government in London. Here's how the historian Lacey Baldwin Smith summarized that balance:

In no other kingdom in Europe was royal authority so effective ... in Elizabeth's England ... the crown [was] able to rule with the confidence and cooperation of the landed and governing classes. The system worked because Gloriana [Queen Elizabeth] and her Council sensed the threefold secret of political success: 1. the importance of maintaining respect for government and of encouraging the habit of obedience among leaders of society as well as the multitude; 2. the guiding through parliament of legislation agreeable to the ears of MPs [members of Parliament] who often turned into JPs [justices of the peace] when they went back to their shires [counties]; and 3. the binding of the financial and social aspirations of the ruling elite to the throne by the judicious distribution of court, county, church, and military patronage.(13)

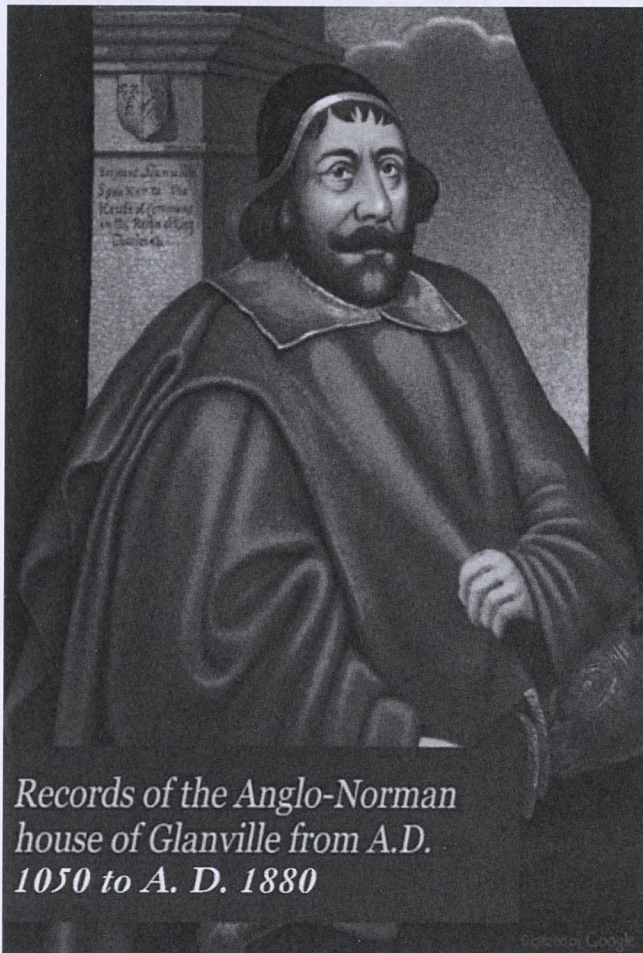


Figure 2. Cover of later edition of *"Records of the Anglo-Norman House of Glanville from A.D. 1050 to 1880."*(12)

In the English counties, it was men serving as justices of the peace who principally shouldered the responsibility for local government and supervised the local court system. Most ordinary Britons paid little heed to the grand schemes of the government in London. Important to ordinary Britons were the local aristocrats, landed gentlemen, and Anglican clergymen who had been commissioned as their county justices of the peace. JPs were unpaid, but had high status and exercised significant local power through the county courts. Among other responsibilities, justices of the peace oversaw parish affairs,

decided the tax required for the parish poor and for highways, and could indict officials such as church wardens, overseers of the poor, surveyors of highways and constables for failing to carry out their duties. (14)

Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603 and Jamestown was settled in 1607. The Englishmen who created Virginia were blessed by their experiences of a good local government system at home. They did not have any literal intent to replicate English local government in the New World, but it was what they knew. With that background, and ongoing input from England, the Virginia county system grew and evolved in Virginia.

The Growth of the Virginia County System

It is convenient and commonplace to think about American history as a sequence of state making, beginning with the thirteen original states at the conclusion of the Revolution and continuing until 1959 with the admission of Alaska and Hawaii to the Union. However, in many ways it was the process of county formation that was more fundamental to the making of America, and in particular it was Virginia counties that played a major role in the making of America

Virginia's western counties played a key role in the expansion of colonial America before the Revolution, and the ongoing process of county formation during the period 1791-1846 provided the fundamental framework for the growth of America. Local government in the United States today continues to be dominated by its county governments.

Two old but still useful works that describe the evolution of the Virginia county system are those by Morgan Robinson (1916) and Martha Hiden (1957). (15) The much more modern and very ambitious Atlas of Historical County Boundaries attempts to show all the historic boundaries of every county in the United States. (16) However, certainly so far as the Virginia counties are concerned, this atlas must be used with caution. The present author has published an article demonstrating one error in the Virginia atlas and is aware of others. (17)

For the casual student of Virginia history, animated maps of Virginia county formation are very instructive. For example, there is an interactive map of the history of the formation of Virginia's counties online. (18) This interactive project shows 134 still-image county maps of Virginia (and present-day West Virginia) for every few years beginning in 1617 and ending in 1995. Each map can be examined individually, or the whole series can be examined one map at a time or even viewed as a continuous animation.

Table 1 (*see next page*) shows in selected years the count of Virginia counties and adds for each of the selected years some commentary relevant to this article about the counties. In general, the number of Virginia's counties grew in two ways: 1. By forming large counties in previously unoccupied and unclaimed land at the edge of the colony (or later the state); and 2. By subdividing existing counties. The modern Commonwealth of Virginia is composed of 95 counties and 38 independent cities that are considered county-equivalents for census purposes. (19) Modern West Virginia has 55 counties and no independent cities; West Virginia consisted of 50 counties at its time of separation from Virginia in 1861. (20)

The development of Virginia's system of local county government out of the Elizabethan-period English county system has been exceedingly well studied and described by the historian Warren Billings. Billings' work appears in multiple articles and books, but in particular in a 1974 article, and in a 1975 edited book of Virginia documentary history that was reissued in a slightly retitled, revised, and expanded edition in 2007 to coincide with the quadricentennial of the founding of Jamestown. (22) Billings' writings are extremely helpful to anyone wishing to understand the precise manner in which this English aspect of Anglo-America became transmuted into the American part of Anglo-America.

As Virginia evolved, its counties adopted variant methods of government from the counties in

Table 1: Count of Virginia Counties in Selected Years with Annotations

Year	#	Annotation
1617	4	Loose geographic designations by the Jamestown settlers rather than counties
1634	8	Traditionally given as the formation year of Virginia's eight original counties
1660	14	Counties at beginning of the second term of office of Governor William Berkeley
1677	17	Counties at end of the second term of office of Governor William Berkeley
1700	22	Counties existing at the end of the 17th century
1734	33	Counties existing at the time of the formation of Orange County
1738	35	The creation of Augusta and Frederick counties added two counties this year
1766	56	Creation of Piedmont, Southside, and fill-in counties leaving Augusta untouched
1769	57	Creation of Botetourt County by subdivision of Augusta County
1772	58	Creation of Fincastle County by subdivision of Botetourt County and creation of Dunmore(21)
1776	60	Fincastle County converted to Kentucky, Montgomery and Washington counties
1781	67	End of the American Revolution
1800	79	Counties existing at the end of the 18th century
2017	133	Virginia's 95 counties and 38 independent cities; an additional 55 counties in West Virginia

England. Virginia's local courts systems developed significantly different methods, with English local courts being largely concerned with criminal matters, whereas Virginia courts handled both civil and criminal matters. Furthermore, Virginia justices of the peace exercised legislative and executive functions within their jurisdictions that English justices of the peace never did.(23)

Here are some key points derived from Billings' writings: The creation of Virginia's county court system of local government in 1634 by the General Assembly divided the functions and powers of government between the newly formed county jurisdictions and those in Jamestown. Each county was governed by a court composed of justices of the peace, a sheriff, a clerk, and several lesser officials such as bailiffs. The functions of the justices of the peace were similar to those of their counterparts in England. Over the following three decades, this division of powers enlarged as the courts' competence in local matters expanded, while the General Assembly assumed a more purely legislative function. The presence of county government meant that deeds and indentures could be arbitrated, as could be land and property disputes, and any other matters that required minor legal attention.

Explaining why Virginians kept needing new counties, Billings writes:

Courts usually met in a presiding justice's front hall, because there were few purpose-built courthouses before the end of the [17th] century. No matter the court's location, the distance a litigant had to go in order to file a lawsuit, register a land deed, or have a will probated was a matter of concern. Given the vagaries of travel, journeys of more than a day posed extreme hardships for any colonist whose affairs required legal remedies. Therefore, as soon as a sufficient number of colonists had seated in a remote area in a county, they petitioned the General Assembly to divide the existing county into two smaller ones. If the assembly concurred with the petitioners' demands, it ordered the partition, and the governor, with the council's advice, appointed officers for the new county.(24)

As they began to be built in the 18th century, Virginia's county courthouses became schools for lawyers. This schooling later provided the necessary training and background for the Virginians to take a leading role in the American constitutional republic. W.S. Long noted that the Virginia planter class lived

in the luxury that slavery afforded, reveled in well-stocked libraries and studied government with passion until they governed instinctively. Thus, Long writes: "In Virginia, plain little courthouses became the arenas of giant contests over simple points at law and the halls of her Legislature rang unceasingly with resistless reasoning which flowed in a strange and fiery eloquence." (25)

The daily operations of modern-day courts in Virginia's counties and cities, while much altered and modernized over the years, still bear a strong imprint of 17th century England. In both England and Virginia the office of justice of the peace has largely become the magistracy, with the minor exception that at least one Virginia marriage officiant even today advertises himself as a justice of the peace. (26)

Governor Spotswood and the Early Shenandoah Valley Counties

It was not until 1716 that the worldly and energetic Governor Alexander Spotswood (1676-1740) turned Virginians' attention to the vast continent that lay awaiting them west beyond the Blue Ridge. That year, Spotswood organized a great trip to the Shenandoah Valley now known colloquially as the journey of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe. It gets its name because he later gave a commemorative horseshoe-shaped gold pin to the men who went with him. Spotswood was Virginia lieutenant governor (under the absentee, nominal governorship of Edward Hamilton, Earl of Orkney) from 1710-1722.

Spotswood's party consisted of about a dozen leading Virginia gentry and their servants, some soldiers, four Indians, and 74 horses. After crossing through Swift Run Gap they reached the Shenandoah river about 10 miles east of Harrisonburg, named it the "Euphrates." On its banks they drank many toasts to the English royal family, and fired off an excessive number of volleys of firearms. We know a good deal about Spotswood's trip thanks to the Huguenot diarist who went on it and recorded his observations. (27)

The horseshoe trip was inspired by Spotswood's recognition of the Virginians' ignorance of their back country and his fear of the French establishing control over the Ohio River valley. In a 1718 letter, Spotswood wrote to the Board of Trade in London saying:

I have often regretted that after so many Years as these Countrys have been Seated, no Attempts have been made to discover the Sources of Our Rivers, nor to Establishing Correspondence w'th those Nations of Indians to ye Westw'd of Us, even after the certain Knowledge of the Progress made by French in Surrounding us w'th their Settlements. (28)

In 1720, with the formation of Spotsylvania County (named after Governor Spotswood), Virginia for the first time had land that approached the Blue Ridge mountains. The preamble to the act that formed Spotsylvania read: "That the frontiers towards the high mountains are exposed to danger from the Indians, and the late settlements of the French to the westward of the said mountains," and so the Assembly is going to create new counties to oppose those dangers. (29)

After relinquishing his lieutenant governorship, Spotswood married in England and then spent the last two decades of his life at Germanna in Spotsylvania County where he established iron furnaces and imported German workers to operate them.

Then, following up on Spotswood's leadership, the Virginians made their "great land grab" with the establishment of Orange County (in 1734), shown in Figure 3, and its rapid and almost complete conversion into Augusta County (created in 1738 but did not hold its first court until 1745), shown in Figure 4.

The act for the creation of Orange County in the eighth year of the reign of King George II begins with the preamble: "WHEREAS great numbers of people have settled themselves of late, upon the rivers of Sherrando, Cohongoruton, and Opeckon, and the branches thereof, on the north-west side of the

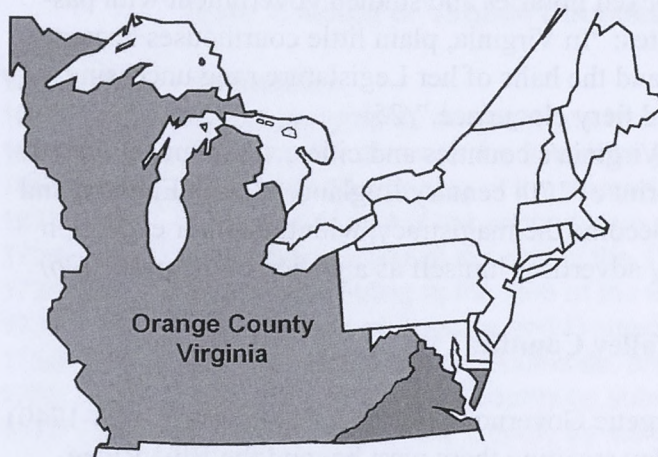


Figure 3. Orange County as created in 1734. The term "utmost limits of Virginia" in the act creating Orange County is imprecise. Historians generally have interpreted the term to mean the east bank of the Mississippi River.

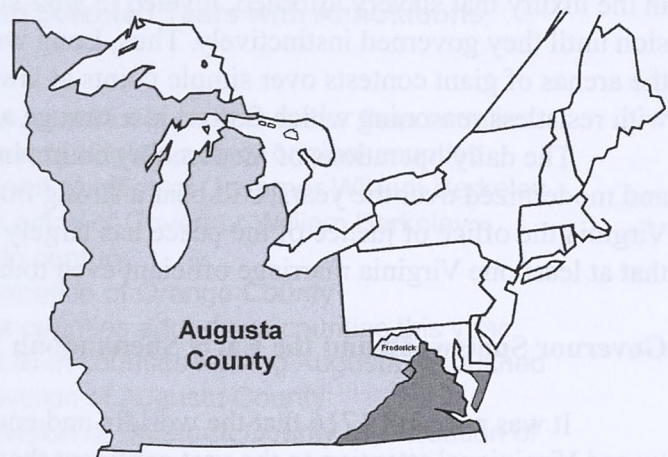


Figure 4. Augusta County as created in 1738 along with Frederick County. Orange County remained at Augusta's eastern edge, but greatly diminished in size. (Images by the author)

Blue ridge of mountains, whereby the strength of this colony, and its security upon the frontiers, and his majesty's revenue of quit-rents, are like to be much increased and augmented: For giving encouragement to such as shall think fit to settle there. Be it enacted" (30) What was enacted for Orange county read:

WHEREAS divers inconveniences attend the upper inhabitants of Spotsylvania county, by reason of the great distance from the court-house, and other places, usually appointed for public meetings, Be it therefore enacted, by the Lieutenant-Governor, Council and Burgesses, of this present General Assembly, and it is hereby enacted, by the authority of the same, That from and immediately after the first day of January, now next ensuing, the said county of Spotsylvania be divided, by the dividing line, between the parish of St. George, and the parish of St. Mark; and that that part of the said county, which is now the parish of St. George, remain, and be called, and known by the name of Spotsylvania county; and all that territory of land, adjoining to, and above the said line, bounden southerly, by the line of Hanover county, northerly, by the grant of the Lord Fairfax, and westerly, by the utmost limits of Virginia, be thenceforth erected into one distinct county, and be called and known by the name of the county of Orange.

Orange County was named for the Dutch stadtholder (hereditary head of state) William of Orange who became William III of England who along with his wife is well-known in Virginia for the College of William and Mary. Augusta was named for Princess Augusta Frederica (1737-1813), the mother of King George III.

The creation of Augusta County in 1738 (31) is usually attributed to the increasing number of western settlers needing more, and more convenient, local government. The first clause of the enabling act for Augusta County read: "Whereas great numbers of people have settled themselves of late, upon the rivers of Sherrando, Cohongoruton, and Opeckon, and the branches thereof, on the north-west side of the Blue ridge of mountains, whereby the strength of this colony, and its security upon the frontiers, and his majesty's revenue of quit-rents, are like to be much increased and augmented: For giving encourage-

ment to such as shall think fit to settle there, the following inducements [listed in the act] are enacted.”

Geographically, the act defined Augusta as: “That all that territory and tract of land, at present deemed to be part of the county of Orange, lying on the north west side of the top of the said mountains [the Blue Ridge], extending from thence northerly, westerly, and southerly, beyond the said mountains, to the utmost limits of Virginia, be separated from the rest of the said county, and erected into two distinct counties and parishes; to be divided by a line to be run from the head spring of Hedgman river, to the head spring of the river Potowmack.” The second county was Frederick as shown on Figure 4.

Augusta residents continued to use Orange County courthouse for their business until 1745 when the first Augusta courthouse was established at Beverley’s Mill Place in present-day Staunton.⁽³²⁾ See Figure 5 for a list of the first Augusta County officials.

After 1745, the Augusta County courthouse became a very busy place. A recent article about civil litigation in the county during the years 1745-1755 tells that there were a documented 1,376 small-claims lawsuits during that decade, with James Patton being involved in 43 percent of them. This article describes the quite efficient workings of law and government in a frontier Virginia county immediately after the great Virginia land grab.⁽³³⁾

The historian Turk McCleskey has written that the creation of a politically stable Virginia “...the Augusta settlement represents one of the most ingenious frontier policies in British North America, for it ensured that Virginia’s periphery was as stable as its core.”⁽³⁴⁾ Men on the Virginia frontier wanted stable and reliable county government for the principal reason that such a government guaranteed their right to acquire, hold and sell land.

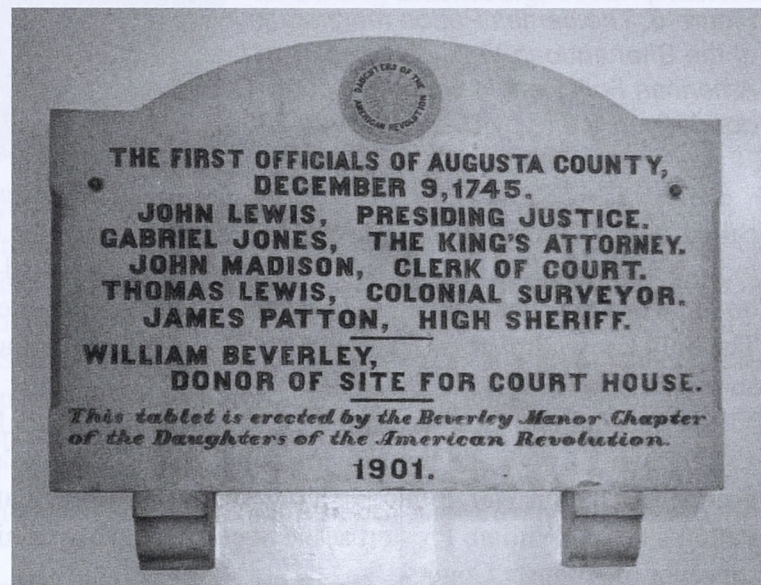


Figure 5. The 1901 Daughters of the American Revolution plaque on the wall inside Augusta courthouse citing the earliest officials of Augusta County. (Image by the author)

Robert Beverly, James Patton and the Opening of Western Virginia

The men who would open western Virginia arrived at about the time of the creation of Augusta County. Figure 5 shows the names of some of them at the time of Augusta’s first court sitting in 1745. John Lewis was the chief justice. Gabriel Jones was the King’s attorney. John Madison was the clerk of the court. Thomas Lewis (John’s son) was the first Augusta County surveyor. James Patton was a justice of the peace and the county’s first high sheriff. All of these men would become prominent in the opening of western Virginia along with many others, such as the explorer and land agent Thomas Walker, James Patton’s son-in-law John Buchanan, James Patton’s nephew William Preston, two brothers of Augusta county’s first surveyor Andrew and William Lewis, and Alexander Breckinridge.

James Patton came to Virginia to stay in 1740. He brought with him his sister Elizabeth, her husband John Preston, and their son, William Preston. The families settled on Beverley Manor. William Beverley (whose father had been a Knight of the Golden Horseshoe) was awarded an adjacent 118,941-acre tract (called Beverley Manor) around modern-day Staunton. Beverley gave Patton a share of the Beverley Manor tract, which was also called the Irish tract because of the Irish settlers that Pat-



Figure 6. The James Patton mannequin looking out at the Shenandoah Valley on display in the Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh, County Derry/Londonderry. (Picture by Diane Hoover, 2002)

called “Great Grant” of land. It was for 100,000 acres to be taken up piecemeal along a corridor between today’s Montgomery County and Kingsport. Patton boasted that he was the first man ever to own land on the western waters, meaning land drained by rivers that eventually flowed to the Gulf of Mexico.⁽³⁶⁾ The only known image of James Patton, in the form of a mannequin at a museum in Northern Ireland, is shown in Figure 6.

James Patton died in an Indian massacre at Drapers Meadows in Blacksburg in the summer of 1755, leaving a wife and two daughters but no sons. Patton’s death was one of the early events of the French and Indian War. Figure 7 shows the brass plaque that records his demise. With his uncle James Patton’s death, William Preston at the age of 26 took over his uncle’s land business and became a deputy surveyor of Augusta County.

From the time that his uncle died and for the rest of his life, William Preston became deeply and completely involved in western Virginia land ownership, land surveying, land speculation and leadership roles in first Augusta County and then its many successor counties until the year of his death in 1783. Preston is thus a central figure in the development of Anglo-America as manifested by the counties of western Virginia. This author’s article “William Preston the Surveyor” views Preston’s life through the prism of Virginia’s vast stock of western land and Preston’s land-related activities.⁽³⁷⁾ In addition to this author’s writings about William Preston, he knows of four extended works about Preston, the first of which has remained unknown until he discovered it in late 2016.⁽³⁸⁾ The only known likeness of William Preston is shown in Figure 8. This image was at one point in the office of F.B. Kegley, and comes from page 235 of his book.⁽³⁹⁾ However, neither the authenticity of the portrait nor its provenance are known, according to someone who knew Kegley.⁽⁴⁰⁾

William Preston’s spectacularly successful three-decade career has been largely neglected by conventional Virginia history.⁽⁴¹⁾ For example, until recently he was entirely missing from the online Encyclopedia Virginia, and is presently found solely as the recipient of a June 15, 1780, letter from Governor Thomas Jefferson published in Founders Online at the U.S. National Archives. William Preston is embarrassingly absent from the

ton encouraged to come there. For a decade earlier, Patton had worked as a ship’s captain in the transatlantic trade between Beverley’s dock at Tappahannock in Essex County and ports in Ireland and Scotland. It was through this trading (and likely smuggling) connection that Beverley came to know and trust Patton. Through this Beverley connection, when the time came, Patton became a great western Virginia land owner and speculator. Along with his coauthor, this author has described these events in considerable depth.⁽³⁵⁾

Life on the early Virginia frontier revolved around the business of land. For example, William Preston went to work for Thomas Lewis as a deputy surveyor while Preston was still a teenager. In 1745 James Patton got his own so-

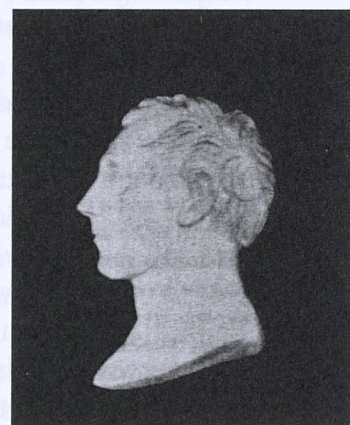


Figure 8. The only known image attributed to William Preston, 1729-1783.



Figure 7. The Daughters of the American Revolution marker recording the death of James Patton is located about midway between the Smithfield Plantation and the Virginia Tech Duck Pond. The text reads: "To Colonel James Patton and pioneers who lost their lives in the Drapers Meadow Massacre, July — 1755. Erected by the Allegheny Chapter D.A.R., Blacksburg, 1938." (Author's picture)

2002 book "Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement," coauthored by historian David Hackett Fischer and published by the Virginia Historical Society.⁽⁴²⁾ Fischer also totally missed Preston in his earlier book "Albion's Seed," in which Fischer devoted 178 pages to emigrants to western Virginia in a section titled "Borderlands to the Backcountry."⁽⁴³⁾ In this section of "Albion's Seed," Fischer committed the hard-to-believe sin of misplacing Staunton from the Shenandoah Valley to the Rappahannock River. Latter-day critics have strongly challenged "Albion's Seed" on multiple grounds. For example, in 2007, Rodger Cunningham wrote: "Sixteen years ago we Appalachian scholars thought we had D.H. Fischer sewed up, and in fact 'Albion's Seed' did disappear from the radar screen for most of the intervening time. But now, thanks to the blogosphere and Amazon.com, it's been raised from the grave in the Grand Récit of Hillbilly Depravity."⁽⁴⁴⁾

Why did the British government allow the great Virginia land grab of Orange and Augusta counties shown in Figures 3 and 4 to happen? It was allowed because of what historians call the policy of salutary neglect. This British policy turned a blind eye to the enforcement of parliamentary laws passed to keep American colonies obedient to England. In particular, the administration of Prime Minister Robert Walpole did not enforce the Navigation Acts that were intended to regulate American trade. In London, the Board of Trade, which was the British agency for regulating the colonies, adopted a decidedly relaxed attitude and the colonial governors were allowed a free hand. In effect, England left the colonists to govern themselves — and they soon began to do it quite well.

A significant step along the path to American independence and evidence of salutary neglect occurred in 1754 with the Albany Congress. Under the inspired leadership of Benjamin Franklin, commissioners from seven of the thirteen colonies met in Congress in Albany, New York, to consider a "plan of union." The Congress showed perhaps the first glimmerings of what the colonies might achieve if they acted in concert. A decade later, the ending of the policy of salutary neglect became a large contributing factor that led to cooperation among the colonies and to the American Revolutionary War.⁽⁴⁵⁾

New Western Counties Delayed by the French and Indian War and the 1763 Proclamation

For the American colonies and particularly for western counties in Virginia, two important defining events of the mid-18th century were the French and Indian War (the North American part of the Seven Years War) and the 1763 Royal Proclamation. Augusta County had been created in 1738. It was

not until 1769 when Virginia had been swept up in a revolutionary fervor, before a new western Virginian county was created. The two defining events help explain why it took 31 years to create a successor county to Augusta.

The French and Indian War (which was part of a worldwide clash between the British and French empires) was called the first World War by no less an Anglo-American luminary than Winston Churchill. (46) It began in western Pennsylvania at Fort Necessity on July 3, 1754, when George Washington began a fight with the French. (47) From the perspective of this article, the significance of the war was the many-year chaos it caused on the Virginia frontier as the French and Indians contested the British for the



Figure 9. The Proclamation Line of 1763 ran along the eastern continental divide separating the headwaters of the rivers that: 1. went to the Atlantic Ocean; and 2. went to the Gulf of Mexico via the Mississippi River.

Ohio Country. The literature of the war is extensive. (48) During the French and Indian War, William Preston served as a ranger and builder of frontier forts.

The October 7, 1763, Royal Proclamation of King George III (49) was intended to provide a management plan for the newly acquired British North American empire in the wake of the 1763 Treaty of Paris that concluded the war. The proclamation intended to create administrative regions in North America by which Britain could organize and control its newly acquired half a billion acres of territory to the north, west, and south of its thirteen American colonies.

It is easy to forget just how consequential the year 1763 was for the future Anglo-America. As a result of the 1763 treaty, Canada and the entire present-day United States east of the Mississippi came under British control. "At the Treaty of Paris, the French and Indian War ended, and King George III gained clear title to

more territory than had ever been exchanged in any other war before or since." (50)

From the point of view of western Virginia, the key language of the 1763 proclamation reads: "[No] Governor or Commander in Chief in any of our Colonies ... [shall] grant Warrants of Survey, or pass Patents for any Lands beyond the Heads or Sources of any of the Rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from the West and North West" I.e. land holding beyond the eastern continental divide (shown in Figure 9) was forbidden.

The Proclamation of 1763 had a sharp effect on the land companies that were competing for land to sell to private buyers in western Virginia and to Virginia's west. (51) The early Augusta land speculators had been involved in land companies. For example, James Patton was a member of the Wood's River Company, formed around 1746. Thomas Lee of Virginia's northern neck created the Ohio Company in 1747. The 1748 Loyal Company had John Lewis, Thomas Walker, Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson as principals. In 1751 John Robinson formed the Greenbrier Company to market his 100,000 acres of land in what is now southern West Virginia; John Lewis and his son, Andrew, made surveys for the Greenbrier Company. Later, after the French and Indian War and despite the Proclamation Line, wealthy men on both sides of the Atlantic maneuvered to participate in syndicates such as the Indiana, Missis-

sippi, Transylvania and Vandalia Companies. The history of these land companies is closely connected to the growth of Virginia's counties because of the need to title land through the courthouses.(52)

While the "big" people participated in the land companies after the war in their attempts to profit from land fever, the "little" people simply headed west, ignoring King George. The situation has been well explained by the office of the Historian of the U.S. State Department:(53)

The British won vast territory in North America after the Seven Years' War, but with it came numerous problems of how to govern it. British officials were unable to balance the interests of colonists and Indians, and these conflicts led to colonial dissatisfaction with imperial rule and ultimately to the causes of the American Revolution. ... With the official end of the war, Anglo-American colonists began to pour over the Appalachian Mountains in search of land. Many of these settlers had no official claim to the land as local Indians had made no land cessions, and in many cases, the land was claimed by private land companies. The Virginia elite had invested heavily in these companies in an attempt to diversify their holdings outside of the volatile tobacco market and thus had an interest in pressing the British Government to address ensuing tensions.

The settlement of the lands west of the Appalachians brought inevitable tension and conflict between settlers and indigenous peoples. British military officials attempted to halt settlement but eager settlers and land speculators ignored their directives. With the military unwilling to forcibly remove settlers from the lands, Anglo-American colonists continued to migrate west and lay claim to these lands.

The Revolutionary Movement in Virginia and the Creation of Botetourt County

The great British victory over the French in North America in 1763 created a British North American empire. Only a brief 12 years elapsed before the Revolution began in Massachusetts in April 1775 that led to the British loss of much of that same North American empire. Those intervening 12 years saw an amazing change in attitudes towards the king and parliament among colonial Americans.

The historical literature about the origins of the Revolutionary War is of course enormous and covers events such as the Sugars Act (1764), the Stamp Act (1765), the Townshend Revenue Acts (1767), the Boston massacre (1770), Boston Tea Party (1773) and the Intolerable Acts (1774-1775). Amongst this extensive literature, Woody Holton has argued that Virginia's deteriorating relations with the American Indians of Ohio provided Virginians' impetus for revolution.(54) Harry Ward provided a good summary of the causes of the American Revolution in his 1999 book.(55) An enlightening discussion of the revolutionary movement in Virginia and the forces that caused the creation of Botetourt County comes from the historian Marc Egnal who places the expansionists in the counties of Virginia's Northern Neck and the nonexpansionists in the lower James River watershed:

Between 1763 and 1776 Virginia's expansionists led the resistance to Britain, while the nonexpansionists proved to be reluctant patriots. The outlook that had guided the expansionists before 1763 shaped the party's response to British measures and to the closely associated problems of the postwar depression. As a result of their strong desire to control the upper Ohio Valley, these factionalists had become willing to take firm steps to assert the colony's rights. Moreover, their involvement with the west had strengthened their belief in America's cornucopian future, a faith that would be evident during the 1760s and 1770s. By contrast, the nonexpansionists were more inclined to weigh the costs of tackling such formidable enemies as the Indians, French, or British. Farther removed from the Ohio Valley than were the Northern Neckers,

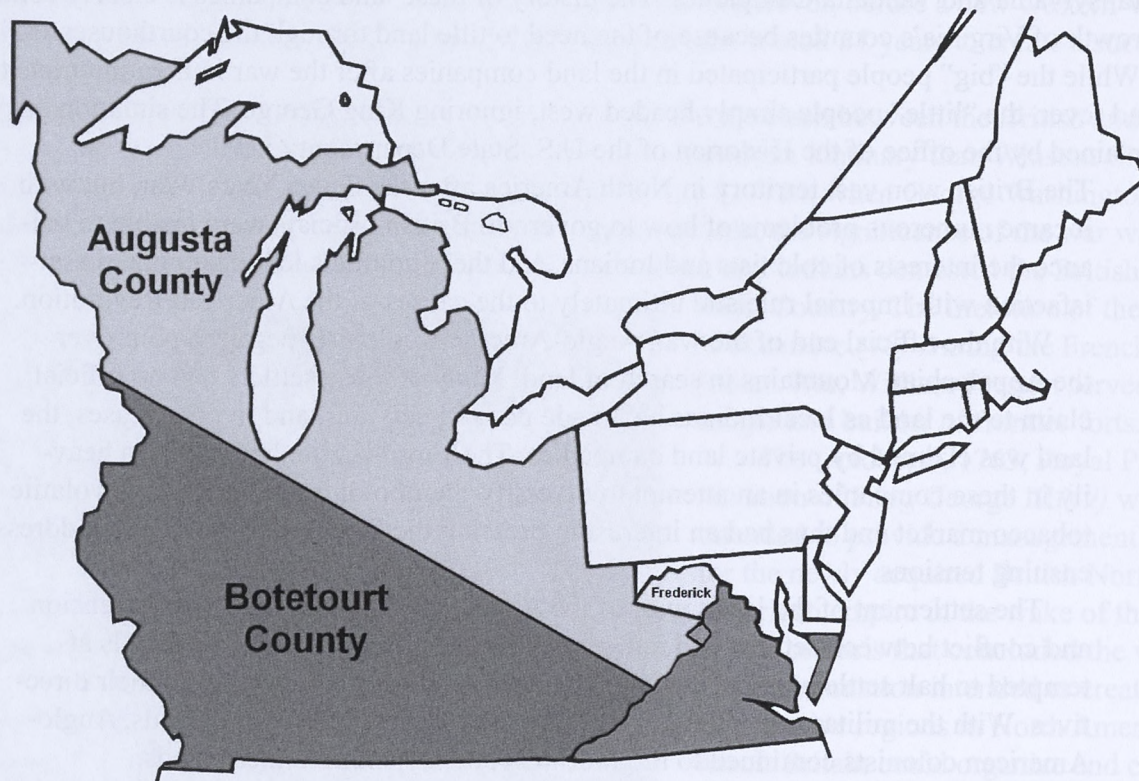


Figure 10. The original Botetourt County was created in 1769 from the lower and western half of Augusta County.

these men had been less enticed during the 1740s and 1750s by the rewards of bold action and continued to evince the same attitudes in the conflict with Britain. The activities of the two factions after 1763 were focused by three major episodes: the Stamp Act crisis, the nonimportation association against the Townshend Acts, and the events from the Boston Tea Party to Independence.⁽⁵⁶⁾

In his 1980 paper, Egnal concludes:

This interpretation of the origins of the Revolution argues that an expansionist outlook, rather than the grievances of the disenfranchised or Whig ideas, guided the patriots. This expansionist ideology was born of self-interest and was well formed by 1763. In Virginia these attitudes emerged from the pressing need of the planters living near the Potomac River and along the Blue Ridge Mountains to deal with the encroachments of the French and Indians. Such a world-view, as voiced by men like George Washington, Richard Henry Lee, and George Mason, had at its center the willingness to take bold steps to promote a prosperous, sovereign America. The outlook encompassed a belief in the richness of the trans montane west and an abiding concern for the health of the colonial economy. More generally, this paradigm suggests that in every colony the leaders of the struggle against Britain were motivated not by disembodied fears but by their vision of America's bountiful future.

In May 1769 growing revolutionary sentiment among Virginians and their resentment of British taxes was expressed in the secret "Resolves of the House of Burgesses." These four resolves maintained

that: 1. "That the sole Right of imposing Taxes on the Inhabitants of this his Majesty's Colony and Dominion of Virginia, is now, and ever hath been, legally and constitutionally vested in the House of Burgesses"; 2. "[I]t is the undoubted Privilege of the Inhabitants of this Colony, to petition their Sovereign for Redress of Grievances"; 3. That trials of Virginians be held in Virginia and not in England; and 4. That "any Person residing in America, suspected of any Crime whatsoever, [will be tried by] the ancient and long established Course of Proceeding." (57)

In November 1769 the General Assembly created Botetourt County by setting off about half of the 31-year-old Augusta County as a newly created county. See Figure 7 for a map of the new county. One imagines that the creation of Botetourt in 1769 was an act of defiance comparable the Virginia Resolves of May of that year.

William Preston became the surveyor of Botetourt County in 1769; he had moved to the Greenfield plantation in the county nine years earlier in 1760 in anticipation of Botetourt becoming separate from Augusta. Although the creation of Botetourt County has not traditionally been considered to be a revolutionary action by historians, seen in the light of this article it can now be so considered. Part of the 1769 language creating Botetourt County reads:

Whereas many inconveniencies attend the inhabitants of the county and parish of Augusta, by reason of the great extent thereof, and the said inhabitants have petitioned this general assembly that the said county and parish may be divided: Be it therefore enacted, by the Governor, Council, and Burgesses, of this present General Assembly, and it is hereby enacted, by the authority of the same, That from and after the thirty-first day of January next ensuing, the said county and parish of Augusta be divided into two counties and parishes, [the new part be] called and known by the name of Botetourt; and that all the other part thereof, which is on the north side of the said line, shall be one other distinct county and parish, and retain the name of Augusta.

While the Virginians were dividing Augusta County as shown in Figure 10, the British had markedly different ideas about the political geography of western Virginia. The map in Figure 11 shows the newly expanded region of British Quebec extending far down into the Virginia back country. For the Virginians, it was arguably the Quebec Act that became the final straw in determining they would join the Revolution. The Historian of the U.S. State Department writes: "The Quebec Act angered the Virginia elite, since most of the western lands they claimed were now officially part of Quebec or in the Indian reserve. The act, which was passed at the same time as legislation placing Massachusetts under crown control, also fueled resentment among Calvinist New Englanders, who saw in its autocratic, pro-Catholic provisions further evidence of an imperial conspiracy against colonial liberties." (58)

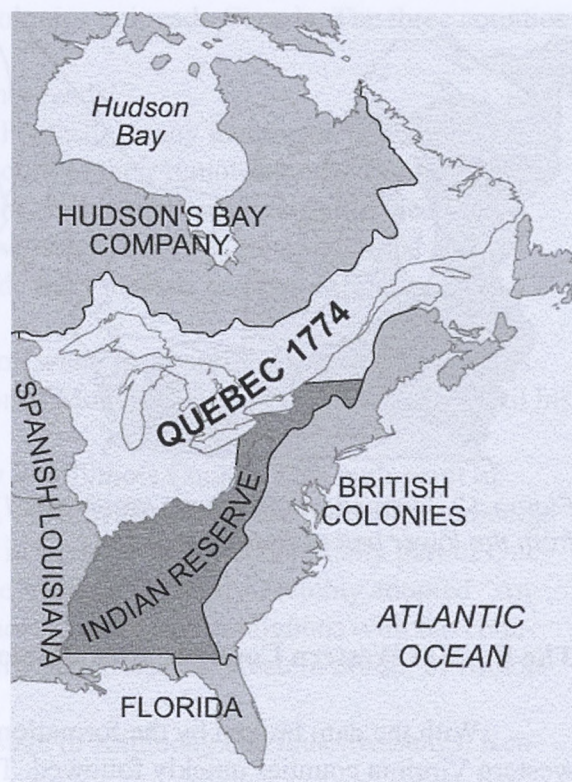


Figure 11. Map showing the territory of Quebec created by the Quebec Act of 1774. (59)

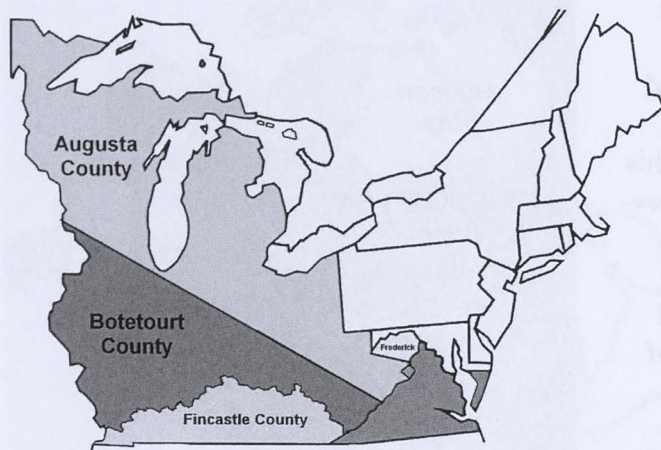


Figure 12. Fincastle County was created in 1772 from the lower half of Botetourt County.

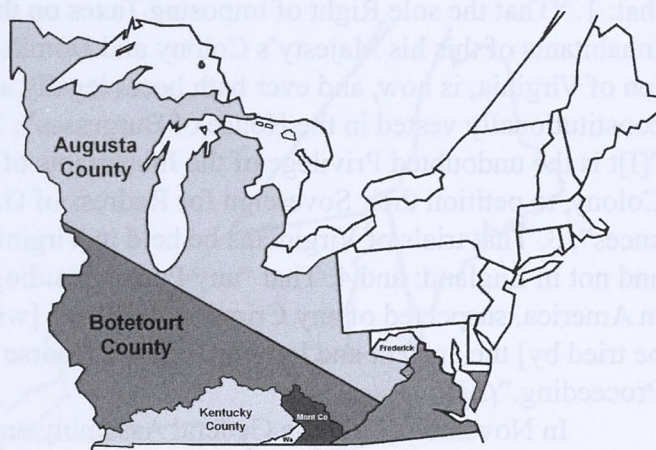


Figure 13. Fincastle County was abolished in 1776 and divided into three new counties: Kentucky, Montgomery, and Washington.

The Rush of Western Counties after Botetourt

With the dam broken by the formation of Botetourt County in 1769, the creation of further western Virginia counties quickly followed. Thus, in 1772 Botetourt County itself was divided, with the lower portion of Botetourt being taken to create the short-lived Fincastle County.⁽⁶⁰⁾ This division is shown in Figure 12. Around 1773, William Preston moved from his Greenfield plantation in Botetourt County to the Smithfield plantation in Fincastle County as Fincastle's surveyor, where he held that office for four years.

Part of the 1772 language creating Fincastle County reads:

Whereas it is represented to this present general assembly, by the inhabitants and settlers on the waters of Holston and New River, in the county of Botetourt, that they labour under great inconveniencies, by reason of the extent of the said county, and their remote situation from the courthouse: Be it therefore enacted, by the Governor, Council, and Burgesses, of this present General Assembly, and it is hereby enacted, by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of December next, the said counties, that is to say, all that part of the said county, within a line, to run up the east side of New River to the mouth of Culbertson's creek, thence a direct line to the Catawba road, where it crosses the dividing ridge, between the north fork of Roanoke and the waters of New River, thence with the top of the ridge to the bent where it turns eastwardly, thence a south course, crossing Little River, to the top of the Blue Ridge of mountains, shall be established as one distinct county, and called and known by the name of Fincastle; and all that other part thereof, which lies to the east and north east of the said line, shall be one other distinct county, and retain the name of Botetourt.

Just four years after its creation, in 1776, Fincastle County was abolished by being replaced by the three new counties of Kentucky, Montgomery, and Washington. ⁽⁶¹⁾ In 1776 the Revolutionary War was on, American independence had been declared, and the names of two of the three new counties were taken from American patriots: George Washington for one, and Richard Montgomery for a second. Montgomery (1738-1775) was an Irish-born soldier who was killed fighting as a major-general in the

continental army during a failed attempt by the American colonies to invade Canada. The three counties that replaced Fincastle are shown in Figure 13.

Part of the 1776 language abolishing Fincastle County reads:

Whereas, from the great extent of the county of Fincastle, many inconveniencies attend the more distant inhabitants thereof, on account of their remote situation from the courthouse of the said county, and many of the said inhabitants have petitioned this present general assembly for a division of the same: Fincastle county divided and Kentucky, Washington, and Montgomery formed; and Fincastle become extinct.

William Preston remained at the Smithfield plantation when that part of Fincastle County was converted to Montgomery County. Preston was the surveyor of Montgomery County from 1776 until his death in 1783.

Virginia's final fling at gaining a big western county was Illinois County. This high point of Virginia's western county formation was reached on July 4, 1778, when during his northwest campaign General George Rogers Clark claimed Illinois for Virginia, in territory that was nominally part of Quebec under the terms of the 1774 Quebec Act. In October, the Virginia General Assembly adopted "An Act for establishing the county of Illinois." As created, Illinois County was contiguous with the counties of Augusta and Botetourt and the enabling act specifically stated that the western border of Illinois County was the Mississippi River.(62)

Kentucky County, Virginia, eventually became the state of Kentucky and thus two states, Kentucky and Illinois, began their lives as Virginia counties.

The avidity of Virginians in seeking western land happened during the rule of George III and continued under the leadership of George Washington. By the time of the Revolutionary War, ordinary men and women could plainly see the promise of the west. Here is a quote from the final royal governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, writing to the Board of Trade about the wanderlust of the settlers:

But My Lord I have learnt from experience that the established authority of any government in America, and the policy of government at home, are both insufficient to restrain the Americans; and that they do and will remove as their avidity and restlessness incite them. They acquire no attachment to place. But wandering about seems engrafted in their nature; and it is a weakness incident to it, that they should for ever imagine the lands further off are still better than those upon which they are already settled.(63)

New States and Counties in the Young American Republic

Already by 1770, the rutted wagon road traversing southwest Virginia was the most heavily traveled route in all America. In the decades following independence, hundreds of thousands of Virginians moved westward to newly created states, carrying with them their culture and their political institutions and creating new court houses modeled on the Virginia system. This movement shaped America. Arguably, William Preston was the most significant single person in making the thoroughfare possible.(64) In terms of the numbers, in 1781 at the end of the American Revolution Virginia had 67 counties and at the end of the 18th century in 1800 it had 79.

After the Revolution had been won, representatives of the original thirteen states met in Philadelphia to negotiate the arrangements for a United States and make the necessary compromises needed to create a constitution. It is all too easy today to overlook what an incredible miracle it was for the original states to eventually agree on the language of the Constitution and to get that Constitution ratified. Many states other than Virginia made claims to western lands and much negotiation was required to develop

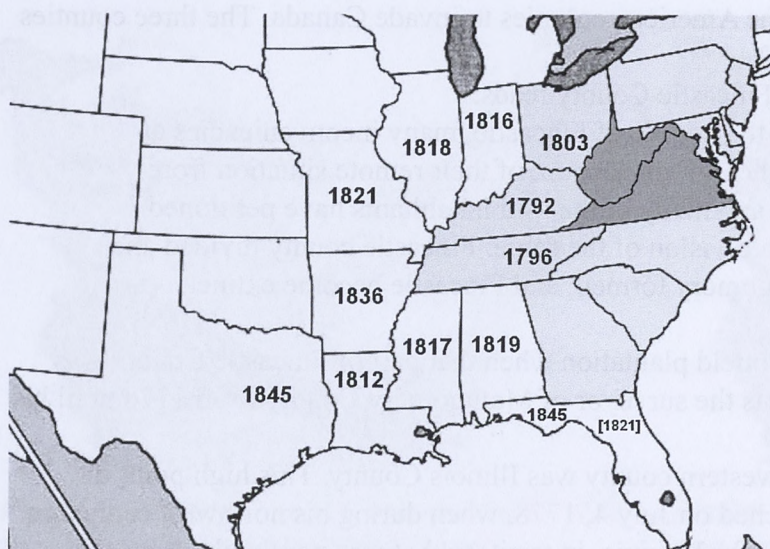


Figure 14. States formed during the first 65 years of the American Republic.

the land concessions of the original thirteen states to the about-to-be-created federal government. Virginia's land cession was enormous, and consisted of most of the original Orange County.(65)

In the decades following the ratification of the Constitution in 1787, hundreds of thousands of Virginians moved westward to newly created states carrying with them their culture and their courthouses. This movement built America.

As shown in Figure 14, by 1803, three new states (Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee) all contiguous to Virginia had come into existence. By 1845, eight new states (Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama) further from Virginia had

come into existence. All of these new states benefited from the export of the Virginians' cultural legacy through their laws and political institutions, and especially in their methods of county government and land titling.

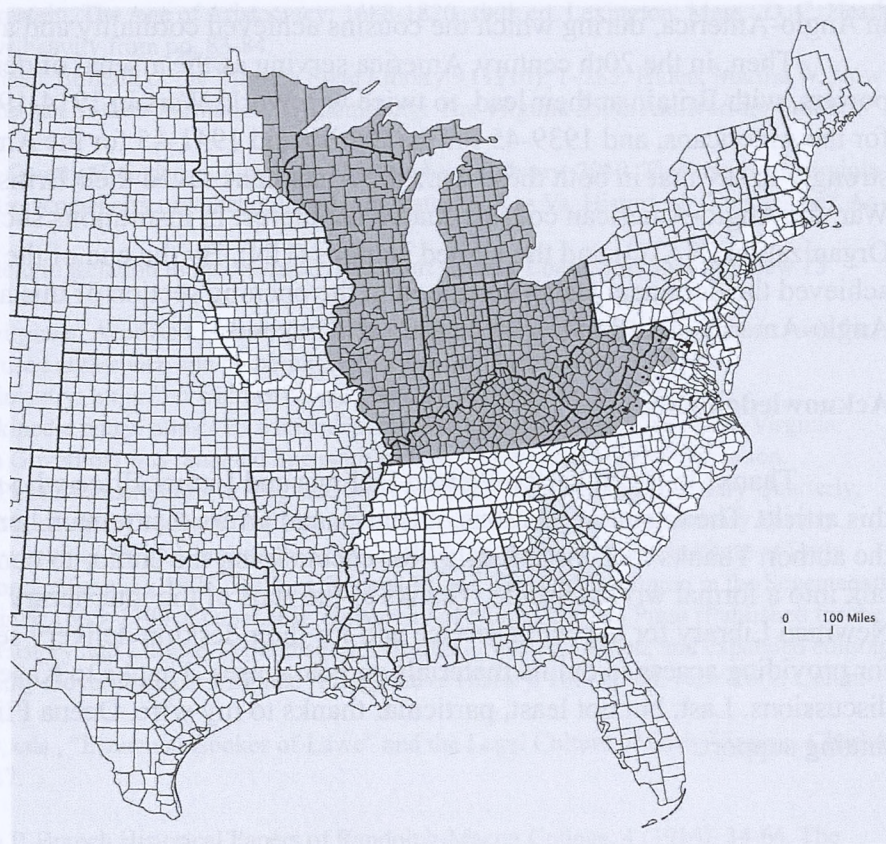
Modern America has 3,007 counties.(66) As shown by the shaded region in Figure 15, about 1,000 of those counties are quite literally on land originally encompassed by the original 1734 Orange County. Perhaps another thousand counties in the eastern half of the nation were created under the influence of Virginia's cultural legacy and its system of county government. Those additional 1,000 counties are located in states such as Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri and Kansas which all have county court houses that follow the Virginia tradition. The existence of these counties and their courthouses is why this author has termed western Virginia a "Thoroughfare of Nation Building." Of all Virginians, it was William Preston who played a central role in creating this thoroughfare.

Discussion

Virginia history is traditionally told from a Tidewater perspective. Virginia Tech historian Peter Wallenstein has written, in a paper that deserves to be widely read and titled "The Grinch That Stole Southern History," that southern history has been "hijacked too long" by white men from eastern Virginia. He posits that the entire South can perhaps recapture its history by taking a perspective from the mountains west of the Blue Ridge, while simultaneously allowing the plantation country view to reduce to life size.(67)

Wallenstein's view (which has much influenced the present author) is that the "rhetoric of southern history, the language of southern politicians and southern historians alike, has, as a rule, implied that white people in the low country had a franchise on the appellation "southerners," and by catering to "white men living in the Piedmont or the Tidewater," write their history to leave out many people and thereby distort what was going on. As an antidote, Wallenstein proposes that we view southern history instead from Mount Rogers, the highest point in Virginia, Clingmans Dome, the highest in Tennessee, or Mount Mitchell, the highest peak in North Carolina. Each is on or west of the Blue Ridge and on or near the Appalachian Trail; each is more than a mile above sea level. With such a view, the South can be seen from a mountain perspective somewhere west of the Blue Ridge.

Figure 15. Modern-day counties that were in the original territory of the 1734 Orange County, Virginia.



In this context, southwest Virginia can be seen for what it was: the gateway for one of America's most important internal migrations and the key geographic link in the process of nation-building during the early years of the Republic. Indeed, as Wallenstein has pointed out, the region played that role at a time when many doubted a republican form of government could effectively administer such a vast extent of territory.

This author has emphasized here that the counties of western Virginia were the vehicle and model for the transmission of Anglo-American culture to much of the rest of the nation. One can conclude that William Preston literally shaped America through his work as a surveyor while he metaphorically shaped America through his personal leadership and the family dynasty he founded. William Preston's life stands as a paradigm of the Ulster American heritage in America. The Virginia system of county government as exemplified by the life of William Preston built an American empire that led eventually to the triumph of Anglo-America as a dominant force in the modern world.

Postscript

In 1812 the Anglo-American cousins reprised the Revolutionary War in a conflict that ended with British defeat at New Orleans by an army led by future U.S. President Andrew Jackson. From then on, through most of the 19th century, relations moderated between the cousins and they largely went their own ways, with the Americans fighting a Civil War and undergoing reconstruction, while the British retained Canada and built an empire in South Africa, India and elsewhere around the world.

By the end of the 19th century, it had become clear that the social and political objectives of the cousins were converging. They now shared democratic ideals and institutions that counterbalanced the rising autocracies in Europe, and took note of their common history. This was a time of rapprochement

in Anglo-America, during which the cousins achieved cordiality and a largely shared foreign policy.

Then, in the 20th century, America serving as the arsenal of democracy, enabled allied European powers, with Britain at their lead, to twice win World Wars in 1914-1918 for the British and 1917-18 for the Americans, and 1939-45 for the British and 1941-45 for the Americans. It is hardly putting it too strongly to say that in both these wars the Americans saved their British cousins. After the second World War, the Anglo-American cousins shared an interest in institutions such as the North American Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (UN). By the end of the 20th century, Anglo-America had achieved the dominant status described in the opening section of this article. History will record where Anglo-America goes in the 21st century and beyond.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Brent Tarter, Warren Billings and Luther Brice who read and criticized earlier drafts of this article. The misinterpretations, mistakes and errors that remain here are solely the responsibility of the author. Thanks to George Kegley for encouraging the author to convert what began as an after-dinner talk into a formal written article. Thanks to the staff of the interlibrary loan office at Virginia Tech's Newman Library for excellent service and for their desktop delivery service. Thanks to Newman Library for providing access to online materials and databases. Thanks to Kasey Campbell for ongoing helpful discussions. Last, but not least, particular thanks to my wife, Deena Flinchum, for her strong and continuing support.

Endnotes

1. First presented on November 18, 2016 in Fincastle, Virginia, as a talk with the title "William Preston and the Making of America" at the 10th Founders Day dinner of the Botetourt County Historical Society celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Society. Talk on line at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJUYMILELbE>.
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11. For comparison, modern Virginia has an area of 42,775 square miles and contains 95 counties and 38 independent cities.
12. The author has acquired considerable familiarity with the electronic land tax records of Monroe County, West Virginia, in connection with studies of the burial site of Virginia Governor John Floyd and his wife Letitia Preston Floyd.
13. Glanville-Richards, William. *Records of the Anglo-Norman House of Glanville from A.D. 1050 to 1880*. London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1882.
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14. Willcox, William B., and Walter L. Arnstein, *The Age of Aristocracy: 1688-1820*, sixth ed. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, 1992. This paragraph draws heavily from pp. 83-84.
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A New Road to be Opened: The Poplar Forest Parkway

By Jack Gary

Introduction

Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest, located in Bedford County, Virginia, was the third president's plantation and private retreat. Jefferson received the property in 1773 as an inheritance from his father-in-law, John Wayles, and ran the 5,000-acre plantation as an absentee landowner during his many years of public service.

Using enslaved labor under the supervision of white overseers the Poplar Forest plantation grew tobacco and wheat as the primary cash crops. In 1781 Jefferson came to Poplar Forest while evading capture by the British. While on the property he took the opportunity to begin writing the bulk of his only published book, "Notes on the State of Virginia."

During his presidency Jefferson began to consider building a house at Poplar Forest for use as a retreat during his retirement. In 1806, construction began on an octagonal brick structure near the center of the plantation (Figure 1). Taking architectural cues from his favorite architect, Andrea Palladio, Jefferson designed the house as a two-story structure sunken into the top of a hill. By 1809, just in time for his retirement from the presidency, the house was finished enough for Jefferson to begin living in it.

Over the next 14 years Jefferson travelled regularly to Poplar Forest, visiting several times a year and staying for a few weeks at a time. Here he found a place to get away from the pressures of a lifetime of public service and the social obligations of Monticello. After 1816 he began to bring two of his granddaughters with him on his trips to spend some private time with them. He also took side trips to nearby attractions such as Natural Bridge (which he owned) and the Peaks of Otter (which he climbed twice at the age of 72).

After Thomas Jefferson's death in 1826, the plantation and retreat house were given to Francis Eppes, Jefferson's grandson. Finding it difficult to raise tobacco in the worn-out soils of the plantation, Eppes sold the property and house to William Cobbs in 1828. Cobbs moved his own enslaved laborers onto the property and continued to grow wheat and tobacco on the plantation. In 1840, Cobbs' daughter, Emma, married Edward Hutter, who soon assumed the role of plantation manager. After emancipation, Hutter continued to run the farm utilizing African-American tenant farmers.

By the early 20th century the property was in the ownership of Edward's son Christian Hutter who moved his family into Lynchburg while using Jefferson's retreat house as a summer home. In 1946 the James Watts family purchased the property and occupied the house while running the property as a dairy farm. By the 1970s and early 1980s the majority of the original Poplar Forest plantation had been sold for residential and commercial development. In 1983 the nonprofit Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest was formed in order to purchase the retreat house and 50 acres of land directly around it.

Since that time the corporation has been able to acquire 617 acres of the original plantation. The

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Figure 1: The Poplar Forest retreat house.

corporation has also worked towards restoring the retreat house to the original Jefferson-era appearance and has established a full-time ongoing archaeology department to conduct research on the lives of the many different people who have occupied this important property. Today Poplar Forest is open to visitors seven days a week for guided tours of the house and grounds.

Due to the development that has occurred around Poplar Forest, visitors' access to the site can often be confusing. To alleviate the challenges of finding this National Historic Landmark, Poplar Forest has designed a new entrance that will connect the main visitor area around Jefferson's retreat house with a major Lynchburg thoroughfare known as Enterprise Drive.

Referred to as the Poplar Forest Parkway, this new entrance road will bring visitors across 2.2 miles of the original plantation before arriving near the retreat house (Figure 2). The Poplar Forest parkway was designed to not only provide more convenient visitor access to the historic site and museum, but to also provide new interpretive opportunities that highlight aspects of the plantation and natural history found on the property. The parkway itself was designed to lie lightly on the land, taking advantage of the topography, vegetation and history of the property to choreograph the visitor's experience. The curves, design, speed and physical appearance of the road itself take their cues from other parkway traditions, most notably the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Natchez Trace.

A trail system will also complement the parkway, taking advantage of the new corridor opened through the property to give visitors access to areas of the original plantation for both educational and recreational purposes. Thomas Jefferson himself had planned to build a new road near this corridor, labeling on a map "new road to be opened to Lynchburg." Along the course of the new parkway and

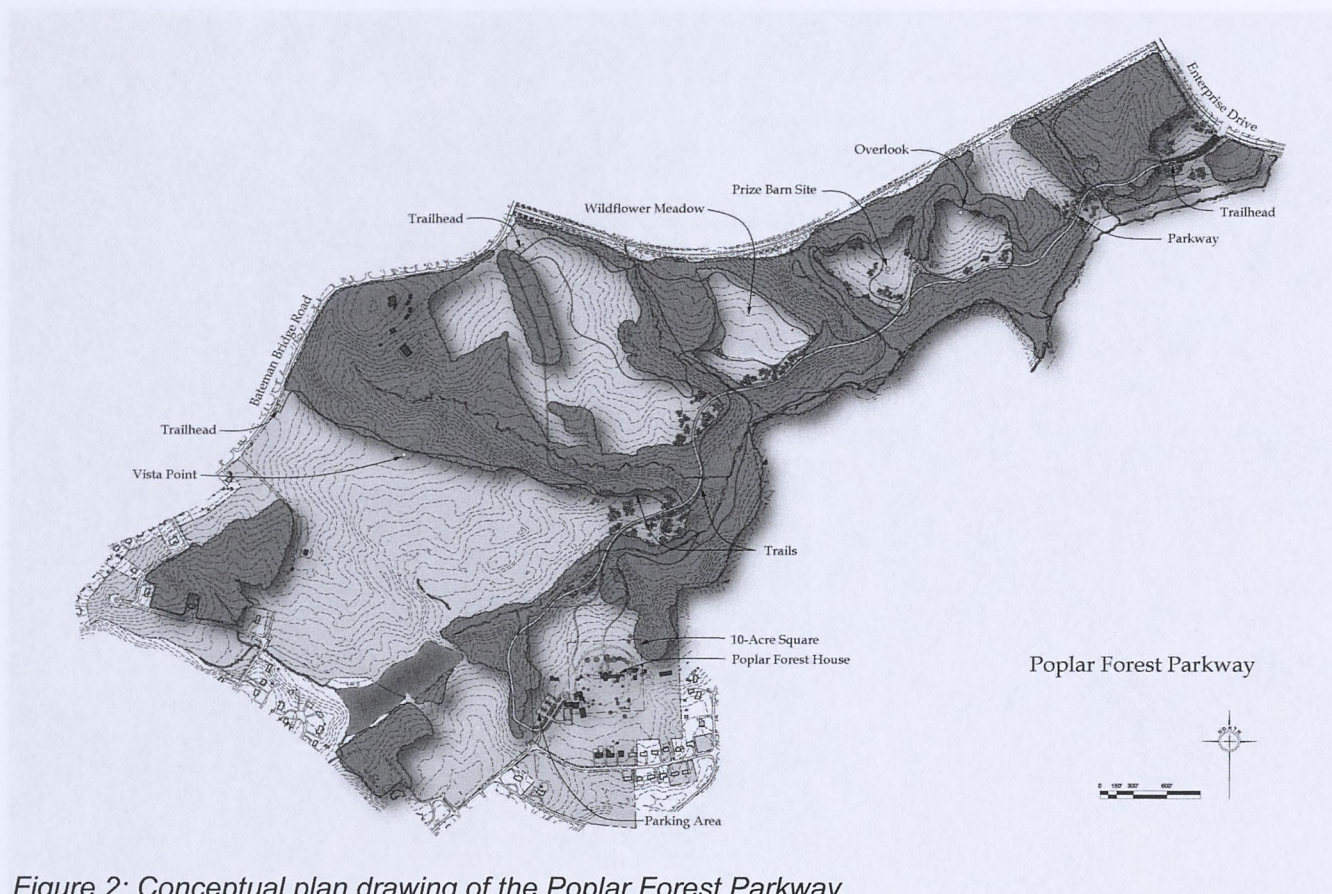


Figure 2: Conceptual plan drawing of the Poplar Forest Parkway.

the trail system will be interpretive signage and waysides that will interpret the people and landscapes of this property from prehistoric occupation through the 20th century, with Thomas Jefferson and the enslaved people of Poplar Forest receiving the primary focus.

The route of the parkway and trail system was designed by Rieley and Associates, a landscape architecture firm based in Charlottesville. The design was informed by historical research and a thorough survey of archaeological resources along the route of the road itself. This archaeological research has allowed Poplar Forest to create a corridor through which the road will run that is sensitive to the preservation of historic resources but that has also uncovered new information about the history of this property. The results of the archaeological excavations are discussed in more detail below with several sites discovered during the project highlighted.

Results of the Archaeological Survey

Between December 2014 and the Spring of 2017, Poplar Forest's Department of Archaeology and Landscapes excavated over 4,000 shovel test pits covering the course of the 2.2-mile-long parkway (Figure 3). Shovel test pits are small circular holes dug by hand on a grid pattern and all of the soil is passed through a screen to capture any artifacts. Concentrations of artifacts indicate an archaeological site.

A total of 29 sites were discovered along the route of the road. Many of the sites discovered were prehistoric encampments, places where Virginia Indians lived while hunting game in the uplands or procuring stone for tool manufacture. While these archaeological sites have been extensively disturbed by plowing and erosion, some of the stone tools that remain provide dates for when people lived on this



Figure 3: A Poplar Forest archaeologist digging a shovel test pit.

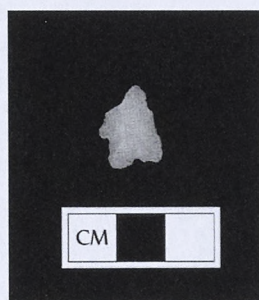


Figure 4: Le Croy point (6500 BC - 5700 BC)

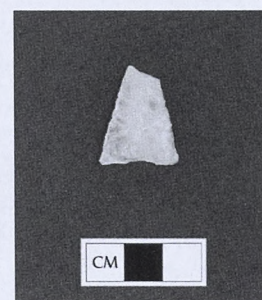


Figure 5: Carraway point (1200 AD - 1700 AD)

[A]rchaeological research has allowed Poplar Forest to create a corridor through which the road will run that is sensitive to the preservation of historic resources but that has also uncovered new information about the history of this property.

land. The oldest artifact found during the project was a quartz LeCroy-style projectile point (Figure 4). Often referred to as “arrowheads,” most points were actually fastened to the ends of spears or darts that would have been thrown by hand. LeCroy points date from 6500 BC to 5700 BC, a time period when human populations began to increase as the climate became warmer. Another site discovered during the project dates much later, and may be associated with some of the last Virginia Indians to live on what would become Poplar Forest. The Carraway point seen here dates from between 1200 AD and 1700 AD (Figure 5).

One of the archaeological sites discovered during the Parkway Survey has yielded some fascinating information about the natural and cultural history of Poplar Forest over a century before Jefferson ever saw this property. A site referred to as Site 37 is located at the base of a steep slope along the banks of a creek called Machine Branch. Erosion from upslope had washed sediment over top of earlier layers of soil, sealing them in place. In one of these layers the archaeologists found the intact remains of burned logs and twigs that appear to have come from fallen trees (Figure 6).

Burned wood, particularly small twigs, offers an excellent chance at getting precise carbon dates that can tell us when this burning episode happened and perhaps yield clues as to how and why it happened. Several samples of charcoal were sent to PaleoResearch Institute in Golden, Colorado, in order to obtain a carbon date and identify the wood. In the three samples sent, chestnut, red oak and white oak were present. The carbon date that came back places this burning episode sometime around 1630 AD to 1640 AD. The possible reasons for this could be that a forest fire swept through the area burning off the trees and vegetation on the slope above the creek, thereby increasing erosion. There may also be the possibility that the burning episode was the result of Virginia Indians clearing small areas of forest in



Figure 6: The remains of a burned tree found at Site 37

order to plant crops. Either possibility reminds us that the Poplar Forest landscape is ever changing, even long before Jefferson's ownership.

This project has also allowed Poplar Forest's archaeologists to investigate some of the original features of Jefferson's plantation, including McDaniel's, Upper, Middle, Lower and Ridge Field, all names given by Jefferson to fields that once grew tobacco, corn and wheat. Utilizing historic maps of the property, some written in Jefferson's own hand, the archaeologists were able to locate the depressions that still remain along the edges of these fields where several of the plantation's original roads used to run (Figure 7). Sections of the road that led from Jefferson's house to his threshing barn and eventually on to Lynchburg were discovered remarkably intact. In the future these road traces may be ideal walking trails, allowing visitors to follow the routes Jefferson and his enslaved laborers used to move across the property.

Another task associated with this project was to dig a little deeper into the site of the Prize Barn, the facility where enslaved workers packed tobacco into barrels for shipment to market. Two summer research interns spent nine weeks pulling together information about the barn, which is located on several historic maps, and excavated over 160 shovel test pits and three larger excavation units to try and pinpoint this important plantation structure. Making the task somewhat difficult was



Figure 7: The road trace for the road that led from Jefferson's retreat house to his threshing barn is still visible.



Figure 9: Students and Poplar Forest archaeologists excavating the site of an ante-bellum period slave quarter.

tation structure. Making the task somewhat difficult was the fact that the barn was dismantled in 1847, possibly with much of its hardware salvaged for re-use, leaving behind few artifacts. The results of the interns' excavations in conjunction with archaeological findings from the mid-1990s, however, located a small concentration of early architectural material that has allowed us to confirm the location of the Prize Barn. With its location known, the site can be preserved, studied and interpreted into the future.

Two new historical sites were located in a section of the property Jefferson referred to as the Curtilage, the 61-acre fenced-in space that surrounded the retreat house. The discovery of these sites was cause for re-routing the road to avoid damaging them. One of the sites is located on a flat knoll above the Tomahawk Creek and is believed to be the remains of a barn or outbuilding dating to the late 19th century. Artifacts such as nails, wrought iron chain, horseshoes and a pintle for a large door or gate hinge all speak to a utilitarian function for the site. A small amount of household debris was found at this site, such as stoneware crockery, a marble and even the closure to a woman's corset (Figure 8). The number of these types of artifacts, however, does not suggest anybody was living at this site for any length of time. The artifacts help to date the site to the mid-1800s and the structure was likely torn down by the end of the 19th century or very early 20th century.

The other site is located near an extant barn constructed in 1856. This site contained large quantities of domestic debris such as ceramics, bottle glass, fragments of an iron skillet, keys to padlocks and other household objects (Figure 9). These artifacts date primarily to the second quarter of the 19th

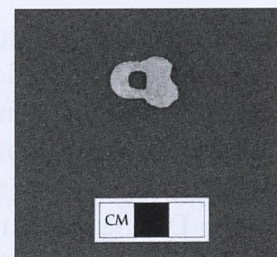


Figure 8: A woman's corset closure



Figure 10: Dr. Daniel Druckenbrod takes a core from a tulip poplar tree that dates to the late 1800s.

century and indicate that a house once stood here. Also recovered in the excavations were fragments of daub, the hardened clay that was used to line wooden chimneys and fill the cracks of log cabins. Based on the dates of the artifacts and the indication that this structure was likely of log construction, we believe that this site contains the remains of a slave cabin dating to the Cobbs and Hutter ownership of the property and was probably abandoned or demolished prior to emancipation. Preserving and interpreting the places where enslaved people lived and worked is an important part of Poplar Forest's mission. As such we have routed the new parkway around this site to ensure that we will be able to properly excavate, understand and interpret this space to our visitors in the future.

Reconstructing the Environmental History of Poplar Forest Through Dendrochronology

One of the most attractive aspects of Poplar Forest's new parkway will be the choreography of driving through different landscapes. The view will be ever-changing as visitors wind their way through open fields reminiscent of the historic plantation before descending into the deep shade of a stand of towering tulip poplar trees (Figure 10). Sections of woods will recall the land-

scape as it may have looked when the first enslaved laborers began clearing hundreds-of-years-old hardwood trees to create fields. Other sections provide a graphic representation of what those fields looked like after decades of intensive farming and abandonment, covered with cedars that will slowly give way to the young tulip poplar saplings growing beneath them. These forests, much like the rest of the historic property, have stories to tell, some of them surprising.

During the course of the archaeological survey for the new parkway, 10 stands of trees were selected along the route of the new road to be examined. Dr. Daniel Druckenbrod of Rider University was contracted to study these sections of forest, determining their age and species composition. By using dendrochronology, the scientific study of tree rings, we can discover the exact year a tree began to grow. We can also see major weather events such as droughts and damaging frosts. Dr. Druckenbrod also examined some historic timbers that had been used to rebuild the retreat house after it was partially destroyed by fire in 1845. The results of this work discovered that all stages of forest composition exist on the property, from woods established as recently as the year 2000 to intact stands of oak and tulip poplar that began growing around 1890.

The most surprising find, however, was that some of the oldest trees on the property are also some of the smallest. Several blackgum trees (*Nyssa sylvatica*) dating to the 1810s and 1820s were found mixed with a younger stand of trees. These blackgums began growing during Jefferson's lifetime, escaping the axe during logging episodes. Their survival over the past two centuries is most likely due to the fact that they are undesirable as fuel or for building.

Dr. Druckenbrod's work also revealed that a tulip poplar northeast of the house began growing in 1806, the same year Jefferson began constructing the retreat house (Figure 11). It is still unclear whether the tree was planted or began to grow up naturally and was left to become part of the ornamental landscape around Jefferson's house.

The examination of the house timbers revealed another fascinating story, one of a natural catastrophe. Several of the timbers came from trees that began growing in the 1740s and were harvested in 1845. The tree rings on some timbers for the year 1774 are almost nonexistent, recording a year with no growth. Turning to Jefferson's own records on May 5, 1774, he noted that a severe frost killed almost everything including spring crops, fruit and even large saplings. As a result, he observed that "the leaves of the trees were entirely killed," and the effects were felt "thro the whole country and the neighboring colonies."

More than just a road, the Poplar Forest Parkway has allowed Poplar Forest to continue examining the natural and historic resources on this property. When opened to visitors it will provide a new way to experience the plantation landscape and learn about the historical significance of the many different people who have called this place home.

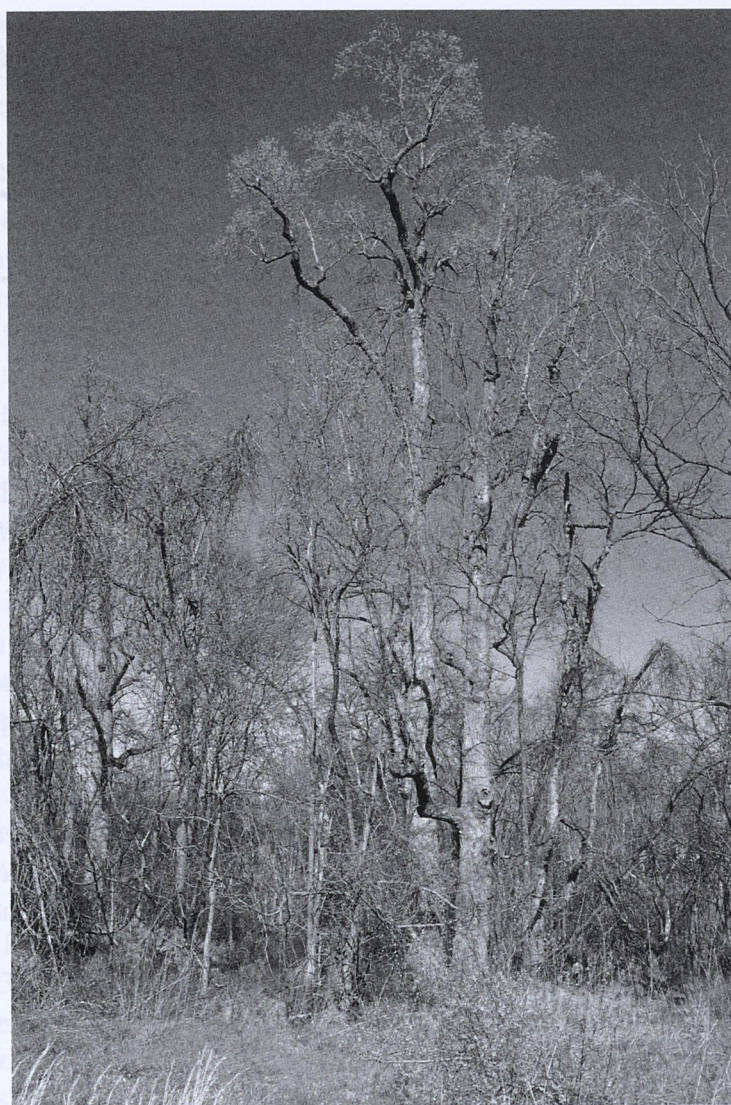


Figure 11: Tulip poplar tree dating to 1806.

One of the most attractive aspects of Poplar Forest's new parkway will be the choreography of driving through different landscapes. The view will be ever-changing as visitors wind their way through open fields reminiscent of the historic plantation [.]

Recalling Poplar Forest

After Mr. Jefferson

by Cranston Williams

After reading this presentation, I hope that you will better understand Thomas Jefferson's Retreat Poplar Forest, a treasure for the nation, located in Bedford County, near Forest. My remarks will cover 1) my involvement with Poplar Forest, 2) the reason Jefferson built his retreat along with its unique construction and plantation features, 3) its deterioration through only three families who lived there, 4) its rescue in 1984 and 5) the 33-year subsequent research and investigation leading up to future restoration expectations.

This property and the Poplar Forest home stayed in Thomas Jefferson's family for about 50 years. In 1823, Francis Eppes, Jefferson's nephew, inherited it and then Jefferson died in 1826. Since Eppes and his brother were not interested in keeping it, Eppes sold 1,075 acres to William Cobbs, my maternal great-great-grandfather. His daughter married Edward Sixtus Hutter of the U.S. Navy and hence my Hutter family ownership began.

The Hutter family owned Poplar Forest for 118 years, until 1946, when my mother's father sold it to Jim Owen Watts. The Watts family lived there 34 years and made it a year-round home with only 50 acres remaining of the 1,075 that he bought. He sold land to pay off his bad habits of gambling and women.

It was in 1984 that the present corporation bought 50 acres and the home from a North Carolina doctor who wanted to save it from real estate developments. He wanted the home to be preserved. It was first opened to the public in 1986. Over 650 acres is now owned by the corporation, including the golf course to the west

Enough of the background and some history. I was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and lived there until 1939 when my family moved to Scarsdale, New York. My mother was Caroline Hutter, one of 10 Hutter children, whose father owned Poplar Forest. My father was from middle Georgia. Therefore, I spent seven to 10 days each summer in Georgia and the balance at Poplar Forest during the 1920s, '30s and early '40s. I want to emphasize that Poplar Forest was JUST my grandmother's and grandfather's home. Yet, Poplar Forest provided no special or historical meaning for me during my summers except for the part I learned about Gen. Hunter's Civil War raid on Lynchburg in June 1864. We had cattle, chickens, pea hens and peacocks roaming around with horses and pigs.

The Hutter family also used this property only in the summertime, as it had little inside plumbing, with only fireplaces for heat on cool nights, and electricity in the kitchen during my latter years. There was no air conditioning.

As I told Russia's Mikhail Gorbachev during his mid-1990s visit there, I spent more time at Jefferson's Poplar Forest than Jefferson. It was due to my 18 summers that I spent there prior to my two-

Cranston Williams, a retired Times-World Corp. executive, told of his boyhood days at Poplar Forest in a Roanoke talk.

year service in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Simply stated, Poplar Forest is one of Jefferson's most perfect architectural works. It was a personal house and summer residence that he built for himself. It was a villa retreat that blended the "built" and "natural" environments. Monticello, begun when he was 36 and completed 40 years later, was a monument to Jefferson. And yet, Poplar Forest remains one of his most unknown works. After a 27-year detailed and rigorous investigation by a team of archeologists, architects, architectural historians, conservationists, researchers and advisers, it is being meticulously deciphered.

Jefferson visited this property for the first time in 1773 and did return a third time when forced by the British to flee Charlottesville in 1781 before Poplar Forest was built.

While in his second term as president, in 1804 and after many years of dreaming and sketching ideas of various retreats, Jefferson began plans for the site. He based his plans upon his own interpretation but modified them to suit his own taste of the French Palladian style. It represents the best example of a villa, an ornamental house and garden within an agricultural center, meant to give pleasure. In 1980, this Virginia and National Historic Landmark, with the same prominence as Mt. Vernon and Monticello, became an endangered property. No longer inhabited, it began to deteriorate rapidly. It was put up for sale and the Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest was formed to purchase the home and surviving 50 acres from a North Carolina neurosurgeon.

There was a sense of urgency. History was vanishing rapidly. The property was under siege from housing developments and a nine-hole golf course had already been built.

After that overview, let's look at the house, its design and plantation. Jefferson had originally designed his octagonal house facing north, the culmination of his lifelong love of math and geometry, as a dwelling place for Eppes and Jefferson's youngest daughter, Maria, at Pantops in Charlottesville. Maria's death in 1804 brought an end to the project at Pantops. But not to the house which, altered to suit Jefferson's needs, was begun two years later at Poplar Forest. It was named for the tulip poplar tree.

This famous Palladian-style country villa design was in part borrowed from William Kent, who described such an octagonal dwelling in his 1737 book, "Designs of Indigo Jones." The bulk of Palladian style architecture includes porticoes, pediments, columns, tall windows and balanced wings. Jefferson had a fancy for the eight-sided shape with one of his rooms at Monticello being eight-sided. Jefferson believed, as architects would prove many years later, that this floor plan used space economically and allowed maximum light and air flow.

By 1790, the residential and administrative core of the property was an area known as "the Old Plantation." It contained at minimum an overseer's house, barn and an adjoining slave quarter that housed some 35 enslaved laborers. While the overseer's house and barn lay outside of the modern Poplar Forest property, archaeologists have investigated the adjoining circa 1770s to 1780s quarter site. Archaeologists have also studied a later slave quarter dating from circa 1790 to 1812 at the edge of the Old Plantation. It was near this area that Jefferson began construction of his house.

Jefferson broke new ground when he placed the foundation for Poplar Forest in 1806. He was 63. This was during his second presidential term and at the same time, he was designing and building the University of Virginia. This was the first octagonal structure in the New World. Construction took six years. He traveled from the White House to personally help his Irish brick mason lay the foundation and upon retirement from the presidency in 1809 he began visiting the site on a regular basis. His voluminous correspondence contains some 1,500 letters to and from workmen overseeing its construction.

By 1813, he had enclosed a 61-acre site surrounding the house, known as the "curtilage." This area most likely contained his kitchen garden, orchards and the buildings needed to support him while in residence.

The basic design consisted of a cubical central dining room. This room was illuminated by a large 20-foot-high skylight and was surrounded by four equal-size elongated octagonal 14-foot rooms

that opened up on this central room. The north room was divided into two by a hall to the front door. The south room served as a parlor or drawing room with floor-length windows. To the east and west off the central room were the main bedrooms. Each had its fireplace and complement of windows.

Projections on the east and west sides of the house held narrow spiraling staircases to the lower floor. How Jefferson used the lower is not totally clear, except for the excavated wine cellar.

The main floor contained roughly 2,000 square feet. Like the main house, the stationary brick privies are octagonal shaped, have hand-crafted cornices and small fan-shaped windows that match the house.

Though he continued to tinker with plantings and details almost until his death, Jefferson considered the house "done" by 1812, when he was 69. He was soon making regular and prolonged visits three or four times a year, often staying as long as two weeks. He died in 1826 at 84.

What happened during the Cobbs-Hutter family ownership? It is easy to see how Jefferson's floor plan would not suit a normal household but only a private family retreat. It was not designed for groups of people, usual entertaining or servant circulation. After an 1845 fire, the Hutters rebuilt the house with Greek Revival alterations changing an aesthetically designed villa into a practically altered farmhouse.

During reconstruction, major features of the house were changed. The elevations were altered, the central room skylight and balustrade were omitted, the new cornice was not Jeffersonian and the pediment on the south portico was not restored. Dormer windows were inserted into the new roof. A narrow stairway to a newly created attic lowered the central room's ceiling to 12 feet. A stairway was built from the central room to the lower level. All these have been reconstructed to Jefferson's original design. At the same time, the ornamental landscape faded into a farmyard setting.

Discoveries are constantly being made since 1984 when preservation interests began. Frequent reference to Poplar Forest is in Jefferson's garden, farm and account books as well as correspondence showing the loving care that went into the building of his second residence, just 90 miles away from his beloved Monticello. High-tech equipment such as ground-penetrating radar drawn on a sled across the yard has been used to try to predict what was there before.

Architects have used aerial infrared photography to detect underground foundations and other features that Jefferson may have built. We know that he had a blacksmith shop and stable but we have no idea where they were located. He wrote in 1814 that he was adding a wing of offices "in the manner of those at Monticello with a terraced roof."

Excavations by archaeologists at the wing of offices to the east of the main house have revealed the original kitchen yard from which a number of artifacts from Jefferson's time have been removed. They then found the number of rooms and their dimensions.

The wing consisted of four rooms. The room closest to the house was cold storage area. Next-door was the kitchen. In the 1990 winter, the third and fourth rooms were excavated, revealing the rest of the wing's layout. The third room, also heated by a fireplace, was the cook's room. A smokehouse was the last room in the wing.

The huge boxwoods that decorate the entrance were probably planted by a later owner because Jefferson confessed dislike for boxwoods. They have now been excavated and the vehicle drive excavated.

What about artifacts? A walk through the archaeological lab is a walk into another world. On trays, one can see colorful fragments of ceramics, pieces of glass, rusted nails, padlocks, buttons, thimbles and utensils.

Archaeologists have unearthed such Jefferson-era items as a bone-handled fork, dyed green to look like jade, a stoneware teapot fragment, a gilded brass mantle clock foot and an iron padlock with brass key cover. A ceramic milk pan, iron pot handles and tops are items found that belonged in Jefferson's wing of offices.

There is a new architectural lab building with a meeting room and an administration upper floor. This lab chemically treats mortars and plasters so as to analyze and understand how and when the interior was changed. They are matching mortar and sand for exterior renovations and ingredients for plaster.

What can you see in the house? Tours gain a new dimension. Plastered walls are on all the main level rooms, except the east bedroom called the Grandchildren's Bedroom. There the brick interior walls are exposed to see 19th century construction. Jefferson's alcove bed is in the west bedroom. Samples of the cornices, entablatures and friezes to be used in the dining room and parlor are shown. Other items are an original Jefferson table, copies of his "stick chair," siesta chair and many exhibits and artifacts found on the property.

Visiting the Office Wing is most inspiring. You may be awe-struck with the central space, the dining room, a perfect cube lit by the skylight. The retreat supplies a soaring two-story space in what appears, from the house's front, to be a single-story house. Check out the 15 fireplaces with only four chimneys and why the fireplace in the central room caused two fires.

What about new developments and what can be seen? Visitors are able to walk the grounds with a hand-held device that provides audio and visual information at 20 points of interest by GPS. The first stage of architectural restoration and historic production of interior trim. Eight volunteers have more than 20 years of service, and more than three-quarters of the volunteers have over five years of service.

Jefferson's complete mahogany dining room table was returned to Poplar Forest in the fall of 2009. An ornamental plant nursery was located. The east wing was completed in 2009. The visitor center was expanded by one-third, including restrooms and a registration area.

Jefferson's curtilage fence, surrounding the retreat's 61-acre core containing the house, ornamental grounds, orchards, garden and support buildings, was reconstructed. A double-row allee of trees was planted on both east and west sides of the home, with the east wing between them to restore the symmetry in a unique rendition of a five-part Palladian villa. A Jefferson re-enactor from Williamsburg is a frequent guest here for public and private events. Jefferson's plant nurseries were discovered and similar plants and trees were planted.

Future goals: Archeologists and historians have made significant headway in the investigative phase of Poplar Forest's restoration. The extensive 33-year discoveries are exciting because of the insight they provide about the previously little known facts of Jefferson's life. An indoor privy idea that he had found in France was discovered.

The restoration team continues to make wonderful progress with broad public support for absolute physical accuracy. No compromise! They are not taking any shortcuts.

Let us now go back to the 1920s, '30, '40s and '50s. I have many fond memories with some interesting tales and events to relate. Some of the more interesting ones may recall similar tales of life on a farm.

First, I want to emphasize that Poplar Forest was JUST MY GRANDMOTHER'S AND GRANDFATHER'S HOME. Jefferson gave us the waffle and provided the knowledge about the "eat-ability" of the "love apple" or "forbidden fruit" called the tomato. Yet, Poplar Forest provided no special or historical meaning for me during my summers, except for the part it played during Gen. Hunter's raid on Lynchburg in June 1864, during the Civil War.

My memories: Poplar Forest had oil lamps, no electricity; there was one bathroom with a tub, basin and toilet on the first floor, one toilet and basin in the basement; a water tower on the east mound provided gravity-fed running water in the house for the 1-1/2 baths and kitchen. An existing wall was between the house and mound, by the 19th century kitchen and smokehouse, as well as now non-existent ice and chicken houses. The dirt-covered swimming pool in the southeast corner of the south lawn was

put in by the Watts family. Chamber pots were in the rooms at night; the necessary houses behind the mounds were in daily use.

Wood stoves for cooking in the kitchen were replaced by electric stoves in the 1940s. Cast metal irons were for pressing sheets, clothing, curtains, table cloths and napkins that were heated on the kitchen stove. Many aunts, uncles and some cousins came from Lynchburg for almost every supper and Sunday lunch — a free meal. They also brought the newspaper and news of the day. No radios or TVs then, no electricity.

Croquet was played every evening under the northwest tulip poplars after a prompt 6 p.m. supper. No card playing or other games were allowed on Sunday by my grandfather. Everyone took an afternoon nap after a 1 p.m. lunch. They had to have a Coca-Cola at approximately 3:30 p.m. I was the provider of these Cokes until I started to work on the farm. Yes, I had to collect the money from each user, to be taken to the store to buy the next day's supply, to keep track of the 5-cent deposits for each bottle and to have them cold for the next day. If I didn't collect the money or the bottles, I lost money.

Most weekday nights I had two suppers, one with the family and the second with the farm manager and his wife and children. They had great "soul food." Then it was off to a local store for his beer, my ice cream and conversation with all the other area people. I did the driving without a license after I was about 12 years old. In the 1930s drought, 55-gallon drums on horse-drawn wagons were used to water the boxwoods at the entrance circle to the house. Those days seem like only a few years ago. They still remain as one of my most vivid remembrances.

Other memories are of killing a groundhog with a baseball bat by the now non-existent ice house with the help of one of the dogs one Sunday afternoon. Also recalled was riding a bull bareback in the barnyard. Or catching a turtle in the creek at the bottom of the entrance road down near the old swimming hole. Mother was so scared that the turtle would bite me and not let go until it thundered. I was carrying it with my arm almost over my head. I was cruel to the work horses by riding them bare-back and making them run through the woods after rains on the wet, slick, Bedford County red clay. They slid and fell sometimes. Neither of us was ever hurt! After working the manure spreader one morning, I was not allowed by my mother to eat lunch with the family.

You may ask if Jefferson haunted the house? "When a door would slam without reason, we'd always say, 'Come in, Mr. Jefferson,'" said Mrs. Giles, Mr. Watts' sister. Visit Poplar Forest and see if you can hear Mr. Jefferson.

Segregated Souls in the Star City

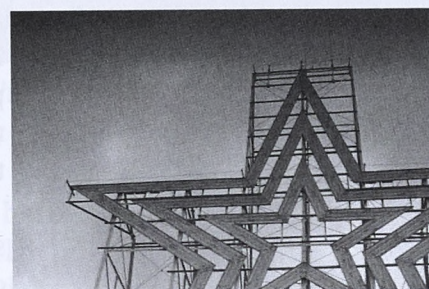
Noel C. Taylor, black churches and the civil rights movement in Roanoke

by John Wiley

In November of 1949, residents of Roanoke peered towards the night's sky, at the top of Mill Mountain, and witnessed a remarkable sight. The Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Roanoke Merchants Association had joined forces to purchase and erect the world's largest man-made star, illuminated with neon lights.⁽¹⁾ Gone forever was the nickname of "Magic City," which had been given to Roanoke in light of its remarkably fast-paced growth in the first few decades of its existence. In its place, Roanoke would become known as the "Star City of the South." This giant star might be widely interpreted for its symbolical significance, but as Arleen Ollie has said, it "would represent a model place to be."⁽²⁾

However, as Roanoke's white and black residents gazed at the glow of the illuminated star on that fall evening, they did so apart from one another in segregated regions of the city.

During this time period, the Civil Rights Movement was in its infancy stage, and it is very unlikely that Roanoke's residents would have expected the significant changes that were about to occur within the city. In 1949, African Americans were legally required to sit in the back of public transportation vehicles and were altogether prohibited from many public venues, though in less than a few decades, a black mayor would be leading Roanoke. One of the most prolific leaders in all of Roanoke's history was that black mayor, Noel C. Taylor, who was a pastor first and a politician second, though he was well respected for both roles. Indeed, black churches provided the platform and the necessary networks for the Civil Rights Movement to find success in Roanoke. Although the city's African American citizens did not accomplish every goal, both Taylor and the black churches of Roanoke provided the main thrust for achieving definitive results on behalf of the Civil Rights Movement in the Star City.



Historiographical Context

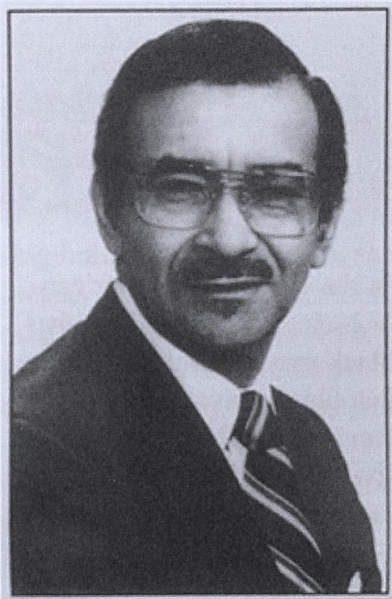
Compared to other cities, Roanoke is not tremendously old, having been founded in the 1880s.⁽³⁾ Many works of local history have likewise tended to focus on years prior to World War II, and thus have preceded the Civil Rights Movement. Some authors, however, have written about Roanoke's history since the 1940s, and occasionally alluded to the city's black citizens. Still, others have made excellent contributions in compiling historical works on Roanoke's African American population, such as Reginald Shareef's "The Roanoke Valley's African American Heritage" and Arleen Ollie's "African American History in Roanoke City."⁽⁴⁾ Still, both Shareef and Ollie, as well as most other related

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works, provide very basic historical information on the history of black churches, such as the names of their pastors, details on their buildings, and a few other historical points of interest. In general, not much attention has specifically been given to the Civil Rights Movement in Roanoke, nor have scholars made great attempts to view the phenomenon from the perspective of black churches in particular. Furthermore, historians have not sufficiently focused their attention on one of the most important people in Roanoke's history, Noel C. Taylor, the first black mayor of Roanoke City, a prominent Baptist minister for decades, and a powerful figure in Roanoke's own Civil Rights Movement. By looking to Roanoke's black churches, and to Noel C. Taylor in particular, one can arrive at the heart, the very soul, of the Civil Rights Movement in the Star City.

Background of Noel C. Taylor

Noel C. Taylor was born at the home of his parents on July 15, 1924, in a Bedford County community called Olive Branch, located near Moneta.⁽⁵⁾ Taylor was often called "Calvin" in his younger years, which was simply his middle name, though in a biblical analogy, he explained, "I feel a bit like



Rev. Noel C. Taylor, mayor of Roanoke 1975-1992, and pastor of High Street Baptist Church, Roanoke, 1961-1999. (Photo courtesy of Sabrina Taylor Law, his daughter)

David, the shepherd boy. He made his way from the sheepfold to the palace. He was able to leave in order to lead the nation. There was nothing wrong with my being the barefoot boy from Bedford, my heritage, but you have to make your way toward a destination."⁽⁶⁾

Despite growing up in the Jim Crow South, where churches and schools were segregated, Taylor recollected from his childhood, "most of growing up centered around church activities or farm work. Then there was family pride and status in a community in which everybody, black and white, really needed one another for survival and to accomplish the tasks of daily living."⁽⁷⁾ He also mentioned that he never encountered any racial hostility until he moved into an urban setting.⁽⁸⁾ According to Taylor, his parents and his childhood church impacted his life more than anything else, and even by the end of his life, Taylor never "met anybody who had better religion than [his] mother."⁽⁹⁾

Though a small congregation, the Olive Branch Church, under the long-winded but talented preacher, Rev. J.D. Walker, was composed of a lively and persistent group of churchgoers. "They prayed over a person until he got religion," Taylor said.⁽¹⁰⁾ Taylor's spiritual upbringing played a major role in his life, even though he did not plan to pursue Christian ministry as a vocation. The seemingly tranquil community also shielded him from truths he would later realize that had major consequences on how African Americans were treated in the country he dearly loved.

Taylor served for over two years in the Army during World War II with an all black unit, though all white commanding officers, which is when he came to the realization that segregation was a planned system, and not merely "just the way things were."⁽¹¹⁾ Upon returning back to Virginia, Taylor earned his bachelor's degree in commerce from Bluefield State College, though he went on to become a teacher, and then a principal.⁽¹²⁾ During his tenure as principal, Taylor was invited by a Bedford pastor to speak at the church's "youth day." After hearing Taylor speak, Rev. S.S. Dutton proclaimed, "This man is going to preach."⁽¹³⁾ When he was battling an unrelenting physical ailment, Taylor prayed, "Lord, if you will just take this discomfort from me, I will preach. All of a sudden," Taylor assured, "the pain just left."⁽¹⁴⁾ Taylor, therefore, quickly prepared himself for a change in

careers. After serving for a year as a circuit preacher in rural congregations, he accepted a full-time position at First Baptist Church in Clifton Forge.(15) His next ministry, lasting from 1958 to 1961, was in Norfolk, a city in chaos, and right in the middle of the Civil Rights Movement.(16) Not long after Taylor arrived in Norfolk, Massive Resistance leaders helped to approve local efforts that closed local public schools, so as to defy the desegregation ruling from *Brown v. Board of Education*.(17) While civil rights activists attempted to fight back and get the schools to reopen, it was there in Norfolk that Taylor made his first substantial attempt to get involved with the Civil Rights Movement. He worked with other local ministers who attempted to desegregate area restaurants, and even participated in a sit-in.(18)



Olive Branch Baptist Church, where Rev. Taylor worshiped as he grew up.

With tensions still high in Norfolk, yet positive signs appearing on the horizon, Taylor had been given the persuasive opportunity to move to Roanoke, and serve as pastor of High Street Baptist Church, an offer that he accepted.(19) Taylor's childhood and young adulthood had prepared him, sometimes unknowingly, to face new obstacles as a minister and a proponent for black civil rights in a new city.

The Civil Rights Movement in Roanoke Before Taylor's Arrival

Although Taylor greatly impacted the Civil Rights Movement not long after his arrival in Roanoke, it would be incorrect to assume that he was the first person to attempt to provoke positive change for African American communities in the Star City. While World War II was still being fought, Roanoke's residents, specifically its pastors, had convened for the Roanoke Ministers Conference and called for action to be made that would benefit race relations. One motion was accepted to permit black Sunday schools teachers to attend their conferences and meetings of the National Christian Mission.(20) An article from *The Roanoke Times* further stated:

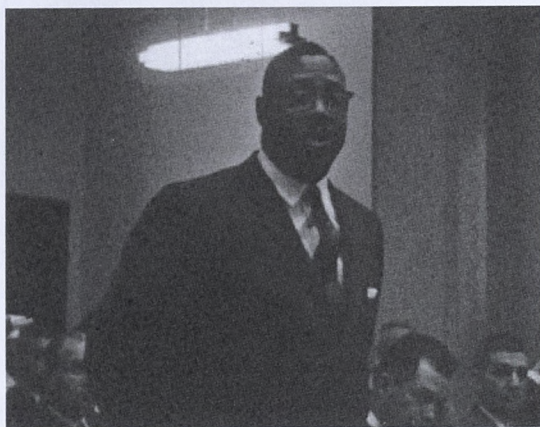
Following the formal business session, representatives from the Northwest section spoke briefly on present conditions in that section following the disturbance between members of the white and colored races. Representatives of the Interracial committee of the YWCA, the ministers and other interested citizens discussed the need for a better understanding between different race groups and some of the causes. With such suggestions as requests of the ministers in the affected sections to devote sermon subjects to better racial understanding, the placing of race relations study on the programs of young peoples' groups in the various denominations in the city, and personal opportunities to help the situation, the group agreed that although such objectives would help, more concrete action was needed at this time. Following further discussion, a motion was made and passed unanimously that the president and the Rev. Harris M. Findlay be directed to present to council at the earliest possible date a request that a commission be appointed to investigate the "housing facilities of Roanoke city with special attention being given to race tension being created by present methods of housing."(21)

It would be a long time until considerable results could be seen in race relations, but the fact that Roanoke's ministers desired to lead the way in the 1940s towards racial harmony provides evidence that religious leaders had the potential to shape the city's culture.

Close to a decade before Rosa Parks helped ignite change in Montgomery, Alabama, by refusing to move from her seat on a city bus by the demand of the driver, a woman named Margie Jumper committed a similar act by not moving from her seat in a Roanoke streetcar when pressed to do so. She later said, "I felt like I had the right to sit anywhere anyone else did."⁽²²⁾ Jumper pleaded guilty to her charge of violating a city ordinance, was handed a small fine, but most telling of all is that this incident was soon forgotten.⁽²³⁾ Some may wonder why the actions of Rosa Parks yielded immediate action, while Jumper's deeds seemed to provoke virtually no change. However, as Danielle L. McGuire once noted about Rosa Parks, "For more than a decade her work with the NAACP, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and other groups placed her at the center of Montgomery's black freedom struggle. Her decision to keep her seat on December 1, 1955, was less a mystery than a moment."⁽²⁴⁾ Jumper, on the other hand, did not share the same context as Parks, having made her public statement before *Brown v. Board of Education* rather than after, nor did Jumper have the same experience and network of associates that were heavily involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Nevertheless, Jumper can rightly be given the title of "Roanoke's Rosa Parks" for her courage to stand up to racial inequality.

Desegregating Roanoke

At the time the ruling for *Brown v. Board of Education* was made, Roanoke's public places, including schools and churches, were thoroughly segregated, and had been for decades. Roanoke's response to *Brown* was not as extreme as other cities in Virginia, such as Norfolk, but it was nonetheless very gradu-



Rev. R.R. Wilkinson

al. Steven F. Lawson explained in "Running for Freedom," "Virginia passed anti-barratry legislation aimed at hindering the NAACP from initiating or sponsoring lawsuits against segregation."⁽²⁵⁾ These laws, part of the "Stanley Plan," added an extra layer of protection for those fighting for Massive Resistance. Nevertheless, Roanoke's black residents fought back, including many black church leaders. A Roanoke Times article in 1960 included the complaints of several parents, who argued that Roanoke possessed "the responsibility to reorganize the school system so that children of school age attending and entitled to attend public schools would not be denied admission to any school or be assigned to a particular school solely because of race."⁽²⁶⁾ For these parents, it was not so much that black schools

were inherently worse, nor did they argue for integration simply for the sake of racial assimilation. Rather, parents believed they had the constitutional freedom to be able to send their children to a school of their choosing, and not be denied entrance because of the color of their skin.

One of the concerned parents, with two children that he desired to send to a local white school, was Rev. R.R. Wilkinson, who was both the pastor of Hill Street Baptist Church and president of the Roanoke chapter for the NAACP.⁽²⁷⁾ For Wilkinson, and other black pastors in Roanoke, ministry meant not just preaching to and caring for souls in one congregation, but also being involved in the social and political matters of the city. By 1963, in *NAACP v. Button*, the Supreme Court made the following ruling:

We reverse the judgment of the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. We hold that the activities of the NAACP, its affiliates and legal staff shown on this record are modes of expression and association protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments which Virginia may not prohibit, under its power to regulate the legal profession, as improper solicitation of legal business violative of Chapter 33 and the Canons of Professional Ethics.(28)

With this Supreme Court ruling, those in favor of desegregation gained a legal victory. Nevertheless, Roanoke's schools would very gradually be integrated and encounter numerous difficulties.

Rev. Taylor moved to Roanoke in 1961, right in the middle of the desegregation battle that was taking place in the Star City. Looking back on what unfolded in Roanoke, Taylor, the former elementary school teacher and principal, stated, "I believe we should have started as a pilot project in the first grade in Roanoke."(29) Far from being radical, Taylor often proposed solutions, first as a pastor, but later adding the roles of city councilman and then mayor, that would seek the unity of the people of Roanoke, rather than place one side fiercely against another. Perhaps it was his experiences from his family farm that provided practical reminders of how change rarely occurs overnight. Rather, the sowing and reaping principle took time and hard work, but certainly it could not be confused with sluggishness.

Rev. Edward Burton, vice president for the Roanoke chapter of the NAACP, said, "For something you know is going to happen and you can't stop, it's much better to negotiate a plan, and that plan took time."(30)

While other Roanoke leaders may not have agreed with the gradualist approach to school integration, as Taylor explained his philosophy, "I can lead by inspiring people to do great things. I've had members say I'm not mean enough. I'm too easy going but I always felt you could win if you could love. I can relate. I can give them a sense of pride and belonging."(31)

Yet, even with slow but steady integration in Roanoke's public schools, there were complexities. Speaking of her schooling before Brown, local resident Peggy Sue Mason remarked, "There was no such thing as integration then. And we did fine, and sometimes I think when they integrated the schools they messed them up. Because after they integrated them they left us out of a lot of things, a lot of things."(32)

However, as fellow Roanoker, Gardner William Smith, clarified, "at the time, people did want schools to be integrated." He also added:

In the separate schools it was not equal, and I think the movement helped focus on those types of unbalances, and other issues and pushed things along. There were some reverends here that were primary leaders in Roanoke and Salem. They combed [sic] me with their ideas on how to move things along. And I'll tell you they helped things, not anything culturally, but socially. And I think the movement helped bring those pieces together.(33)

So, whether one leaned towards the more immediate method for change, as manifested in Rev. Wilkinson of Hill Street Baptist Church, or towards the views of Rev. Taylor of High Street Baptist Church, it is clear that black churches were influential in the movement for integration. Consequently, several formerly all-black schools had to close down due to readjustment of school districts as well as fewer pupils, and by 1973, Roanoke's schools were fully desegregated.(34)

Schools, however, were not the only institutions that would be forever changed by desegregation. Clare White helpfully summarized, "Roanoke was never subjected to the racial violence that scarred

some parts of the nation, and the credit for the peaceful handling of a difficult situation goes to a committee of twelve prominent blacks and whites who worked quietly, and secretly, toward that end." She commented further, "In a display of mutual tolerance, six volunteers from the Negro community and six from the white worked together over a period of several years to implement the desegregation they knew was obligatory." (35)

However, a 1967 article from *The Roanoke Times* shared the thoughts of one worried resident, who said, "Something's going to happen here. Some of the kids are already talking rioting. Roanoke's getting hot." (36) Meanwhile, the biracial committee, along with countless Roanoke residents, including several black church leaders, had pressed forward to desegregate other public institutions. Taylor explained how many of these efforts were put into action:

Our protest was different than in other places. We used the media as our method. We would call a mass meeting, say an open housing, at one of the black churches. We'd have several different speakers making brief presentations to the people to explain what we were about, why we thought it should come to pass. We did the same thing regarding jobs and food service. We wanted to bring the attention of the community to what we thought were the existing evils: people being denied what we thought were their Constitutional rights. And the media covered these meetings. (37)

According to Taylor, "Use of mass meetings with speakers and mass media got the message to the citizens. It pricked the conscience of the community. We learned how to really listen to one another, to respect each other's point of view. Out of each other's perspective and wholesome dialogue we tried to determine what is the common good." (38) In this atmosphere of openness, black churches helped usher in change so that unawareness could be replaced by understanding.

Having connected much of Roanoke's black residents by mass media methods, using churches as meeting places and dispensers of information, the foundation had been set to implement steps towards desegregating the city's institutions. Taylor described the intricate planning that had been made for desegregating Roanoke's food services:

The commission was convinced of the need to desegregate the restaurants. They called restaurant owners all over town. A number of them said they did not care to discriminate but they didn't want to start serving blacks and lose their trade. If it were done as a community they would go along. So the commission contacted enough who consented to make it effective. One day at 12 noon we decided it was supposed to happen. We set a time. We showed up at the main places around town and we were served in the restaurants. It was a city-wide movement. (39)

This plan was mightily effective, but its success was largely due in part to the careful preparation of Roanoke's civil rights leaders. A news report from 1971, on the other hand, described some of the frustrations that Rev. Taylor experienced, regarding the arrest of four black young people, while serving as a city councilman: "Mr. Taylor said he found it strange that only black students were arrested even though the incidents were termed 'interracial' at the time. He said it destroys the credibility of blacks like himself who are trying to work within the system to better the conditions of their brothers, and that arrests of this sort can cause further polarization of blacks and whites." (40) Taylor, therefore, believed that working "within the system" would yield the most fruitful results, though Taylor's gradualist approach did not prohibit him making proper criticisms of the system either.

Whereas Roanoke's black churches helped guide the way in the Civil Rights Movement, its white churches seemed to generally play an accommodating role, though somewhat passive. Rev. Taylor had been elected president to the Roanoke Ministers' Conference in 1967, and a year later, Martin

Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Following this tragedy, Taylor called Pastor Charles Fuller of First Baptist Church in Roanoke, a white congregation, saying, "I hate to ask you this, but I have an idea to bring the blacks and whites together for worship and the largest building in the inner city is your church. I am calling to ask if I can use it." (41) Rev. Fuller was completely in favor of helping Rev. Taylor, and the request was granted. This feat of solidarity, however, did not settle well with some of First Baptist's church members. Though a church split did not take place, some threatened to leave while others complained to leadership. (42) Taylor later recalled a story about a white pastor who went beyond what most were willing to do in the Civil Rights Movement: "Jim Allison, [a] white Presbyterian pastor, was one who felt that he needed to be involved although he hadn't realized what a really big issue integration would be. He was deeply involved and he came to the mass meeting in Northwest Roanoke to see if something couldn't be done when a young black boy was murdered in Mississippi. He was the only white brother there." (43)

Indeed, from a Roanoke Times article in 1991, a journalist recorded, "Churches are one of the last bastions of segregation in the city, [Noel] Taylor said. But that is beginning to change as blacks and whites focus more on their religious commitment than on racial issues, he said. 'Churches are now working together more.'" (44) The Star City's churches were not only divided by race, as segregated souls, but also in the ways they participated in the Civil Rights Movement.

Roanoke's religious leaders were wise to take note of the importance of raising up young leaders in the Civil Rights Movement, which started with churches themselves, and in the homes of these young people. Rev. Edward T. Burton said in 1977, "Of the nine denominations represented by the black church in Roanoke, the Baptist church has the largest membership. This is due largely to young people following the religious preference of their parents." (45)

All denominations, Protestant and Catholic, however, knew that they needed to be involved in the Civil Rights Movement if they wanted to maintain a presence in their communities. The historian of St. Gerard's Catholic Church recorded:

[Cooperation] of blacks and whites in establishing St. Gerard's Mission, and in building the church on Orange Avenue, fostered a core of rapport that was needed in the trying times of the fifties and sixties. The disagreements and alienation that accompanied the drive for public housing and the peaceful solution of the problem paved the way for handling other problems. Establishing Our Lady of Perpetual Help as a joint venture of black and white, and non-segregated seating there, helped break down racial barriers. (46)

In order to retain the youth, some churches introduced change. As an article with the pastor of the historically black First Baptist Church, Rev. Kenneth Wright, detailed:

The youth have contributed to the church as well as drawn from it, Wright said. The



Rev. Taylor served at High Street Baptist Church for 38 years.

liturgy was once conservative, traditional, and 'it was discovered that this wasn't meeting the needs of individual spirituality.' But as at Loudon Avenue Christian, and St. Gerard's, things are changing, the youth have brought their contemporary music to the services and it has mingled with the traditional to yield what Wright calls 'a beautiful diversity.' (47)

These young people gradually became more integrated with their white neighbors and classmates, and became one of the generations that helped vote in Noel C. Taylor as mayor for four terms. Some of their communities, however, were forever changed by what was known as "urban renewal."

Bulldozing Communities

In 1954, the same year as the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, Roanoke's leaders began discussing plans for "slum clearance," otherwise known as the less derogatory phrase of "urban renewal." These debates revolved around plans for demolishing several homes, businesses, and churches in exchange for the building of an ambitious architectural project, the Roanoke Civic Center. Geographically, the sites that would be razed for "urban renewal," for the Roanoke Civic Center and other projects, were almost always in black neighborhoods. (48) Mary Bishop summarized the details: "They tore down 1,600 black-owned homes, some of the city's most historic schools, two dozen churches, and more than 200 small businesses owned by black, Greek, and Lebanese immigrants. On the seized land, totaling 395 acres, Roanoke built the Roanoke Civic Center, the main post office, white-owned industries, hotels, fast food restaurants, and businesses." (49) According to Reginald Shareef, "Gainsboro remained the center for black business activity in the Roanoke Valley until the urban renewal programs of the 1960s and 1970s." (50) The writers of the document "Black Community Observations Over the Past Forty (40) Years in the City of Roanoke" concurred:

Even as severe as the loss of jobs was by the closing of the Silk Mill (The American Viscose Plant) was to Blacks, without debate, the worst offender will be the "Urban Renewal" programs as they guided money and people out of the Black neighborhoods. These neighborhoods, consisting of working home owners were destroyed by the "Urban Renewal" program. In addition, there was a loss of private and successful Black businesses which were operated by "ma and pa." (51)

The same writers noted an even more dramatic loss to the cultural fabric of the black community of Roanoke: "Not to be overlooked is the indebtedness of Black churches which were forced to rebuild — this has resulted in a community which is church poor. As homes and churches were eliminated in the Black neighborhoods, their schools were removed and closed which drained Blacks of role models." (52) If there was one thing most damaging to the progress and later results of the Civil Rights Movement in Roanoke, it was the urban renewal projects.

Conclusion

Historians of the Civil Rights Movement have tended to overlook the example set in Roanoke. Perhaps this has been due to its relatively small size, in area and population, but the fact that Roanoke was considerably calmer, having avoided riots and other escalations, may have also contributed. Yet, these calm responses should not be confused with idle behavior. Roanoke's black churches not only connected people with one another for mobilization, but they also provided a source of strength and hope.

Although Noel C. Taylor was employed by both his church and his city, one of his remarks he made in *The Roanoke Times* offers an important perspective. He said that his church believed his politi-

cal work "was part of High Street's ministry to the whole city." (53) In a similar way, it would seem that the black churches of Roanoke understood the Civil Rights Movement as a ministry to the whole city as well. Taylor, throughout his busy life in Roanoke, was an optimist and reconciler. Despite the numerous challenges that resulted from desegregating schools and the upheaval of black communities due to urban renewal projects, progress was made in many areas. Wages have slowly increased, as have workplace opportunities. (54) Places that originally barred the entrance of blacks have now welcomed them. One of the highest achievements for African Americans, which seems to have at least partially resulted from the Civil Rights Movement in Roanoke, was in the election of Rev. Taylor to the offices of city councilman and mayor. The way that Taylor perceived his role as mayor provides a helpful understanding regarding his acceptability and personal character:

The day I got here I knew who I was and I knew what my job was supposed to be. I knew I was here to be Mayor to all of Roanoke. It mattered not: North, East, South or West. It has never bothered me and I feel comfortable and I feel happy whoever they are and whatever my task is as Mayor for the City of Roanoke. I'm glad that the Lord has fixed it. Nobody can change that. There's not enough black power to make me not serve where I'm needed in the majority community and there's not enough power in the majority community to make me not do what I ought to do for the minority and it's all because of the man who has all the power standing above it all and directing. (55)

Overall, the story of the Civil Rights Movement in Roanoke is inextricably linked to the work of leaders and laypeople from the city's black churches. Their courage and sacrifices forever changed Roanoke. As residents today look up to Mill Mountain and observe the illuminated star, they can consider that while Roanoke is still far from perfect, it has been nudged a little closer to becoming an ideal city as the result of those involved in the Civil Rights Movement in the Star City.

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The Photographs of George Newton Wertz, 1852-1926

by Richard Morgan

One of the earliest and most prolific photographers in Washington County was George Newton Wertz, who has been little recognized despite the many pictures that have survived, bearing his name. His prominence first came to the attention of Jane Oakes of the Historical Society, who has spent many years digitizing and preserving images of Washington County and Southwest Virginia. This article provides an introduction to the man and his works while the Society plans an exhibition of his photographs where many more can be put on public display. A sampling of his work is presented here.


When Wertz was born, photography was still in its early stages. It had been invented in France by Louis-Jaques-Mand Daguerre, who gave his first exhibit in 1839. The new art came to the United States not long afterwards and an advertisement for a daguerrotypist appeared in *The Democrat* as early as 1852 though that might not have been the first. Wertz was born in Cave Spring, Roanoke County, on May of that same year, the son of Noah Frantz Wertz and Catherine Persinger Wertz.

At that time, photographs had to be taken in well-lighted studios, with skylights, where the posers had to remain still for several minutes because the process required very long exposures. Sometimes the subjects of photographs were locked in a brace so they would not move. In 1853, what were known as tintype photos appeared, although they were actually made of iron. During the



G. N. Wertz September 1871

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American Civil War, many outdoor photographs were taken although they still required long exposures. In later years, the process improved to the point that shorter times were required to capture an image.

In 1870, when he was 18 years old, Wertz attended classes at a photographic studio in Roanoke. Shortly thereafter, he became a traveling photographer using a studio in a railroad boxcar known as a Skylight Car. The railroad would put the boxcar on a siding in towns and people went to the studio for the novelty of having pictures made of themselves and their family members. Advertisements show him to have been in Pearisburg in 1872 and in Christiansburg during 1874-1875. By 1875 he had arrived in Abingdon where he opened a permanent studio. There he remained active for more than 50 years.

In 1879, Wertz married Lillie Burch, the daughter of the manager of the Colonnade Hotel where he had been living. They had a daughter, Kate May, in 1880. Unfortunately, Lillie died in 1882 and was buried in a family plot in Sinking Spring Cemetery.

The quantity of surviving works by Wertz demonstrates his popularity among the residents of Abingdon and surrounding communities, while the quality can be easily seen by a viewer today. The earliest surviving images show mostly adult family members, but his business seems to have rapidly expanded when he started capturing images of children.

He also took pictures of businesses, churches and the community. When biplanes came to town after World War I, he used the opportunity to take his camera to the sky and record views of Abingdon from the air. Wertz also took several pictures of Abingdon from Fruit Hill and assembled them as a panorama of the town in 1915.

Wertz married again in 1887 to Garnett Fuller of Abingdon and the 1890 census indicated they lived on Valley Street where the family may have lived for some time. The couple had a daughter, Georgia G. Wertz, who was born in 1889.

Among many other subjects, Wertz photographed his daughters at his studio on Main Street, next to the Episcopal Church. His daughter, Georgia, unfortunately died in 1910 of child birth at the age of 21. Her daughter, Christy, then became a favorite of his.



In June 1924, Wertz suffered a massive stroke and never took another picture. Six months later, on December 27, fire destroyed his studio and all his photographic plates and negatives were lost. The fire spread to the adjoining St. Thomas Episcopal Church which burned to the ground and all its early records were lost. The photographer died on April 24, 1926.

Although Wertz's first wife, Lillie Burch, is buried with an elaborate headstone in a large family plot in Sinking Spring Cemetery, his grave and that of his second wife, who died

in 1929, are unmarked although their obituaries and death certificates indicate they too were interred in Sinking Spring Cemetery. In addition, there is no evidence where their daughter, Georgia, is buried.

Wertz took hundreds if not thousands of photographs over a long period of time. Of these, over a hundred have been identified and preserved in digital format by the Historical Society of Washington County. Many more may be in private collections. They can be easily identified because he stamped each with his logo: G.N. Wertz Photographic Studio Abingdon. The Historical Society would appreciate people searching for additional photographs and bringing them to the Society so that they may be copied and preserved for future generations.

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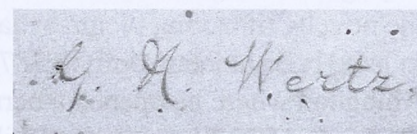
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"The Women of Summer" is largely a work of fiction, but the author states the information about Wertz's daughter, Georgia, is fact.



Exchange Bank In New Building

Handsomest and Most Modern Structure of Its Kind in the South

Monday will mark a new era in the history of the National Exchange Bank, which then will occupy its magnificent new home on the southwest corner of Jefferson Street and Campbell Avenue. The building is one of which all Roanoke is justly proud and is an everlasting monument to the strength of the institution and the business ability and foresight of its management. It is by far the handsomest, most modern and best equipped banking house in the South. Constant comment is made of the building and frequently it is styled a perfect example of architecture.

The officers and directors did not rush matters when they were formulating plans for their new home. After a thorough investigation the directors voted unanimously to erect a building exclusively for the conduct of the bank's business. In so doing they secured what is conceded the most valuable building site in the hub of Roanoke's business center. The directors voted against the erection of an office building since they were of the opinion that the time necessarily devoted to tenants could be utilized to a better advantage in meeting the demands of the bank's customers.

Complete, the building has forty or more rooms used exclusively by the bank and not a single office will be rented.

The property on which the bank stands covers an area of 50 by 160 feet and this together with the completed building represents an outlay of about \$200,000. The directors first purchased the lot and then took up the matter of the erection of a new home. A consulting architect was con-

sulted to prepare preliminary plans and these were submitted to the board. Later, plans were submitted on a competitive basis and architects from New York, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Norfolk and Roanoke competed. The successful competitors were Messrs. Wyatt and Nolting of Baltimore. Wyatt and Nolting are architects of national reputation. They have made the plans and supervised the construction of some of the largest buildings in the North. The same firm designed the magnificent five-million-dollar court house in Baltimore. When the plans were completed, the contract for construction was awarded to Thompson, Starrett & Co. of Pittsburgh, Pa., one of the leading construction firms in the country. This firm is building the Woolworth Building in New York and many others. Ground was broken for the foundation of the new building May 1st, 1912.

THE BUILDING

The building has frontage of fifty feet on Jefferson Street and runs back on Campbell Avenue one hundred feet. The structure is fire proof, wood work having been eliminated. It is an amazing structure and is made more impressive by its simplicity. It is of the ionic style of architecture, built of Georgia white marble, with a base of Mount Airy granite. The effect is exquisitely carried out with six solid marble ionic columns, forty feet in height on the Campbell Avenue side and four on the front. On the north side are five large windows and these are covered with iron grilles but not of sufficient density to interfere with the lighting. There are two entrances, one on Jefferson Street,

Editor's note: This account of the opening of National Exchange Bank is printed verbatim from The Roanoke Times of March 3, 1913.



The former First National Exchange Bank building has been offered for sale by its owner, Wells Fargo Bank. The building is vacant.

main entrance, and one from Campbell Avenue side. The building stands over fifty feet high, the banking room having the same pitch.

THE BANKING ROOM

On entering from Jefferson Steet, one is struck with the simple elegance of the commodious banking room. The president's office is on the right and adjoining this is an ante-room. The president's rooms are finished in Italian mahogany, its furnishing being of the same wood. The office is equipped with a private vault.

On the left of the main entrance is the office of the vice president, finished in the same style as that of the president. On this side of the building is a ladies waiting room, comfortably arranged, and opposite this is the "ladies window." Every convenience is provided for the comfort of woman patrons. The "ladies window" is exclusively for their use in transacting business with the bank.

In the banking room proper are fourteen tellers' windows, each teller being provided with a separate compartment as well as a savings department windows and others. On the right side of the room, near the entrance, are the offices of the cashier and the assistant cashier. The partitions separating the main lobby from the tellers' compartments are of Italian statuary and Pavonanze marble and the

windows are of bronze grille work. To the center of the lobby stand two magnificent check desks, made of French Caen stone. Besides the light obtained from the large windows on the north side of the building, additional light is given from a huge art glass light in the center of the ceiling. The walls are devoid of decorative color, being of Caen stone, in keeping with the architecture and finish. Just inside the main entrance are two solid Italian marble columns supporting a mezzanine floor. The floor of the banking room is in gray and green French marble. The electric lighting is done by the indirect system in the main banking room, eight large chandeliers of Oriental glass and opal glass being suspended from the ceiling. The gate in the rear of the banking room, which opens into the employees' departments, is operated by an electric lock. Just behind this is located the principal vault. This gigantic strong box is held by a quadruple time lock in addition to two of the latest improved combination locks. The vault is equipped with a score of lock and safety deposit boxes and is one of the nine different vaults in the building, the door weighing over twenty-three thousand pounds.

LAMSON'S PNEUMATIC TUBE SYSTEM

Of the many devices found in the modern equipment of the building, one which will be of inestimable value to the bank is Lamson's pneumatic tube system, which has been installed throughout the entire building. The system is similar to that used in large department stores and will enable employees of the bank to send papers, change, etc., from one part of the building to another within a few seconds, thereby saving much time and delay.

A private branch telephone exchange with the intercommunicating also has been installed, there being more than thirty telephones in the building, in addition to speaking tubes, press buttons, burglar alarms, etc.

THE DIRECTORS ROOM

What is considered as distinctly the handsomest feature of the building is the directors' room, which occupies the mezzanine floor over the main entrance. The room is spacious and has an unusual pitch. It is finished in English oak panels which run half-way to the ceiling, the remainder of the walls being of French Caen stone. Standing in the center of the room is a massive directors' table of silver grey English oak with chairs to match and twenty directors can be comfortably seated at this table. Suspended over the table is a handsome chandelier finished in Verde antique bronze.

The room is accessible by electric elevator on one side and stair case on the other. On the other side of the room and adjoining it are consultation rooms, while on the other side a bed room, shower bath and lavatory for the use of directors is furnished. Adjoining this is an office which has been arranged for use by any of the vice presidents.

DINING ROOM FOR EMPLOYEES

In the rear of the building are three mezzanine floors. The first contains another vault for the storage of money, books, etc., a stationery room and a library for the use of employees.

On the second mezzanine floor is found a bed room with private bath for the use of employees and on the same floor one of the greatest innovations to be found in a Southern bank are the dining rooms for employees and officers, where they will be served dinner free of cost. The dining rooms are finished in oak and attractively furnished.

The kitchen, butler's pantry, refrigerator, store room, servants' and janitors' quarters are located on the floor above.

With one or two exceptions, the National Exchange Bank is the first financial institution in the South to inaugurate free dining service for its employees.

IN THE BASEMENT

In the basement may be found many interesting features. Five vaults are here located, containing deposit compartments for the storage of family valuables, being designated particularly for keeping articles of great value for persons absent from home. Individual lockers have been installed here for the use of employees, as well as shower baths, lavatories, etc. In this connection it might be mentioned that shower baths at various points in the building are provided for use by officers, employees and servants.

The basement is exceptionally dry and in the center is a room forty feet square, which at this time is not utilized but is reserved for future use. All machinery incident to the operation of the pneumatic tube system is located in the basement. Here too is seen a wonderful bit of machinery, a plant which furnished the building with pure air. The air is pumped into the plant and filtered through cloths and thus purified before being sent into the banking room. This is in addition to a regular system of ventilation. The building is equipped with a vacuum cleaning plant, also in the basement. Throughout the building are sanitary drinking fountains. The water is chilled but does not come in contact with ice.

Another modern mechanical device is an automatic pump designed to carry off water or sewerage, should the necessity arise. Under the compolite floor is a layer of tile and should water rise it would be carried directly to the pump which automatically will be put into operation. The building is heated by twin boilers and in addition to those is a hot water heater which supplies water for the baths and kitchen.

A small gymnasium for the employees of the bank is being installed in the basement. This is the first bank in the South to put in arrangements for physical recreation for its employees. While the gymnasium will not be large, it will be equipped with all the necessary appliances.

BUILDING FIREPROOF

The building is absolutely fireproof. But two desks in the entire building are of wood. The flooring used is of four styles: marble, compolite, cork and terrazo. Although fireproof, the building is equipped with stand pipes and two-inch hose to be used in the case of incipient fire. Three elevators, an electric, one operated by water and a hand elevator are installed.

The building, which is complete in every detail, not only is an ornament to the city but will be pointed out with pride by Roanokers to visitors as a distinct example of the progressiveness of Roanoke's leading businessmen.

BANK'S EARLY HISTORY

The National Exchange Bank is twenty-four years old next May, having been organized May 7, 1889. In those twenty-four years it has grown from a small bank to one of the most important in the State. T.T. Fishburne, now chairman of the board, was the first president and J.B. Fishburn, now president, was vice president and cashier. They are the two original officers of the bank. When the bank was organized it had a capitalization of \$100,000. Today, the capital, surplus and profits amount to more than \$750,000. On November 9, 1910, the day the site for the new building was purchased, the deposits amounted to \$2,200,000. Yesterday when the bank began to move into its new quarters, the deposits amounted to over \$3,000,000, an increase of nearly a million dollars in a little over two years. This is a record of which few banks in this section can boast. The total assets of the bank are over four million dollars.

In twenty-four years of its existence, the National Exchange Bank has had three homes and the new building makes four.

When the bank was started in 1889 it occupied a store room on Salem Avenue, in the rear of the lot on which the First National Bank now stands. In July 1890, the bank was moved to more commodious quarters in the Bear building on the southeast corner of Salem Avenue and Jefferson Street.

The business of the bank made rapid strides between that time and 1899 when there was a re-

moval to the Terry building. Being cramped for room, the bank took in additional office space two years ago, occupying the office across the hall in the Terry building vacated by the First National Bank.

The National Exchange Bank made rapid strides from the beginning. In 1905 it took over the business of the Century Banking and Safe Deposit Company and a year later it absorbed the Peoples National Bank.

OFFICERS OF THE BANK

The officers of the bank are; T.T. Fishburne, chairman of the board; J.B. Fishburn, president; Lucian H. Cocke and Edward L. Stone, vice presidents; E.B. Spencer, cashier; T.L. Engleby and A.H. Dudley, assistant cashiers; and C.W. Beerbower, auditor.

Directors: J.B. Andrews, W.K. Andrews, James C. Cassell, L.H. Cocke, J.B. Fishburn, T.T. Fishburne, F.E. Foster, T.W. Goodwin, L.E. Johnson, Joseph Keys, A.E. King, W.H. Lewis, I.J. Meals, John H. Newton, S.B. Pace, E.B. Spencer, W.C. Stephenson, Edward L. Stone, F.B. Thomas, J.L. Vaughan, J.R. Weaver, E. Wile and James P. Woods.

READY FOR BUSINESS MONDAY

Saturday afternoon, a large force of men were engaged in moving the books, papers, etc. from the Terry building into the new bank across the street, and Monday morning at 9 o'clock the bank will be ready to handle all business in the new quarters.

Last Thursday the building was formally thrown open to the public for inspection. However, the public is invited to look over the building at any time.

The Terry building, which was vacated and owned by the bank, was sold recently to a syndicate of Roanoke businessmen for \$350,000. This has been carried on the books of the bank at \$100,000.



Editor's note: The former Terry building, Roanoke's first "skyscraper," stood at the present site of Hometown Bank, across Jefferson Street from the National Exchange Bank building which this 1913 newspaper article describes.

The directors voted against the erection of an office building since they were of the opinion that the time necessarily devoted to tenants could be utilized to a better advantage in meeting the demands of the bank's customers.

The Virginian Station and the Restoration

by James Cosby and Skip Salmon

The Virginian Station was built in Roanoke in 1909 and opened in 1910 as the crown jewel of stations on the Virginian Railway which stretched from Deepwater, West Virginia, near Charleston, to Norfolk, Virginia. Financed and built by Henry Huttleston Rogers, it competed with the Norfolk and Western, Chesapeake and Ohio and other railroads for the coal traffic fueling the American and foreign economies at the height of the Industrial Revolution. Built in the 20th century, the Virginian had a more favorable grade than its 19th century competitors.



The Virginian Station in 1910.

After the heyday of train travel in the 1920s, by the 1940s the Roanoke station served four passenger trains daily, two east- and two west-bound. Railroad passenger traffic nationwide declined after World War II as the travelling public turned to airlines and automobiles. Passenger service through Roanoke on the Virginian ended in 1956.

The Virginian was merged into the Norfolk and Western in 1959. The passenger station was ultimately leased to feed and seed store tenants. It tragically burned on January 29, 2001, and was substantially destroyed.

By early March, Ken Miller, president of the Roanoke chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, and Alison Blanton, president of the Roanoke Valley

Preservation Foundation, led their organizations to form an informal partnership to restore the Virginian Station, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Under sponsorship of the City of Roanoke, appropriations and grants were obtained through the office of Congressman Bob Goodlatte, Virginia Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency which, with more than 20% matching funds, enabled the restoration to proceed.

Phase I restoration was begun and completed in 2012. That involved removal of the substantial asbestos and lead contamination, stabilization of the building and replacement of the tile roof destroyed by the fire. The replacement tile came from the Ludowici Company in Ohio, who had provided the original in 1910. It is in the same style and a similar color as the original.

Phase II was completed in 2016. It comprised completion of the interior including wiring and HVAC, parking, landscap-



Twelve days after the fire. (Photo by James Cosby)

Cosby and Salmon are leaders of the Roanoke chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the station restoration committee.



The Virginian Station after completion of restoration.

ing and the Virginian monuments. Chapter historian Ken Miller and architect Barry Rakes determined the original paint scheme from historical documents and paint chips from the window frames and sills. Miller even had the paint formula from a century ago. All window frames and some doors were removed before the restoration, stored in a trailer on premises, re-finished and reinstalled. Even the mop sink in the women's room and the urinal in the men's room are "historic originals" over 100 years old. The terrazzo floor was damaged in the fire but was restored to a modern-day beauty.

The chapter's mechanical department restored and installed the operating signal light outside. Chapter members also recovered the large "Virginian" tablet monument when the Virginian's Narrows power plant was demolished some 45 years ago.

Many people have contributed to this beautiful restoration of a railroad station. As a superb grant writer, Alison Blanton raised more money than all others combined. The architects were Barry Rakes, Spectrum Design and Hill Studio; the general contractor was G & H Contracting; counsel, Gentry Locke; and accountant, Budd and Company. Construction banks were Valley Bank and Carter Bank and Trust.

The smaller baggage and express building will be used by the chapter as its principal office with a display area for artifacts and exhibits from and about the Virginian Railway and its employees. The larger passenger station building will be leased to a tenant yet to be determined.

Editor's Note: The station welcomed the public to a re-opening ceremony in November 2016.



City Hall is 101!

Courtesy of the City of Roanoke

The City of Roanoke was founded in 1882 and the first Municipal Building, a three-story Victorian structure, was opened in 1887. By the early 1900s, the city government required more space so in 1907, a site for a new building was selected and purchased. That site is the location for the present building.

Plans were drawn in 1913 and on October 27, 1914, ground was broken for a new building. The building was designed by the Roanoke architectural firm of Frye and Chesterman and it was constructed by King Lumber Co. of Charlottesville. Work was completed and the building was opened in late March 1916.

Since no ceremony had been held to lay the cornerstone, the city decided to hold a large festive celebration to dedicate the facility. Although city aldermen in March had authorized expenditure of \$150 to cover the cost of a celebration, the official opening was on July 4, 1916. So the building was formally dedicated on July 4, with a parade that included 5,000 marchers and a crowd estimated at 50,000 spectators lining the streets to the city auditorium where speeches and singing were heard. James A. Bear,

Some of this information was gleaned from a Historic American Building Survey.

chairman of the Public Property Committee which oversaw the construction, presented the building's key to Mayor Charles N. Broun. Confederate soldiers were the first honored guests to tour the facility and thousands followed throughout the day.

Roanoke's "courthouse" building, as it was called, is a neoclassical revival structure, typical of federal and local government construction found in the early part of the 20th century. With three-story, Ionic and Corinthian columns and pilasters and terra cotta cornices, this building achieved the effect of grandeur and majesty desired by the city. A newspaper critic called it "modern and pretentious ... a striking example of its stability, progressiveness and prosperity." Total construction cost of the original facility was \$218,900.

The original building was planned in the following manner: The first floor housed the Police Department, along with the Police Court, dormitory and detention area and the trial and issuing-justice area. The second (or main) floor contained the mayor's office, city clerk, Health Department, solicitor, engineer, treasurer and collector, and commissioner of revenue. The third floor housed the council chamber, commonwealth's attorney, corporation courtroom, law and chancery court, grand jury room and clerk of courts. The jail was located on the two upper floors of the building, providing 34 rooms for male inmates, six cells for females. 34 additional cells for male inmates on the fifth floor and a kitchen on the fourth floor. Four years after the jail opened, four inmates escaped by sawing through the bars. The jail equipment supplier had not provided case and steel as specified.

For 100 years, the Municipal Building has been a center of municipal business and civic activities. In 1970, construction of the adjacent Municipal Building "annex" was completed and that structure was opened. At that time, most municipal services, excluding judiciary-related offices, were moved. In 1982, construction work began to completely renovate all five floors of the original building to primarily accommodate the needs of the city's Social Services program. Prior to that renovation, space for the program was housed in various properties, leased throughout the downtown area. It was with this project that the former main entrance from Campbell Avenue was closed in order to provide administrative office space. The cost of that renovation project was approximately \$2.3 million.

In 2009, the former "Sears Town" shopping center located on Williamson Road was renovated and expanded to accommodate the growing needs of the Social Services Department and a short time later, the City Health Department. The space freed up in what was now referred to as the Municipal North Building was then renovated to better accommodate the administrative needs of Juvenile Court services, the registrar's office, purchasing, human resources, Parks and Recreation and other sundry departments and offices.

The recent effort in 2016 to reopen the former main entrance from Campbell Avenue has entailed the remodeling of the original city council chambers on the third floor. That space will now be used for employee training and larger meetings. It also required the relocation of a small group within payroll and the relocation of Human Resources and the "lead-safe" program staff.

One of the factors that led to the city's pursuing this initiative was the condition of the ornamental plaster found on the walls and ceiling of the original lobby. Those surfaces were found to be in incredibly good condition, given that walls had been furred out with new gypsum wall board, new walls constructed and lay-in ceilings installed with the previous renovation efforts. City staff were able to make repairs to major portions of the crown mold and to a lesser degree the decorative portions found in the ceiling coffers. New tile flooring was laid over the existing floor, the walls were repainted, the aluminum doors and glazed window units added in the 1980s were removed and replaced with new wood doors resembling those found in the original building, and new LED lighting installed.

The reopening of the grand entrance on Campbell Avenue was celebrated with a ceremony that heralded the building's 100th anniversary.



The Seven Hills of Rockbridge

by George Kegley

Seven fine brick homes were built in the early 1800s by three inter-related families — Grigsby, Greenlee and Welch — on estates in the Buffalo Creek/Natural Bridge area of southern Rockbridge County. They are Fancy Hill, Hickory Hill, Liberty Hill, Herring Hall (formerly known as Clover Hill), Marlbrook (formerly known as Cherry Hill), Rose Hill and Fruit Hill. A bus tour of the Historical Society of Western Virginia visited five of the seven mansions in October 2016.

Two historians, writing about Natural Bridge and its surroundings in 1939, likened the old homes to the seven hills of Rome. “[I]t might be suggested that Rockbridge County has a counterpart in the seven ‘Hills’ of the Welch-Grigsby-Greenlee clan,” according to Edmund P. Tompkins and J. Lee Davis in “The Natural Bridge and its Historical Surroundings.” They said the homes were “connected rather intimately in former days by a thread of romance, marriage or blood relationship. ... All of them are of dignified, rather stately architecture and curiously enough every single one of them has a name ending in ‘Hill.’” (Two of the “Hills” were later renamed.)

George Kegley is editor of the Journal. (Editor’s note: The tour did not visit Fruit Hill and Rose Hill. Pictured above is Fancy Hill.)

"Soldier John" Grigsby, a captain in the Revolutionary War, built Fruit Hill and lived there until his death in 1796. His son, Elisha Grigsby, married Elizabeth Porter and they lived nearby at Rose Hill. Fancy Hill was the home of Sally Grigsby, a daughter of "Soldier John," who lived there with her husband, Thomas Welch. Hannah Grigsby, daughter of Elisha, and her husband, David Greenlee, lived at Clover Hill, later called Herring Hall. Eliza Grigsby, younger sister of Hannah, married Thomas Welch Jr., son of Thomas Welch Sr., and they made their home at Liberty Hill. Captain Reuben Grigsby, a son of "Soldier John," and his wife, Verlinda, made their home at Hickory Hill. David Greenlee Sr., uncle of Clover Hill David, married Jane White and lived at Cherry Hill, now known as Marlbrook.

Fancy Hill

Fancy Hill, one of the finest of the seven, is an imposing eight-bay Federal style mansion, started in 1821 and added onto in 1831. Built for Thomas Welch II and his wife, Sarah Grigsby, it is located on the Great Road (also called Valley Road,) off Interstate 81 today. In early days it was a dwelling, a stagecoach stop, tavern and a boarding school for boys. A 1934 owner planned to replace it with a Cape Cod home but he was persuaded to renovate it instead. A former Colonial Williamsburg carpenter did the work. Gerald and Genie Vaughn have lived here since 1985.

Fruit Hill

Fruit Hill, the Federal home of "Soldier John" Grigsby, is recognized for its excellent detailing, especially on a parlor mantel. Grigsby lived there until his death in 1796. His burial was the first in the cemetery at Falling Spring Presbyterian. Grigsby served in the Revolution with Lawrence Washington, brother of George Washington. In 1783, a French marquis who fought in the Revolution with Washington and Lafayette visited Fruit Hill. Kurt Russ, present owner, has an extensive collection of pie safes and pottery.

Herring Hall

Clover Hill, now called Herring Hall, was the manor house of a 600-acre plantation, probably built by John Greenlee, who bought the land in 1771 and built the home about 1812. It was later occupied by his son, David Greenlee, and his wife, Hannah Ingram Grigsby, and their 12 children. The Herring family bought the home in 1901 and changed the name to Herring Hall. The "handsome, late Federal style main house is complemented by a six-sided smokehouse," according to Dan Pezzoni's "Architecture of Historic Rockbridge." Catherine and Frances Herring operated an inn and restaurant there from 1926 to 1970. Anne Herring reopened the bed and breakfast in 2008 and continues today.

Hickory Hill

Hickory Hill, the 1823-24 home of Reuben Grigsby, has a Federal parlor mantel, circular stairway, three integrated chimneys and Doric columns with Greek Revival influence. Grigsby, a community leader, was a militia captain, sheriff, member of the House of Delegates, trustee of Washington College and treasurer of his church. A daughter, Mary Ann, married Robert McCormick, son of the McCormick reaper family. In the 1920s, a McCormick descendant bought the place. A large barn features heavy timber construction. A row of posts rise to a mortise and tenon joint at massive cross beams. Don Hasfurther lives there today.

Liberty Hill

Liberty Hill is an 1836 Federal/Greek Revival mansion built for Thomas Welch III and his wife, Eliza Grigsby Welch. The home is recognized for a series of ornate carved mantels and a wealth of or-

namental woodwork. Marbled stair risers, a large kitchen and a small wine cellar are other features. The home is owned by Ken Taylor of Charlottesville.

Marlbrook

Marlbrook, built as Cherry Hill in the 1790s, was the Georgian home of David Greenlee and his mother, pioneer settler Mary McDowell Greenlee, who lived to 102 and was believed to be the first white woman in the county. The house, recognized for its architecturally refined interior, has paneled chimney facings and mantels. A log spring house, barn and tenant house are nearby. The property has had a number of owners and now is held by John C. Malone of Colorado, believed to be the largest landowner in the nation.

Rose Hill

Rose Hill, the 1820 home of Elisha Grigsby, son of "Soldier John," is a home of Carolyn Glenn, who operates it as rental property. The bricks for the classic two-over-two style farm home were made on the place. Elisha Grigsby's daughters, Hanna, lived at Clover Hill, and Eliza lived at Liberty Hill. This estate adjoins Fruit Hill. A family cemetery is nearby on the 360-acre farm.

The tour also included additional points of interest.

Buffalo Forge

Near the Seven Hills is Buffalo Forge, once a famous iron manufacturing business whose records were used by historian Charles Dew for a popular 1994 history, "Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge." Here as many as 100 slaves produced iron for William Weaver in the early 1800s. He sold to Confederate arsenals during the Civil War but the business closed in 1868. His 1,500-acre plantation produced corn and tobacco. Mount Pleasant, manor house for the forge, dates from 1819. The home is still owned by the Brady family, descendants of Weaver.

Falling Spring Presbyterian Church

The congregation of Falling Spring Presbyterian Church, one of many Scotch-Irish Presbyterian churches in Rockbridge and Augusta counties, was formed about 1748 in a log structure. They worshiped in a stone building from 1794 until the present building was dedicated in 1864. The church was named for a small waterfall off nearby Buffalo Creek.

John Craig, an Augusta County pioneer who ministered to as many as 28 frontier congregations in the mid-18th century, conducted baptisms here. After services by several itinerant pastors, James McConnel, a recent graduate of Nassau Hall (later Princeton University), was the first resident minister in 1755. Kenneth Chorle is the pastor now.

Franklin County Business in 1883

A writer signing his Aug. 9 contribution to the Richmond Dispatch as "Araminta" notes: "The farmers of Franklin, like those of Henry, cultivate tobacco chiefly, which is of a superior kind. It is bright and is used primarily for wrappers and til-
lers for high grades of manufactured tobacco. In the county, there are fifteen tobacco factories which will work on an average fifty hands each.

The amount of wheat and corn raised is small, but there is to be found in the county some of the finest timber in the State, and at present there are several persons engaged largely in the lumber business. The population of the county is 20,000 — whites, 18,000; colored, 8,000.

Monday, Aug. 6, was court-day at Rocky Mount. At an early hour in the morning, people could be seen coming into the village from every direction — on horseback, in buggies and some in ox-carts. About mid-day, several hundred had assembled.

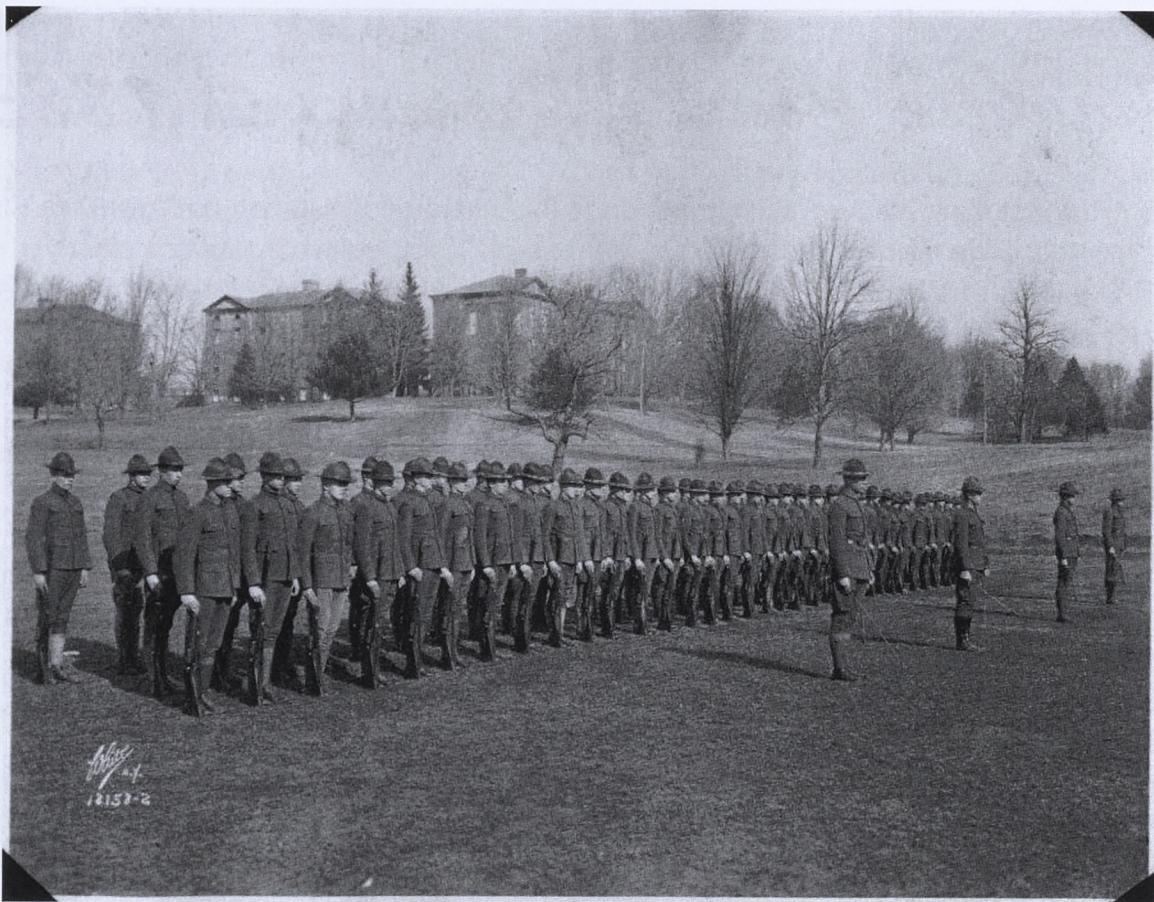
Here and there the country auctioneer was selling either horses or cheap dry goods, while at the hotels, in the largest and best rooms, were met the enterprising commercial travelers with samples of goods laid out offering inducements to the county merchant. They were here from Baltimore, Richmond and Lynchburg and represented dry goods, notions, grocery, hardware and drug houses. I am told that Lynchburg drums the county very closely and has the bulk of the trade.

In and around the courthouse I observed groups of men, some of them white and some black, in earnest conversation discussing the politics of the day. I was told that they were principally Coalition-Republicans. After adjournment of the County Court, they held their convention and nominated William L. Powell for senator — his opponent was Judge Thomas B. Claiborne, the Mahonite judge of the county — and Waddy T. James (ex-State senator) for the House of Delegates. There was considerable feeling on the part of James's friends, who claimed that he ought to have been re-nominated for the State Senate.

The nomination was first to John O. Poindexter, who was elected sheriff last spring, but he would not accept. At that time he claimed to be a Democrat and but for that fact would not, it is said, have been elected. The Democrats pronounce it a weak ticket, and claim that they will carry the county some 300 to 500 majority. The Democrats will hold a primary on August 25 in the different magisterial districts to elect delegates to a convention that will meet September 3 (court day) at Rocky Mount to nominate a senator and a member of the House of Delegates.

There has been no rain in this section since June 20 and the tobacco is suffering very much.

(This report comes from The Times of Franklin, August 2016, a publication of the Franklin County Historical Society.)



Remembering World War I Veterans

In this centennial year of World War I, Daniel Newcomb, a graduate student at Virginia Tech and now a history teacher, has been working on a digital project exploring the lives of Roanoke Valley and Virginia Tech veterans of that war. Newcomb gathered oral histories from family members at the Virginia Room of the Roanoke Public Library and that information is online.

“Roanoke Valley in the Great War” is the title of the project seeking information on more than 3,000 veterans. Likely sources of information are draft cards, the VPI yearbook, census records, birth, marriage and death records, and genealogies.

Newcomb and his associates focused much of their work on the estimated 1,000 students from Virginia Tech who were in military service between April 1917 and November 1918. They were among the first soldiers to arrive in France in the summer of 1918. VPI men fought in all three major American offensives on the Western Front in France — the Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and the Meuse Argonne. Since the American Expeditionary Forces took a leading role, these three offensives brought an end to World War I. Veterans who had served in France formed a Virginia Tech Overseas Club.

Information on World War I veterans is available online from Virginia War Commission at <https://www.virginiawwiandwwii.org/>.

Pictured above is ROTC Company A on the Virginia Tech Drillfield in 1918. A sampling of biographic information about Virginia Tech veterans follows.

— George Kegley



Clifford Wilson Hubbard

VPI Class of 1913

November 17, 1891 - November 30, 1951

After the war ended, Clifford Hubbard returned home to Forest, Virginia, and resumed farming. He married in 1921 and when his second son was born he named his son Samuel, after his brother who had died during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

Charles Tell Lawson

VPI Class of 1916

November 13, 1893 - May 9, 1979

Immediately after the war, Charles Lawson trained fellow Marines at the Quantico Marine Corps Base. Upon being discharged on January 30, 1919, Lawson returned to civilian life as a sales engineer with a company in Pennsylvania. Lawson married Marion L. Cundiff and raised one daughter.



Walton Marshall Ellingsworth

VPI Class of 1917

June 21, 1894 - April 7, 1982

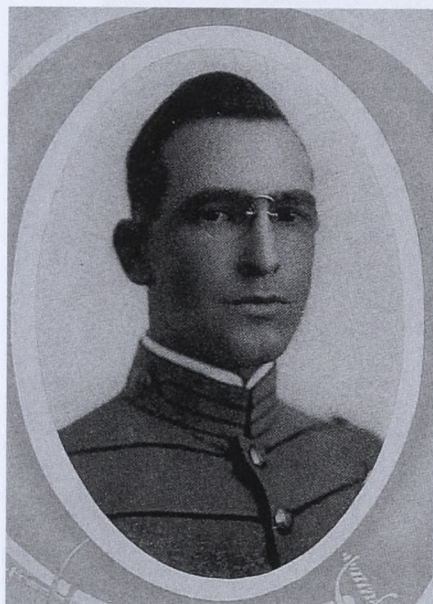
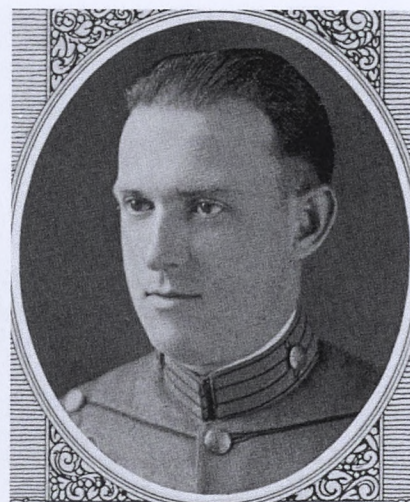
Walton Ellingsworth returned to the United States and married Margaret Parker, with whom he had a son in 1920. Ellingsworth moved to Alabama where he worked as a civil engineer.

Earle Davis Gregory

VPI Class of 1923

October 18, 1897 - January 6, 1972

Earle Gregory enrolled in VPI after the war and graduated in 1923. He studied electrical engineering. Gregory was twice elected class president and president of the Corps of Cadets. He retired as the administrative assistant to the Tuscaloosa Hospital's Chief of Staff.



James Wayne France

VPI Class of 1915

May 7, 1890 - October 11, 1918

James France was killed by German shellfire while fighting in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. He was 28 years old.

Leonard Myrton Gaines

VPI Class of 1917

April 12, 1895 - December 4, 1947

Leonard Gaines recovered from his wound and returned to the United States. After recovering, Gaines found work as a land appraiser. He married Anna Marion Brand, and raised two sons.



John Waller Faulconer Jr.

VPI Class of 1912

September 11, 1892 - September 18, 1972

John Faulconer married Sylvia Dornche and moved to Southern Pines, North Carolina, where he died at the age of 80.



Withrow Reynolds Legge

VPI Class of 1913

January 29, 1893 - February 8, 1955

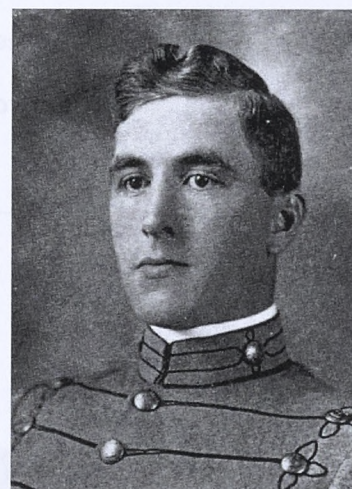
Withrow Legge returned to his home in Winchester, Virginia, and became a teacher. He married Katrina Baumgardner and had a son, Withrow Legge Jr.

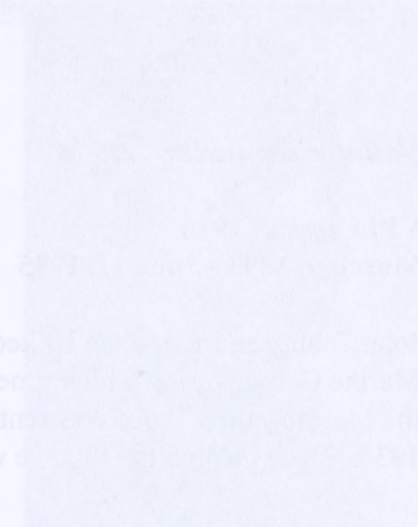
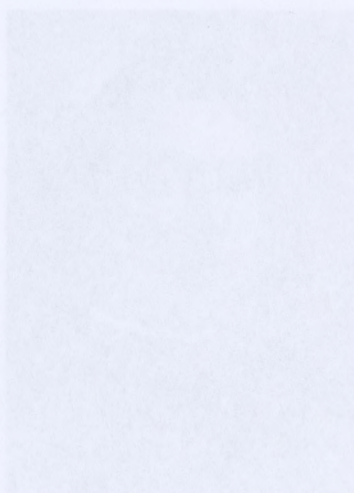
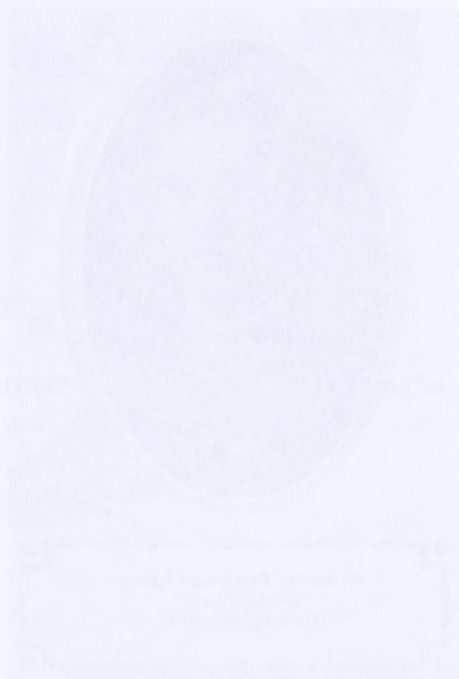
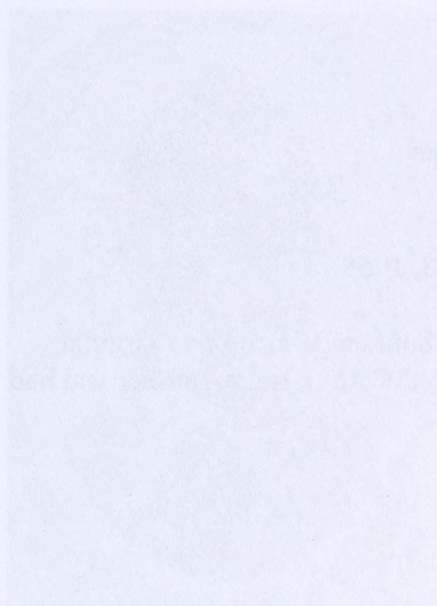
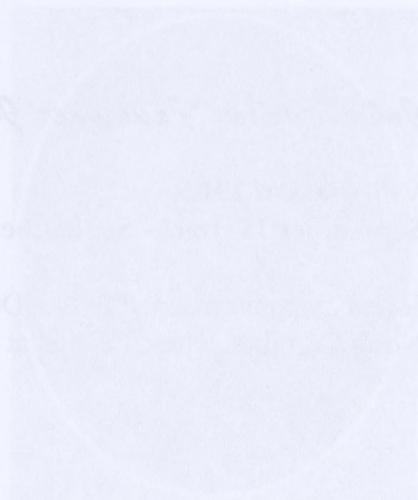
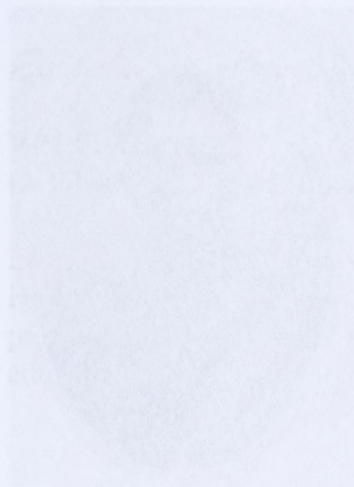
John Alexander Tebbs

VPI Class of 1916

March 9, 1893 - June 11, 1945

John Tebbs returned to the United States and continued to serve in the Marine Corps, during which time he rose to the rank of Major. While in the Marine Corps Tebbs was sent to Haiti in 1922, and then to China in 1934. When he died in 1945, he was survived by his wife, Lillian.





Help us preserve our history

Please consider contributing to the Historical Society's Kegley Publication Fund to help us continue publishing articles about the history of the Roanoke Valley and Western Virginia.

YES, I want to support the Society's Kegley Publication Fund with the following gift:

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Name _____
(as to be listed in print)

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I will fulfill my/our gift with:

___ An enclosed check (make payable to Historical Society of Western Virginia)

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