

HISTORIC LEXINGTON

FOUNDATION

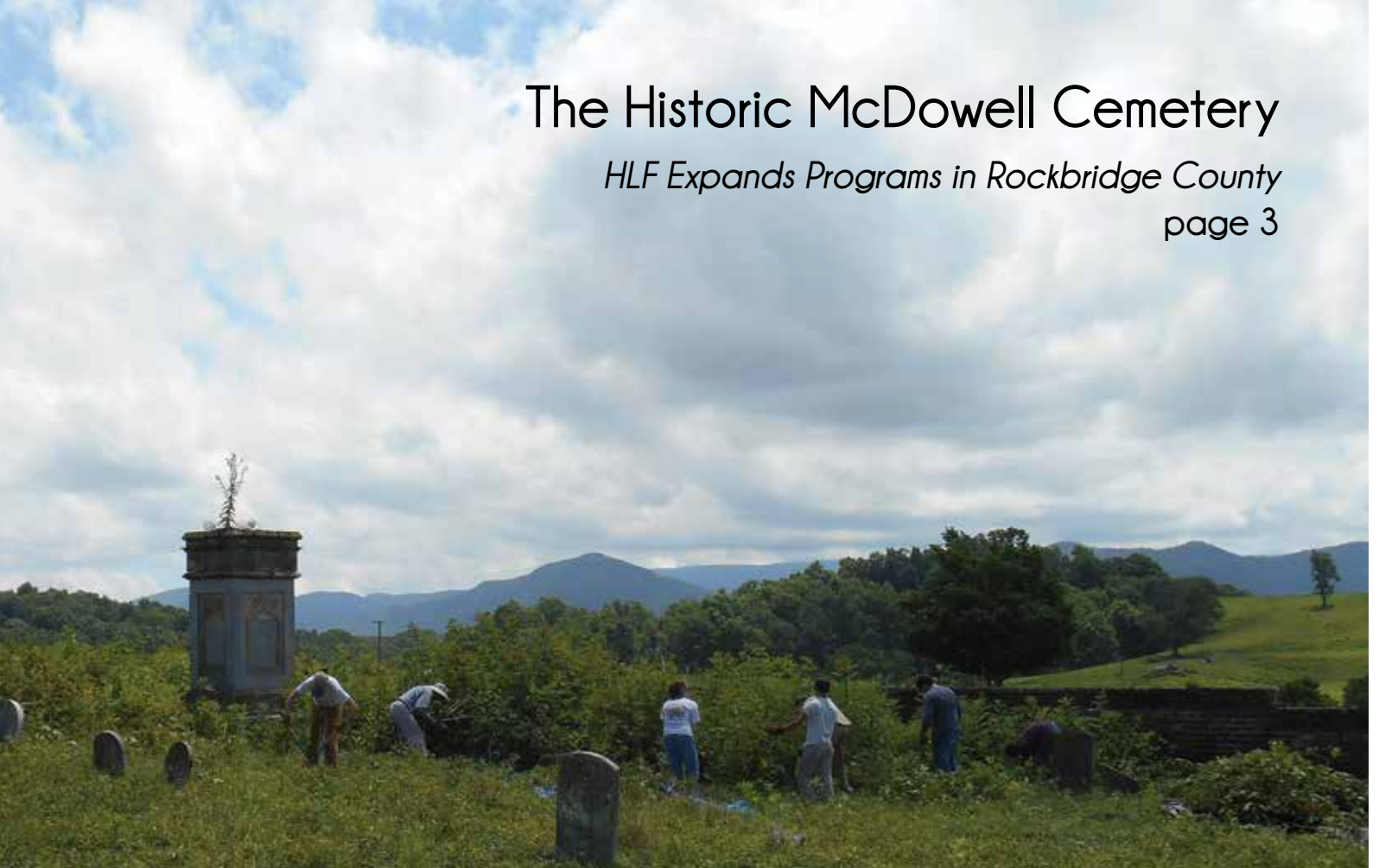
winter 2014

Newsletter

The Historic McDowell Cemetery

HLF Expands Programs in Rockbridge County

page 3



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- >Preserving the Historical Heritage and Fabric of Rockbridge County
- >HLF Collaboration at Jordan's Point in Lexington
- >Downtown Facade Grant Program





From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure to report to you on what has been an important and evolving year for an organization founded nearly forty-eight years ago in response to threats to buildings in Lexington's historic downtown. As you know, we had our beginnings dealing with "brick and mortar" issues and focusing on the preservation of significant architecture as exemplified by the Alexander-Withrow Building, the McCampbell Inn, the Dold Building, and the Jacob Ruff House.

Preservation priorities do change, and so must preservation organizations. In February of this year, HLF revised its mission statement to read "to interpret and present the historical heritage and fabric of Rockbridge County" in recognition of our broader interests. With this new focus, HLF lead an initiative in 2013 aimed at the conservation of the historic McDowell Cemetery near Fairfield and a tour of historic buildings in southern Rockbridge County. You can read more about the collaborative effort in the McDowell Cemetery in this annual report.

HLF is also planning the publication of a book to be titled *The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge*. This is intended as a companion volume to *The Architecture of Historic Lexington*, that seminal work with text by Pam Simpson and Royster Lyle and photography by Sally Mann. It is our intent that the new book will follow the essay approach of the Lexington book but with themes documenting the evolution of the county's architecture, from traditional architecture through the Federal and Revival periods and beyond, including early industry, schools and churches.

With respect to early industry, while it exists today only in the wonderful photography of Michael Miley and others, HLF began efforts in 2013 aimed at further documenting the industrial and transportation heritage of Jordan's Point in East Lexington. In this annual report, you can read about collaborative efforts with W&L on archaeological research at Jordan's Point, with the City and others for the establishment of a Miller's House Museum, and with the City and other contributing property owners on early efforts to designate the area as a historic district.

Finally, as we have previously announced, we are becoming a membership organization. While this does not constitute a significant redirection in our activities, we hope that this might encourage more people to get involved in HLF's programs and projects. We will be getting membership information out early in 2014 and hope that you will consider becoming one of our first members.

Sincerely,

Skip Ravenhorst
President
HLF Board of Directors

(cover photo courtesy of Alison Bell)

Board of Directors 2013

Skip Ravenhorst
President


Paul Miller
Vice President

Peter Grover
Treasurer

Beverly Tucker
Secretary

Arthur Bartenstein
Alison Bell
George M. Brooke, III
Mary Stuart Gilliam
Maury Hanson
Bruce Macdonald
Pat Ohleger
Matt Paxton, Jr.
Suzanne Rice
Rosa Wiggins
Rick Wolf

Don Hasfurther
Executive Director



Post Office Box 901
Lexington, VA 24450
540-463-6832
hlf@rockbridge.net
www.historiclexington.org



Find us on
Facebook!

Historic Lexington Foundation Begins Restoration of the McDowell Cemetery

In keeping with its mission to preserve historic sites in Rockbridge County, HLF has undertaken major conservation work on the historic McDowell Cemetery. The cemetery, which is located just off Route 11 south of Fairfield, had become overgrown with vegetation and a portion of the wall around the cemetery had collapsed. Under the leadership of HLF board member Maury Hanson, a major part of the restoration was accomplished in 2013.

The cemetery contains more than 100 graves of early settlers in what is today Rockbridge County. The earliest tombstone in Rockbridge County is here, that of John McDowell, who was killed in a skirmish with Indians at Balcony Falls in 1742. In addition to the McDowell family, other early Valley families are buried there, including the McClung, McCormick, Moore, Patton, Paxton, and Templeton families.

Restoration began in the summer. Washington and Lee University Associate Professor of Archaeology and HLF board member Alison Bell and W&L staff archaeologist Don Gaylord assembled teams of

students and other interested citizens that cleared the cemetery of its vegetation during work sessions in June and October. Masons from Robert L. Faulkner & Sons, Inc. rebuilt the collapsed section of the brick wall and repaired other sections where the top courses of brick had been dislodged. They also repaired the central stone monument.

The masonry work was paid for by HLF with other donations coming from the Blue Ridge Committee of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Blue Ridge Garden Club, and individuals, including a McDowell descendant.

As part of this project, the visible stones will be examined and the remaining inscriptions recorded and photographed. Geologists, using modern technology such as ground-penetrating radar, will help in locating stones that have been buried by soil and vegetation. In this way, the information still present will be recorded, and hopefully further deterioration can be prevented or at least slowed.

Before



After





“To Preserve, Interpret And Present The Historical Heritage And Fabric Of Rockbridge County”

Formed nearly 60 years ago in response to threats to prominent buildings in Lexington, HLF is today more and more involved in the preservation of cultural resources in Rockbridge County, as indicated by its new mission statement. As an example and as reported in this newsletter, the organization coordinated in 2013 the beginnings of a major effort to conserve the historic McDowell Cemetery.

Rockbridge County is noted for its cultural landscape and its richly built environment. At the time of its establishment, the county was on the Virginia frontier and consisted largely of log structures. By the 1770s, stone structures were replacing earlier log homes, churches, and industrial structures.

The Federal period saw the introduction of brick as a primary building material and by the 1820s and 1830s the construction of Federal style homes including those on Lee Avenue in Lexington, the “Seven Hills of Rockbridge County,” and stately homes in the vicinity of Brownsburg and other towns.

Rockbridge County, including Lexington and Buena Vista, is also rich in architectural styles that would follow, including Greek and Gothic Revival, Victorian, and 20th century architecture, such as Colonial Revival and Craftsman. Rockbridge County is also fortunate to have numerous extant early industrial and agriculture structures, as well as religious and education architecture.

An important part of historic preservation is the documentation of one’s historic buildings, structures and sites. With this in mind, HLF began in 2013 the planning process for a book on the architectural history of Rockbridge County. This is an effort to document the evolution of our county’s built environment and the individuals and events behind these buildings, extant as well as lost. HLF plans to dedicate the volume to Pam Simpson and Royster Lyle, authors of *The Architecture of Historic Lexington*. We will keep you informed as this undertaking moves forward.



1774 Vineyard Hill near Buffalo Creek



Ca. 1835 Paxton House in Glen Maury Park



Archival photo of 1823 Hamilton School



Ca. 1860 Falling Spring Presbyterian Church and Cemetery

HLF Collaborates

with W&L and City at Jordan's Point

While little remains above ground other than the Miller's House, Jordan's Point continues to tell its rich industrial and transportation history through archival photos, maps and other documents and, most recently, archaeology directed by Washington and Lee Archaeology. In September, under the direction of HLF board member Alison Bell, approximately 40 students from Washington and Lee University spent an afternoon of archaeological research with the goal of beginning to piece together the story of what went on at Jordan's Point from the late 18th century through the early 20th century, as well as the story of the lives of the people who lived and worked there.

The shovel test pits dug by the students on September 29 revealed brick and limestone rubble associated with at least one 19th century structure. A small brass buckle, buttons, and pieces of ceramic cups, plates and bowls that were found point to household activity during the late 1700s and the 1800s. Artifacts related to transportation and industrial uses of the Point included railroad spikes and part of a shoe from a draft animal.

The archaeological research, which is expected to increase in intensity in the spring of 2014, is an outgrowth of a proposal by HLF to have Jordan's Point designated as a state and national historic district. As archaeology will be an important element of the historic district nomination, the partnership with W&L Archaeology is essential. H. W. Furman's 1873 "Map of Jordan's Point" shows numerous commercial structures, including a saw mill, a foundry, a forge, a grist mill, warehouses and shops.

The map also reveals the site of the gauge dock, where cargo was weighed in order to collect a toll for use of the North River Navigation canal. The Town of Buchanan in Botetourt County recently excavated its gauge dock at the terminus of the James

River and Kanawha Canal, a project that has generated a great amount of local interest. Philip de Vos of the Virginia Canals & Navigations Society is certain that the Jordan Point gauge dock still exists and has expressed interest in its excavation.

In addition to the long-covered gauge dock at Jordan's Point, the area is replete with stonework from the area's transportation heyday, including along the millrace, the canal dock, and the abutment of the covered bridges that once linked the Point with the other side of North River (now Maury River). HLF plans to work with the City and others to develop interpretative signage for visitors to Jordan's Point.

HLF is also working with the City, Rockbridge Historical Society, W&L Archaeology and others for the development of a Miller's House Museum depicting the industrial and transportation heritage of Jordan's Point. HLF board members Skip Ravenhorst, Beverly Tucker, Alison Bell, and Peter Grover, as well as Executive Director Don Hasfurther are part of the committee working on establishing the museum.



Miller's House--site of future Jordan's Point Museum



HLF Board Members Beverly Tucker and Suzanne Rice observe W&L student digging shovel test pits at Jordan's Point



HLF Board Member and W&L Professor Alison Bell instructs students at Jordan's Point



HLF Inaugurates Downtown Façade Grant Program

In its Winter 2013 newsletter, HLF announced that together with the City of Lexington it would be inaugurating in the coming months a façade improvement grant program to encourage property owners to maintain and improve downtown buildings. The program was named for the late W&L professor Robert S. Johnson, whose bequest to HLF made the program possible.

Following the formation of a façade grant committee in the spring, a brochure explaining the program was prepared and sent to all individuals owning buildings in the downtown Lexington historic district. Simultaneously, an application form was finalized with a request for information on planned scope of work, contractor estimates, and photographs of the buildings on which façade improvements would be made.

Theresa and George Bezold, the new owners of 14 and 18 E. Nelson Street, were the first to submit grant applications for work on the two properties. At a meeting with the façade grant committee, they explained that plans for 14 E. Nelson included repointing of brick and mortar and repainting of previously painted exterior brick and wood trim. They told the committee of their plans to remove the awning frame and boards covering

the original historic window transoms and repair of the glass on 18 E. Nelson Street. The application also called for repointing the mortar according to the Secretary of Interior's Standards. The two buildings date from the 1920s. As of press time for this newsletter, much of this work has been done and the Bezolds are working on improvements to the buildings' interiors.

As the work progressed in late 2013, Lexington Architectural Review Board member Sallie Sebrell shared her thoughts with HLF. "As a member of Lexington's ARB, I was thrilled to have an opportunity to vote to approve the façade improvements that the Bezolds are planning. They are being very sensitive to the historic integrity of their buildings, and that section of Nelson Street will benefit greatly from the renovation. It is marvelous that the City and HLF are offering incentives for this sort of project, which hopefully will encourage others to improve their properties."

Since approval of those two grants, the façade grant committee also approved grants for façade improvements on 123 S. Randolph Street and 29 W. Nelson Street. The program is still open for business; HLF and the City of Lexington hope there will be many more applications in 2014. Grant applications are available at HLF. Contact us at hlf@rockbridge.net or 540-463-6832.



Facade Grant Panel of Joe Sokolowski, Michael Zehner, Dan Pezzoni, and Don Hasfurther review application submitted by Theresa Bezold.

Thanks To Our Contributors

A list of those whose gifts were received during the year-end 2012 Annual Campaign

Patrons

Gifts of \$1,000 or more

Mrs. George M. Brooke, Jr.
Lauren L. Butler
In Honor of Michael Lynn
Mr. and Mrs. H.E. Ravenhorst

Benefactors

Gifts of \$500-\$999

Mr. and Mrs. John P. Ackerly, Jr.
Rogers L. Crain
Ben and Carol Grigsby
Peter Grover
Marguerite G. Old
Alec and Linda Wilder

Sustainers

Gifts of \$250-\$499

Col. and Mrs. George M. Brooke III
Dr. and Mrs. Edward D.C. Campbell, Jr.
Allan and Marian Carlsson
Grant and Josephine Griswold
Kathryn and Mike Hicks
In Honor of Beverly Tucker
Charles and Constance Horner
Bruce Macdonald
Paul Miller
Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program
Prudential Matching Gifts Program
John and Sallie Sebrell
Spencer and Beverly Tucker
Welsh Construction Inc.
Rick and Nan Wolf

Partners

Gifts of \$100-\$249

Anonymous
William and Varnell Badgett
Arthur Bartenstein
Fred Bartenstein
Laurent and Elizabeth Boetsch
In Memory of Pamela Simpson
Rick and Lenny Bruno
Laura Cameron and Lee McCown
Mr. and Mrs. Albert V. Carr, Jr.
Lloyd and Margaret Craighill
Margaret Davis
In Memory of Pamela Simpson
Nancy Epley
Mrs. William H. Dabney
In Memory of Pam Simpson
Judge and Mrs. John F. Forster, Jr.
In Memory of Pam Simpson
Mary Stuart Gilliam
Don Hasfurther
Alan B. Howard
S.L. Kopald, Jr.
In Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Daves
Louise and Bill Latture Fund
Mr. and Mrs. William Loughridge
Bill and Barbara Luton
Michael Lynn
In Memory of Charles F. Phillips, Jr.

J. Hardin Marion
In Memory of Pam Simpson
Grigg and Cindy Mullen
Matt and Mary Raine Paxton
Dorothy Ravenhorst
In Memory of Henry L. Ravenhorst
Mrs. Suzanne Read
Suzanne Barksdale Rice
Norman and Barbara Rollenhagen
Hart and Bonnie Slater
Jim and Esther Stokes
George J. Tompkins III
Roger Thompson and Laura Ter Poorter
Mr. and Mrs. Harry H. Warner
Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Watson
Mr. and Mrs. David W. Zwart

Friends

Gifts up to \$99

Fay Andrews
Buddy and Evan Atkins
Robert R. Baldwin
Dan and Jane Balfour
John G. Barrett
E.P. and Joyce Benton
Joellen K. Bland
In Memory of Larry Bland
Carl I. Bradford
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Brennan
In Memory of Tom and Mary Gentry
Buddy and Carol Bryan
Linda Castle
In Memory of Chuck Phillips
Mr. Dabney Chapman
In Memory of Scotty Huger
Sarah Clayton
In Memory of Donald B. Clayton, Jr.
David Coffey
Wayne and Norma Combs
Sidney and Mary Coulling
In Memory of Pam Simpson
David Cox
Jerry and Dianne Darrell
In Memory of Chuck Phillips
Elizabeth C. Donald
In Memory of Drs. Bruce and Patillo Donald
Jean Eisenhauer
Mimi Elrod
Tom Goodwin
Peter and Marjorie Hansen
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Henneman
Mrs. Robert L. Hopkins, Jr.
Len and Jan Jarrord
Roger and Sylvia Jeans
Robert S. Keefe
Frances L. Kelly
John and Beth Knapp
Laura Lembas
Claude T. Mangrum
Larry and Ellen Martin
Merrie Gayle McNemar
In Memory of William Lafayette Holcomb
Holt and Rebecca Merchant

Mrs. Jane P. Moreland
In Memory of J. Marvin Moreland, Jr.
Howard and Susan Moss
Malcolm and Carol Muir
In Honor of Beverly Tucker
Pat Ohleger
David Peterson
Steve and Peggy Riethmiller
Doug and Helena Roller
Henry Sharp, Jr.
Adelaide Simpson
Ed and Liz Spencer
Wayne C. Thompson
In Memory of Claude Thompson, Jr.
J. Randolph Tucker, Jr.
In Memory of Laura Tucker Fletcher
Kenichi and Deborah L. Ujje
Darracott and Anne Vaughan

Other support for which HLF is most grateful:

- Ben and Carol Grigsby for critical office support.
- Larry Wiese and Kappa Alpha Order for access to Mulberry Hill for HLF Annual Meeting.
- Lenny Lyons Bruno, Mary Stuart Gilliam, Pat Ohleger, Beverly Tucker, and Rick and Nan Wolf for auction items for Annual Meeting.
- Maury Hanson for his leadership and financial support for the conservation of the McDowell Cemetery and to Washington and Lee Archaeology for its support of the conservation effort.
- Dan Pezzoni for his keynote presentation on Gothic Revival Architecture during Preservation Month.
- Elizabeth Knapp & Chuck Smith and Katie Kain & Donald Brown for opening their Gothic Revival homes for tours during Preservation Month.
- Skip Ravenhorst for opening Bechenbrook Chapel for a lecture and tour during Preservation Month, and to Col. Keith Gibson and Laura Lembas for presentations.
- Elly & Brian Grady for opening their home, Blandome, for book signing of *The House on Fuller Street*.
- Chris Walker and Cliff DeVito for opening Forest Oaks for an HLF tour.
- Dan Pezzoni for his lecture on the architectural history of Forest Oaks.
- Pastor Rev. Jason Grimes for the tour of High Bridge Presbyterian Church.
- Rebecca Wilson for the tour of her home Grace House.
- Anne Carter Lee, Editor of *Buildings of Virginia: Valley, Piedmont, Southside, and Southwest Virginia*, for her gift in Memory of Pamela Simpson.

Please consider Historic Lexington Foundation when you are doing your estate planning. In 2013, HLF was the recipient of generous bequests from the estates of:

- James A. Hight
- Sally Letcher
- Herbert R. Preston, Jr.

2013 Remembered in Photos



HLF Board Member Rick Wolf presents Founders' Award to Dan and Kathleen Vance



David Grist and Jay Melvin accept Founders' Award on behalf of CornerStone Bank



Dan Pezzoni discusses the architectural history of Forest Oaks in Rockbridge County.



Don Hasfurther leads tour of Gothic Revival architecture in Lexington



Rebecca Wilson gives tour to HLF of Grace House on South Main Street

SAVE The Date! ▶

HLF Annual Meeting

April 11, 2014 at 5:30 pm
Sigma Nu National Headquarters
9 N. Lewis St, Lexington

May Preservation Month

Sacred Places: Rockbridge Churches and Cemeteries
Dates and Locations TBA