

# Newsletter

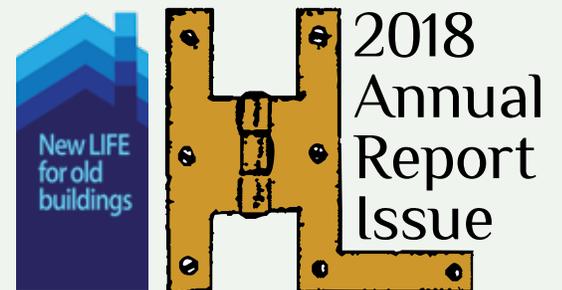


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# From the President's Desk

Dear Friends of HLF,

As we turn the calendar to a new year and the fresh start this ritual implies, we pause for a moment to reflect on where we've been and where we're going.

With your support, HLF remains steadfast in its goal to preserve, advocate for, and educate about the historic places that matter to us throughout Rockbridge County. Our activities in 2018 and our plans for 2019 reflect these precepts.

In 2018 HLF focused on the conservation of our historic cemeteries. Your response, in notes and gifts to our cemetery fund, indicates that our cemeteries matter to you as well. After all, these places reflect our culture and tell our stories. HLF commissioned a Cemetery Preservation Plan for Stonewall Jackson Memorial and Evergreen cemeteries that provides a survey of gravestones in greatest need of restoration. In May, we held a Cemetery Conservation Workshop conducted by the Department of Historic Resources that covered such topics as cemetery archaeology and conservation. Our new walking tour brochure tells the stories of 45 individuals buried in the oldest section of Stonewall Jackson Cemetery.

Thanks to your generous gifts to the Lyle-Simpson Preservation Fund, HLF launched its first county project—the restoration of the c. 1823 Hamilton School in the South Buffalo community. With the support of local builders and craftsmen, progress has been made and the project will resume soon, weather permitting.

In advocacy to national, state, and local governments, we championed cemetery preservation; saving the Jordan's Point dam, mill race, and gauge dock; and the retention of Federal Historic Tax Credit incentives. We opposed the W&L Chi Psi deck on the c. 1910 Ann Smith building. We won some, lost some, compromised on some, but we held true to HLF's role in the preservation of our historic places.

Throughout the year, HLF provided educational talks. Horace Douty related the story of the 1906 Palmer School during April's annual meeting held in the old school building. Alison Bell presented her research on the gravestones of veterans, and Dan Pezzoni spoke on the symbolism of grave markers. David Cox explained the history of the Lee Chapel. Henry Browne described Virginia's vanishing ruins.

Now, looking forward, we invite you to join with HLF as we continue our work in cemetery preservation and embark upon new challenges. In 2019 we will explore historic barns, those striking symbols of Rockbridge's agricultural landscape.

With best wishes in this new year,

Suzanne Barksdale Rice

*Cover images: Barn paintings by Bruce Macdonald (top) and Beverly Tucker (bottom)*

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# HLF Focuses on Historic Rockbridge Barns

**H**istoric Lexington Foundation is making the documentation and preservation of historic barns in Rockbridge County a focus of its 2019 programming. Historic barns often fall victim to demolition by neglect or intentional demolition to make way for new, modern structures. Preservation Virginia recognized this when it named “Historic Barns in the Shenandoah Valley” to its 2018 Most Endangered List. Following announcement of this designation, HLF began plans for a series of 2019 events to focus community interest and involvement in the preservation of these barns.

During May’s National Preservation Month, local artists will undertake an exhibit, “Point of View: Interpretation of Rockbridge Barns” at the Nelson Gallery, 27 West Washington Street, Lexington. The artists include Bruce Macdonald, Beverly Tucker, Dorothy Blackwell, Elizabeth Sauder, Paisley Griffith, Ryan Russell, and Bruce and Jennifer Young. An opening reception will be held on May 3 from 5–7 p.m. as part of Lexington’s “First Fridays” activities. Participants will have an opportunity to meet the artists and discuss with them their barn interpretations.

On May 9, 3–4 p.m., Charlottesville architect, preservationist, and author Henry Browne will speak at Kendal at Lexington on historic barns. Browne has previously spoken at Kendal on his book *Vanishing History—Ruins in Virginia*, documenting lost historic structures in Virginia. The public is invited. There will be a reception following the presentation.

On May 18, 2–4 p.m., HLF will sponsor a program at the historic post-and-beam barn at Camp Maxwellton on Walker’s Creek Road, Rockbridge Baths. The program will focus on barn architecture, a presentation on the restoration of the Maxwellton barn, and financial incentives for barn preservation, including historic tax credits. Among the speakers will be Anne McClung, author of *Rockbridge County Log Structures*, Dan Pezzoni, author of *The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge*, and Al Anderson,



*Beverly Tucker and Bruce Macdonald*

who did the restoration work on the barn. Another speaker will be Sonja Ingram, Preservation Field Services Manager at Preservation Virginia, who will talk about Preservation Virginia’s program to save tobacco barns in Southside Virginia.

Additionally, HLF is planning an exhibit at the Rockbridge Historic Society’s Campbell House that will run from July through December. It will tell the story of the region’s agricultural development from the 18<sup>th</sup> through the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with a focus on barn architecture, including crib barns, bank barns, and timber frame barns. HLF plans to make this a family-friendly exhibit, in part by showing historic barn tools and utensils. A reception will be held Friday, July 5, 4:30–6:30 p.m.

More information on these programs will be made available as we get closer to National Preservation Month. The public is invited and encouraged to attend all events.



*Barn at Camp Maxwellton, site of May 18 Barn Program.*



*HLF is grateful to Simone Siex-Boone for use of her historic barn on Pogue Lane off of Forge Road for its annual meeting on April 13. The barn was originally part of the Claytor Farm accessed from Claytor Lane.*



# Historic Lawyers' Row Structure Undergoes Restoration with HLF Façade Grant Assistance

**T**wo units in Lexington's Lawyers' Row are set to undergo major restoration this spring. According to *The Architecture of Historic Lexington*, the older (c. 1846) structures in the row were designed by renowned architect Thomas U. Walter, architect of the adjacent c. 1840 Old County Jail. Walter was also the architect of Lexington Presbyterian Church and the Capitol Dome in the nation's capital. The two units slated for restoration sit behind the c. 1897 Old Rockbridge Courthouse designed by Lexington architect William G. McDowell.

The units, 9 and 11 Courthouse Square, formerly housed the law offices of Paul Penick and are now owned by Nelson and Randolph LLC and its principals, George and Theresa Bezold. Previously, the Bezolds bought and rehabilitated the buildings at 14 and 18 East Nelson Street. Thanks to their meticulous work, these two buildings are once again important tax-generating structures. The Bezolds are now restoring the Lawyers' Row properties so that they can be used as a residence.



*George Bezold, business partner Tim Hickman, and HLF Executive Director Don Hasfurther in front of Lawyers' Row properties.*



*Bezold, Hickman, and Lexington Planning Director Arne Glaeser. Thomas U. Walter designed Old Jail next to Lawyers' Row.*

The façade grant will help finance the cleaning, restoration, and painting of doors and windows, re-pointing of brick on the front of the building, as well as new gutters on the rear of the Lawyers' Row properties. The façade grant program is jointly funded and administered by HLF and the City of Lexington. It is named for the late Washington and Lee University professor Robert S. Johnson whose generous bequest of \$20,000 to HLF helped establish the fund in 2014. Since its inception, the fund has helped finance façade improvements along North Main Street, East and West Washington Street, East and West Nelson Street and South Randolph Street.

The purpose of the grant program is to preserve and maintain the façade of historic buildings in the Lexington downtown historic district. A façade is defined as the front, side or rear exterior of a building visible from the street. Façade preservation includes ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. To qualify a building must be 50 years or older and contributing to the historic fabric of the downtown.

Among the categories of work eligible for grants are mortar re-pointing, window repair, gutter replacement, repainting of exterior elements, chimney repair and cornice repair. Not eligible are elements distinct from the façade, such as business signage and awnings.

Funds are still available for façade improvements within Lexington's downtown historic district. Grants finance one-quarter of improvement costs with a cap of \$2,000. Property and business owners in the historic district should contact HLF for further details.

# Anne Baxter Gravestone Restoration

If one is willing to make the effort, historic cemeteries can provide important insights into the history of one's locality. In his role as executive director of HLF, Don Hasfurthur has spent time learning about the area's historic cemeteries, including Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery (SJMC) in Lexington. He noticed one grave in particular in SJMC, that of Anne Baxter or as her gravestone reads, "Annie Baxter." Hasfurthur notes, "I was drawn to the Baxter grave, not because I knew anything about Annie, but because the table top stone was broken in two and resting on just two legs and an adjacent gravestone."

The condition of the stone and others, both in SJMC and Evergreen, provided a compelling reason for HLF to focus on cemetery conservation in 2017. In 2018, HLF contracted with a professional conservator to do preservation plans for Lexington's two historic cemeteries. One of the stones identified by the conservator as having the highest priority for preservation was the gravestone of Anne Baxter. The City of Lexington owns SJMC and Evergreen but not the stones, monuments, and markers, and consequently takes the position that it is up to descendants of those buried there to maintain the gravestones.



*Sidney and Mary Coulling and family.*

The Baxter stone's inscription reads, "daughter of Col. William Fleming and wife of George Baxter." Trained as a physician, Fleming emigrated from Scotland to Virginia. He served in the American Revolution and very briefly as acting governor of Virginia after Jefferson's term had expired. Rev. Baxter served as minister of Lexington Presbyterian Church and rector of Washington Academy and then president of Washington College.

Whenever Hasfurthur gives tours of SJMC, he always takes people to Baxter's grave in the hope that they will become engaged in the cemetery's preservation needs. He mentioned the Baxter grave in the HLF summer 2018 newsletter as one of several in SJMC and Evergreen identified in HLF's preservation plans as having urgent conservation needs. Sometime after the newsletter's publication, HLF received a letter from Mary Coulling. She noted that her late husband, Sidney Coulling, was a descendant of Anne Baxter and a Coulling daughter is named after her. She further wrote that after discussing the matter with her family, the family had agreed to pay the cost of the stone's repair.

HLF subsequently received a proposal from Hamric Memorials of Lexington for the repair of the stone, leveling of the support base, and four new legs to join the original four to ensure support of the stone. Mrs. Coulling approved the plan. The stone is now on plywood and resting completely on the adjacent stone. Once the weather warms, the Hamrics will undertake the stone's restoration. HLF plans to document the restoration.

HLF is indebted to the Coulling family for its generosity and hopes it will encourage others to give to HLF's cemetery preservation fund. Mary Coulling is also working on additional biographical material on Anne Baxter, which will become part of HLF's website for all to read and appreciate.



*November 2017, Executive Director Don Hasfurthur points to tabletop gravestone of Annie Baxter.*



# HLF Advocates to Protect Lexington's Two Historic Districts

During 2018, HLF opposed two projects that will significantly alter historic places in Lexington's two nationally recognized historic districts. The first involved the historic structures in the Jordan's Point Historic District. The second, in the Lexington Historic District, impacted the historic Ann Smith School that sits prominently on a hill overlooking Lee Avenue and downtown.

HLF has a long connection with Jordan's Point. In 2000, it purchased the c. 1811 Miller's House there and deeded it to the City of Lexington the following year with the intent that it would become a museum. After lengthy restoration, the house opened as a museum focusing on the rich industrial and transportation history of Jordan's Point. In 2016, HLF successfully had Jordan's Point designated an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places.

As such, HLF was alarmed to hear of a proposal by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) to demolish the dam at Jordan's Point and remove the concrete railroad pier supports in the Maury River. DGIF contended that the dam had

structural issues that could lead to a collapse but provided no alternative to demolition. Speaking at a City Council meeting on July 19, HLF President Suzanne Rice delivered a statement on behalf of the HLF board urging the City to explore every avenue to retain the dam.

DGIF gave HLF status as a consulting party on efforts to remove the dam. In its Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) regarding the dam's removal, DGIF noted that the Jordan's Point millrace is a contributing resource to the historic district. In its written consultation with DGIF, HLF explained that the millrace likely dates to 1808 when the first mill was constructed at Jordan's Point. At the end of the millrace stood the North River Canal gauge dock. The limestone walls of the dock and parts of the millrace are visible and provide visitors with a sense of the area's transportation history.



*Millrace at Jordan's Point*



*Jordan's Point Dam with Tankersley's Tavern to the rear*



*North River Canal gauge dock at Jordan's Point*

HLF further noted that with the removal of the dam and the lowering of the water-surface elevation in the river, the MOA concedes that “there will be times when the millrace is dry.” Without a consistent flow of water through the millrace, HLF warned that the timbers below the limestone walls will be susceptible to dry rot. HLF urged that if the dam is removed, DGIF must include plans to ensure that the millrace has an adequate year-round water supply. As this newsletter goes to press, plans are underway to remove the dam, except for sections on either side including the fish ladder. However, HLF is unaware of any provisions to ensure the long-term preservation of the millrace and gauge dock.

In addition to the Jordan’s Point dam project, HLF faced an issue in 2018 regarding plans to alter the front landscaping to the former c. 1910 Ann Smith School, as well as the building itself. Now owned by Washington and Lee University and housing the Chi Psi Fraternity, “the well-portioned building, typical of school architecture of the period, served as a high school and later as an elementary school until 1969.” (Source: *The Architecture of Historic Lexington*)

The first Chi Psi project presented before the Lexington Architectural Review Board (ARB) by Washington and Lee University architect Hugh Lattimer called for the construction of a retaining wall near the Lee Avenue side of the front lawn. As explained, this was an effort to level the front yard so that it might be used by fraternity brothers. At that ARB meeting, then HLF board member Arthur Bartenstein noted that because there were no elevation plans with the proposal, it failed to show that because of the yard’s sloping elevation, the wall would need to be 7 or 8 feet tall at the north end. His concerns were dismissed and the ARB approved the project. Chi Psi ultimately decided not to construct the wall but rather to go forward with plans to remove the front steps leading to the front door and extend this area for purposes of seating.

A second plan to go before the ARB proposed building a deck off the north side of the building to be accessed through the building’s first floor. The deck with its pergolas was to be used, as explained by Lattimer, to extend the dining experience from the new dining room that would be moved from basement to first floor. To do this, the fraternity would need to remove the lower window sashes on two windows and cut through roughly three feet of the top of the stone foundation below those windows. There were insufficient votes in favor of the plan, so the ARB sent it back to the fraternity for reconsideration.



*Former Ann Smith School with construction of new front addition to the portico*

Following this action, HLF received an invitation from the fraternity’s corporate president, Andrew Dewing, and its architect, Jerry Dixon, to tour the building and talk about plans for changes to the deck’s massing. In mid-November, HLF Executive Director Don Hasfurther, President Suzanne Rice, and other board members toured the facility and talked about proposed deck changes. The new design, already without pergolas, called for the deck pilings to be lower than originally planned and faced with real stone veneer. The fraternity’s architect stated that the two window sashes and foundation stone would be preserved so that in the future they could be returned to the building’s north façade, if so desired. The fraternity also pledged to undertake landscaping to partially conceal the deck from Lee Avenue. With these changes, HLF agreed not to oppose the plans when they went again to the ARB for approval. In December the plans were approved.



*Site for construction of Chi Psi deck*

# 2018 Remembered in Photos



February - Howard Wellman works on preservation plan for Evergreen Cemetery.



May - HLF/Department of Historic Resources Cemetery Workshop



April - Guests enjoy the annual meeting reception with the Palmer School in the background.



August - Beverly Tucker talks with visitors to HLF's booth at the Rockbridge Community Festival.



October - Lyle-Simpson preservation grant recipient, Hamilton School, on a partial, new foundation.



September - Thorn Hill Reception

## Save The Date:

HLF Annual Meeting  
Saturday, April 13, 2019  
at the historic Claytor barn  
on Pogue Lane off of Forge Road