

HISTORIC LEXINGTON
FOUNDATION

winter 2012

Newsletter



Pamela Simpson
1946-2011

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2011
Annual
Report
Issue



From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

As I write this message, I am in my final weeks as President of Historic Lexington Foundation. The position has been both fulfilling and challenging, and I think we have made important strides in the past year. But before I get to that, I would like to introduce you to my successor, Paul Miller. Paul came to Rockbridge County in 1998 and has served on the HLF board since 2008.

Paul will be taking over a number of new initiatives, some of which are mentioned in this Annual Report. We have begun a fascinating oral history program to record the life stories of some of our long-time area residents. We have begun this in Lexington's Diamond Hill community, where we are also beginning a historic resource survey of homes and structures not currently in Lexington's National Register historic district.

I am also pleased to report that our local preservation organizations are doing more than ever to cooperate in the promotion of local history and preservation. In May, HLF and the local branch of Preservation Virginia undertook a series of events entitled "Artists and Artisans: Early Industry in the Valley of Virginia." We hope to expand such cooperative efforts and include other organizations, such as the Rockbridge Historical Society, in future activities. One possible area for collaboration in 2012 is the conservation and maintenance of the historic McDowell Cemetery near Fairfield.

I think we are on the right track, but we need to hear more from our loyal supporters to better understand the directions they would like to see HLF follow. And we are always looking for people to help with our programs, such as monitoring our façade easements, furthering our oral history program, and helping us to establish new programs, including one to offer markers for historic properties in Lexington and Rockbridge County.

Sincerely,

Al Carr
President
HLF Board of Trustees

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Remembering PAM SIMPSON 1946-2011

Hundreds of well-wishers came to celebrate Pam Simpson's 65th birthday on September 8 of this past year. The picture on the cover (courtesy of W&L photographer Kevin Remington) captures only a fraction of those attending the event at the Washington and Lee Alumni House. Pam can be seen sitting with her grandchildren on the steps in the upper left.

Few people have had an impact on the Lexington community over the last 40 years to the extent of Pam Simpson. "We all think differently and think differently about living in Lexington, because of Pam," notes her long-time friend and colleague in many a cause, Jean Dunbar. "Her energy has become the community's energy, though few of us will do so much good in such a short time."

One of the vehicles by which Pam made her impact on historic preservation was Historic Lexington Foundation. Pam served on a number of occasions as president of HLF. Her *The Architecture of Historic Lexington* has had many legacies, but perhaps its greatest has been in instilling local pride, not just in what used to be, but pride in what is. And those thousands of Washington and Lee students who walked through her classroom will be forever beholden to Professor Simpson. As a colleague of Professor Simpson noted, "Pam taught Lexington to see what was in plain sight--and that is always the toughest job for any educator and the most thrilling moment for any student."

In summing up her thoughts on Pam Simpson, former HLF president Jean Dunbar noted, "She never said 'Can we do this?'; she always said, 'So, how will we do this?' I expect to keep hearing her say that in my mind's ear for the rest of my life." Perhaps this "can do" attitude is best observed by walking through Lexington's downtown and marveling at all of the historic buildings that are there today in large part because of Pam Simpson and her colleagues in the preservation community here.



Pam Simpson and student recipient of an HLF Preservation Month award.

SIMPSON MEMORIAL PLANNED

With the generous support of Reed Belden, past president of both Historic Lexington Foundation and the Rockbridge Historical Society, the two organizations, together with the local branch of Preservation Virginia, are planning a memorial to Pam Simpson. The memorial will take the form of a stone sculpture carved by sculptor John Mason. Mason and his wife Pauline are next door neighbors of the Simpson family and became devoted friends of Pam. Peter Simpson, Pam's son, has provided the conceptual design for the memorial. Landscape architect Arthur Bartenstein is providing assistance with respect to the memorial's placement. Once the design and site plan are complete, HLF and RHS will seek City Council approval for placement of the sculpture on Hopkins Green. We expect to dedicate the memorial in the spring.

Thanks to Those Who Made a Contribution in Memory of Pam Simpson

Robert R. Baldwin
Reed Belden
Al Carr
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Timothy and Carol Roden
Elizabeth Tracy
Washington & Lee University
Rick and Nan Wolf

Many others made contributions "In Memory of Pam Simpson" during the 2011 year-end annual appeal. They will be acknowledged in the 2012 Annual Report.

New HLF Programs

Include Oral History Project

History is the culture of Lexington and two of its better-known sons are Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. Literature on Rockbridge County features bigger than life personalities such as Cyrus McCormick, Sam Houston and "Big Foot" Wallace. Beverly Tucker believes that there are also many lesser-known personalities that deserve our pride. "Many of those deserve our recognition and admiration for they provide us with their stories from the past." According to Tucker, "They are caretakers of memories that reveal what many of us never knew, yet define us as a community."

With this in mind, HLF began an oral history project in 2011 to record these life stories for the present and for those that come after us. Tucker, who will join the HLF board in 2012, has taken the lead in this project. Using the method of oral history, HLF seeks to facilitate a forum for the recollections of long-time residents of Diamond Hill, a traditionally African-American neighborhood in Lexington. "Their stories are compelling and too valuable to remain unrecorded", Tucker emphasizes when discussing the oral histories. Working with her on the project is Don Hasfurther, Executive Director of Historic Lexington Foundation. It is intended that eventually HLF will broaden the history project to include other area residents and perhaps focus on various vocations, such as education, agriculture, artistry.

Many other historic preservation organizations have oral history programs. HLF intends to follow the models provided by organizations such as Historic Fredericksburg Foundation and place transcriptions of its recorded interviews on its website, www.historiclexington.org, so that they are easily available to anyone with an interest in the lesser-known part of the Lexington/Rockbridge heritage.

Historic Resource Survey to Record Diamond Hill's Built Environment

Also begun in 2011 is a building survey of those buildings and structures in Diamond Hill not already recorded as part of the Lexington Historic District included in the National Register of Historic Places. While N. Randolph and Henry Street, as well as parts of such streets as Tucker, Fuller, and N. Lewis fall within the National Register district, other parts of the neighborhood do not. Those historic properties that do not fall within the National

Register historic district are not eligible for such tangible benefits as historic rehabilitation tax credits.

Leading the effort to survey those properties not already surveyed and those Diamond Hill properties not within the National Register historic district are HLF board members Laura Lembas and Sean Devlin. Once the surveys are completed, HLF intends to engage those property owners to determine whether they would like to be part of an effort to expand the National Register district.

The next step would

then be to do additional historic research on the neighborhood before submitting a nomination to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.



Beverly Tucker interviews Diamond Hill resident Edlow Morrison as part of HLF oral history project.

"Their stories are compelling and too valuable to remain unrecorded."

Thanks To Our Contributors

A list of those whose gifts were received during the year-end 2010 Annual Campaign:

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Special Thanks

James McMillan and Ben & Carol Grigsby for opening their homes, Beaumont and The Pines, to HLF and its major donors.

Keith Gibson for his presentation on the early 19th century homes on Lee Avenue.

Washington and Lee University for use of the Courthouse meeting room and for access to W&L's Special Collection.

HLF and Preservation Virginia

Expand Cooperation in 2011

After a series of successful Preservation Month events in 2010 focusing on the area's transportation heritage (River, Road, and Rail), HLF and the Southern Shenandoah Valley Branch of Preservation Virginia teamed up again in 2011 during May's National Preservation Month on a series of programs entitled "Artists and Artisans: Early Industry in the Valley of Virginia."



➤ *Retired Colonial Williamsburg Master Gunsmith Wallace Gusler exhibits his historic rifle collection during Preservation Month.*

presentations were subsequently given at Kendal at Lexington before the Kendal residents.

That fall, HLF and Preservation Virginia co-sponsored "Heirloom Discovery Day", an opportunity for area residents to bring their antiques and other collectibles for identification and valuation. Volunteering their time and expertise as appraisers were HLF trustee **Rick Wolf**, **Kurt Russ**, and **Seth McCormick-Goodhart**.



➤ *Dan Pezzoni leads discussion of the 18th century gravestone of John Mackey at Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church Cemetery during National Preservation Month.*

The 2011 events focused on brick and pottery making, gunsmiths and their trade, and gravestone carvers. **Kurt Russ** of the Preservation Virginia branch and **Mike Pulice** of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources spoke on pottery and brickmaking respectively. HLF Trustee **Sean Devlin** presented on the importance of archaeology for understanding the area's early industry. **Dan Pezzoni** lead a group through the historic cemetery at Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church and spoke on gravestones and their carvers, including the 18th century John Mackey gravestone. The highlight of the program for many was the presentation and demonstration of the Virginia long-rifle by retired Colonial Williamsburg Master Gunsmith **Wallace Gusler**.

In August, the two organizations shared a booth at the Rockbridge Community Festival. A joint presentation inside the Meeting Room of the Old Courthouse building featured showings of HLF's Preserving a Special Place, a dvd highlighting the preservation of historic Lexington, and a Preservation Virginia slide presentation of archival and recent pictures of Lexington and Rockbridge County. Both



➤ *HLF trustee Rick Wolf appraises antique clock during Heirloom Discovery Day. Photo courtesy of Patte Wood, Rockbridge Weekly.*

In line with its interest in getting more involved in preservation work in Rockbridge County, the executive committees of HLF and the Southern Shenandoah Valley Branch of Preservation Virginia also began discussions in 2011 regarding the conservation needs of the historic McDowell Cemetery near Fairfield. The cemetery is the final resting place of John McDowell, who surveyed the Borden Tract and was killed in an Indian skirmish at Balcony Falls in 1742. Other organizations, including the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council and the local chapter of the Virginia Garden Club, have expressed interest in the cemetery's conservation and maintenance.

HLF's Easement Program

Continues to Protect Lexington's Historic Character

The *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, that remarkable collaboration of Pam Simpson, Royster Lyle, and Sally Mann, tells the story of the early years of Historic Lexington Foundation. The story begins with the threatened demolition of the ca. 1824 Barclay House (Beaumont) on Lee Avenue. A group of concerned citizens got together and ultimately persuaded the property owner to sell Barclay House to someone who would restore and inhabit the historic building.

The effort did not end there. Those citizens realized that Lexington might also lose a number of historic buildings in the downtown. This was the genesis in 1966 of the formation of Historic Lexington Foundation. Beginning in 1968, the organization undertook three successful fall house tours of homes in Lexington, thus raising funds for what became HLF's Revolving Fund.

With this instrument, HLF would purchase a number of important properties in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including the Alexander-Withrow House, the Dold Building, the Central Hotel (McC Campbell Inn), and the Jacob Ruff House. Once the organization stabilized the buildings and undertook varying degrees of exterior restoration, HLF found new owners to purchase and finish the restoration of these properties.

To ensure that the buildings would not again fall into disrepair, HLF also placed restrictive covenants in the deeds of sale requiring that the exterior of the buildings be maintained in a state of good repair and not be allowed to deteriorate. The easements were placed in perpetuity. This would be repeated with other buildings HLF would purchase over the next 30 years. In some instances, HLF merely purchased an easement on the building from the property owner. (See back page for pictures of properties on which HLF holds façade or other easements).

Typically, the easements state with respect to the exterior of the buildings that "no alteration, attachment or extension, and no physical or structural change and no change to the color or surfacing and no cleaning or treating in any way of the exterior brickwork" shall be made without the written approval of HLF. Many of the easements specifically state that "no advertising signs of any kind shall be attached or painted on the exterior portion of the upper floors."

One easement differs from the rest, the easement on Hopkins Green, which was purchased by HLF and given to the City of Lexington. The easement states that Hopkins Green shall be maintained as a public park and that no permanent building or structure shall be erected other than the existing garden structures. The easement that HLF holds on the Hopkins House

next door also contains an interior protection requiring that "historic character defining architectural elements in the Foyer", including the folk art "hand" mantel, "shall not be permanently altered or removed."

As part of its obligation, HLF performs annual inspections on the easement properties and notifies owners of problems that need resolving.



HLF trustee Paul Miller (right) and executive director Don Hasfurther conduct an easement review on the Dold Building.

Properties On Which HLF Holds Easements



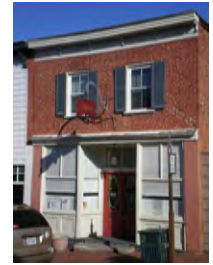
Dold Building



Central Hotel



Lyric Theater



Lexington Lighting Company



Roberson-Phalen House



Alexander-Withrow House



Jacob M. Ruff House



Hopkins House



Boiler House



Lorwood Building



Davidson-Tucker House

SAVE The Date!

HLF ANNUAL MEETING

FRIDAY, APRIL 13

5:00-7:00PM



Historic Thornhill

Founders' Awards

Tour Of Thornhill
And Lecture On Its
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Auction To Benefit HLF



Miller's House



Reid-White-Philbin House



Hopkins Green

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BEFORE



AFTER

The Haden and Rebecca Holmes House awaits a buyer to complete its restoration. Post-Civil War home at 205 Fuller Street.