

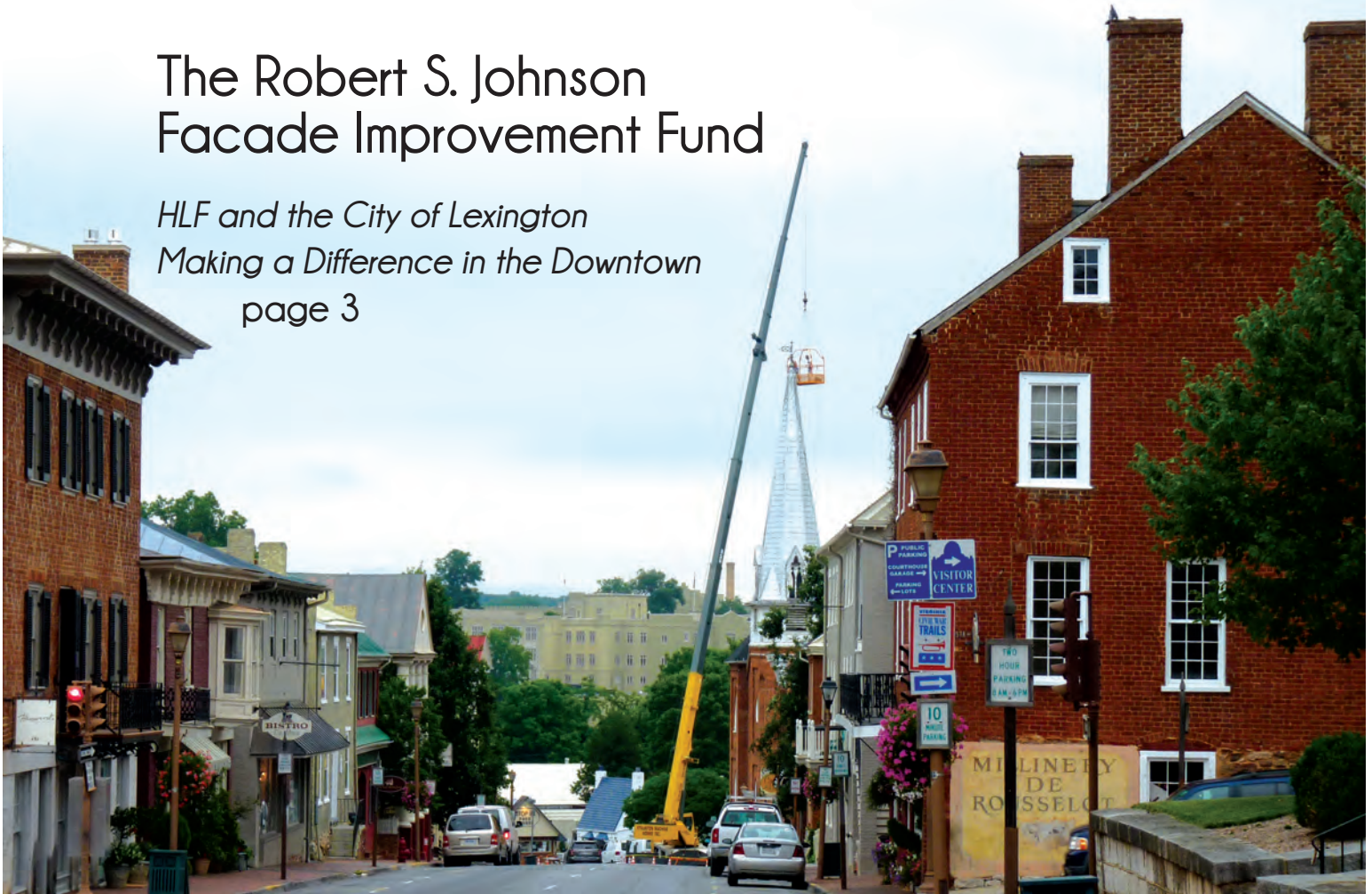
HISTORIC LEXINGTON FOUNDATION

winter 2015

Newsletter

The Robert S. Johnson Facade Improvement Fund

*HLF and the City of Lexington
Making a Difference in the Downtown*
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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

It has been a privilege to serve as president of Historic Lexington Foundation for the past two years. As I reflect on that time with our organization, I'm pleased to note that a number of initiatives have been realized.

After several years of discussion, we have successfully made the transition to a membership organization. In conjunction with that, we have revised our charter and bylaws to more closely reflect the way our group has evolved over the years since its inception. We have established a streamlined financial reporting procedure in keeping with contemporary requirements for nonprofit groups such as ours.

We have been fortunate in being the beneficiaries of a number of generous gifts, and we take seriously both the stewardship of those funds, and the planning necessary to ensure that similar funding for our important work may be available in the future. We have partnered with the City of Lexington in establishing a Facade Grant program, which has already begun to reap visible benefits in the city streetscapes.

A considerable amount of effort in the past year has gone toward the preparation of a long-awaited book, *The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge*, which will serve as a companion piece to *The Architecture of Historic Lexington*, which has become the preeminent authority on the city's architecture since its publication by HLF in 1977. I am eagerly looking forward to the completion of that project in the near future.

HLF has been active on other fronts, including laying the groundwork for a future historic district at Jordan's Point. I am excited about the prospects for our Foundation as it enters the next phase under the leadership of my successor as president, Beverly Tucker, who brings phenomenal energy and talent to the post.

Sincerely,

H. E. Ravenhorst, AIA
President
HLF Board of Directors

(cover photo courtesy of Skip Ravenhorst)

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Historic Lexington Foundation Facade Grant Program Helps Restore the Face of Lexington's Historic Downtown

Anyone visiting Lexington's downtown commercial district in 2014 undoubtedly witnessed more than the usual facade rehabilitation work in progress. Many of these projects were financed in part through the Robert S. Johnson Fund, a joint undertaking by HLF and the City of Lexington. Indeed, the program has been so successful that both HLF and the City have agreed to recapitalize the Fund for another year. Property owners are encouraged to take advantage of the incentive program.

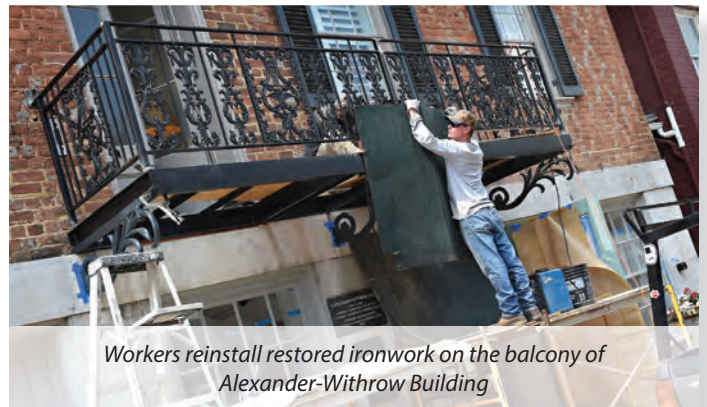
HLF was particularly pleased to play a small role in the facade restoration work at the Alexander-Withrow Building and McCampbell Inn on N. Main Street. HLF played a key role in saving the buildings back in the 1970s when they were threatened with demolition by neglect. Today, the two buildings are operated as "The Georges" inns. The grants helped in the restoration of metal handrails on steps and balconies, restoration of exterior shutters and other exterior carpentry.

Facade grants also were given for the painting of the building at 123 S. Randolph Street, repair and repainting of the exterior woodwork on the Rockbridge Historical Society's Campbell House, gutter repair and repainting of woodwork at 29 W. Nelson Street, and exterior wood repair and repainting at 5 W. Washington Street.

Probably the most dramatic of the projects undertaken with the assistance of a facade grant was the repainting of the First Baptist Church steeple and trim around the front windows. The photograph on the cover of this newsletter captures the work in progress high on a lift. With the work accomplished this summer, the shining steeple can be seen from numerous vantage points in the downtown. HLF is honored to have played a role in the project.



123 S. Randolph Street



Workers reinstall restored ironwork on the balcony of Alexander-Withrow Building



5 W. Washington Street

HLF Preservation Grant For Paxton House Restoration

The following article was written by Andy Wolfe on behalf of the Paxton House Historical Society in December of 2014.

Buena Vista VA – The Historic Lexington Foundation (HLF) is lending the Paxton House Historical Society a big hand in the final restoration phase of the historic 1828-31 Paxton House, one of Rockbridge County's most historic properties, located in the Glen Maury Park, Buena Vista. HLF presented a \$2,000.00 grant check at a special program held December 1st in the Paxton House.

The Paxton House is now one of the finest examples of early 19th century architecture in Virginia. It became an asset of the City of Buena Vista in 1968. For the next 30 years nothing was done to the house and its condition gradually deteriorated. Local citizens decided to establish a program to save the antebellum structure and the Paxton House Historical Society was formed in 1995. Nineteen years and over 1 million dollars later, the end is in sight.

The Paxton House Historical Society has actively conducted local fundraising campaigns to complete the exterior restoration of the building and the spring house. The final cost of the exterior work was nearly double the original estimates but commensurate with current building and material costs.

The restoration has been a pay-as-you-go project. The most recent projects include electrical service and lighting, heat and climate control. The City of Buena Vista constructed a new fence this past month. Plastering and priming the walls on the second floor will begin this week. The anticipated completion will be summer 2015.

When the restoration is complete, the first floor will feature a period furnished living room, historical displays and meeting room. The second floor will have a period furnished bedroom, reading room and artifact display and the Historical Society's office.

The Paxton House will be open for a living history program May 1–3, 2015.



Paxton House exterior restoration work



Window Restoration by Wayne Flint



Working to stabilize the pillar foundation on the front of the house. The brick was later plastered white.

HLF to Publish Book on the Architectural History of Rockbridge County

The *Architecture of Historic Rockbridge* will be a companion volume to *The Architecture of Historic Lexington* first published in 1977 by Royster Lyle, Jr. and Pamela Simpson with photographs by Sally Mann. The book will be dedicated to Lyle and Simpson, both of whom were important contributors to the work of HLF.

The Rockbridge book, which is planned for publication in the fall of 2015, will reflect the wonderfully rich and diverse architectural history of the county, including its two cities, Lexington and Buena Vista. The book will trace the area's architecture from the 18th century through the post-World War II period. It is intended to be both scholarly and engaging, presenting architectural analysis in a manner accessible to a general readership.

Architectural historian J. Daniel Pezzoni is the book's author. He has been supported in this effort by a book committee made up primarily of HLF board members. The book will be richly illustrated throughout with both current and archival images. The photographs on this page are merely illustrative of the architecture and architectural details that will be included in the volume.



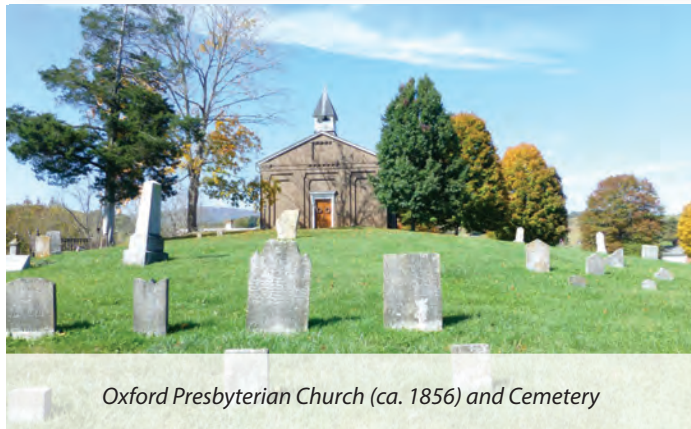
Herring Hall (ca. 1837) Door Fanlight



18th Century Stone House at Buffalo Bend



*Charles F. Jordan House (ca. 1890)
Buena Vista (courtesy W&L Special Collections)*



Oxford Presbyterian Church (ca. 1856) and Cemetery



*Goshen (ca. 1900) with Alleghany Hotel
(courtesy W&L Special Collections)*

Restoration Activities Along Lexington's Main Street

In April, Historic Lexington Foundation awarded its annual Founders' Awards to Charlie Hallock and Rebecca Wilson for their meticulous restorations of the J. T. McCrum House and the Grace House, respectively. The two residential buildings are prominently situated on S. Main Street. As is often the case, restoration can be contagious. Since the awards, a number of additional homes near the intersection of S. Main Street and Edmondson Avenue have undergone significant rehabilitations.

At the other end of Main Street, the unit block of N. Main Street has witnessed stellar restoration projects. As reported under the facade grant article in this newsletter, the Gottwald family has returned the Alexander-Withrow Building and McCampbell Inn to their former elegance and they are once again important economic contributors to Lexington. Both buildings went through major rehabilitations in 2013-14 on the way to becoming "The Georges." Next door to the McCampbell Inn, the Jacob Ruff House is seeing new life thanks to restoration efforts of the Cory family.

As seen on the cover of this newsletter, the First Baptist Church has gone through a major project to repaint the church steeple. Additionally, the historic Knights of Pythias Building now sits closer

to the downtown after an October move by VMI. The building awaits rehabilitation and a new use. Its new place on N. Main Street will hopefully make that a more viable proposition.

And certainly not least in a list of Main Street restoration activities, Historic Lexington Foundation welcomes the major rehabilitation and reopening of the Robert E. Lee Hotel. The hotel, which had been an important hub in Lexington beginning in the 1930s, is once again an important contributor to the City's economic livelihood thanks to Ugo Benincasa and his development team.



J. T. McCrum House



Alexander-Withrow Building



McCampbell Inn



Jacob Ruff House



Grace House

Thanks To Our Contributors

A list of those whose gifts were received between October 2013 and October 2014

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For maintenance of McDowell Cemetery

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Other support for which HLF is most grateful:

Ben and Carol Grigsby for critical office support
Sigma Nu National Fraternity for annual meeting site and support
Peter Grover and Skip Ravenhorst for annual meeting support
Dan Pezzoni and Taylor Sanders for Preservation Month lectures
The many area historic churches for opening their doors during National Preservation Month
Those who helped in the maintenance of the McDowell Cemetery
Beverly Tucker for creating the display at the Miller's House
Col. Keith Gibson for talk on Jordan's Point at the Miller's House
Members of the Book Committee--
Alison Bell, Don Hasfurth, Dan Pezzoni, Skip Ravenhorst, and Suzanne Rice--for work on *The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge*
Charles Bodie, Matt Paxton, Jr. and Mary Stuart Gilliam for reading and critiquing book draft
Virginia Historical Society
Bob Keefe for design work on the book and sponsorship brochure
Anne McClung for design work on the dust jacket of the book
City of Lexington for collaboration on facade grant program
Special Collections at W&L, Department of Historic Resources, and Library of Virginia for help with book images



Special thanks to Susan Brady for making Buffalo Forge available as the site of the 2015 HLF Annual Meeting

2014 Remembered in Photos



April: HLF Annual Meeting at Sigma Nu National Headquarters



May: National Preservation Month Focuses on Historic Churches in Rockbridge



July: HLF Awards Facade Grant to First Baptist Church for Repair and Repainting of Steeple



October: Col. Keith Gibson Speaks to HLF Membership at the Miller's House at Jordan's Point



October: VMI Moves Knights of Pythias Building to New Location on North Main Street



December: HLF Presents Grant for Preservation of Paxton House.



December: HLF board and staff give Skip Ravenhorst (second from top) send off after two years as HLF President

SAVE The Date! ► HLF Annual Meeting • Historic Buffalo Forge • Saturday, April 11th at 2pm