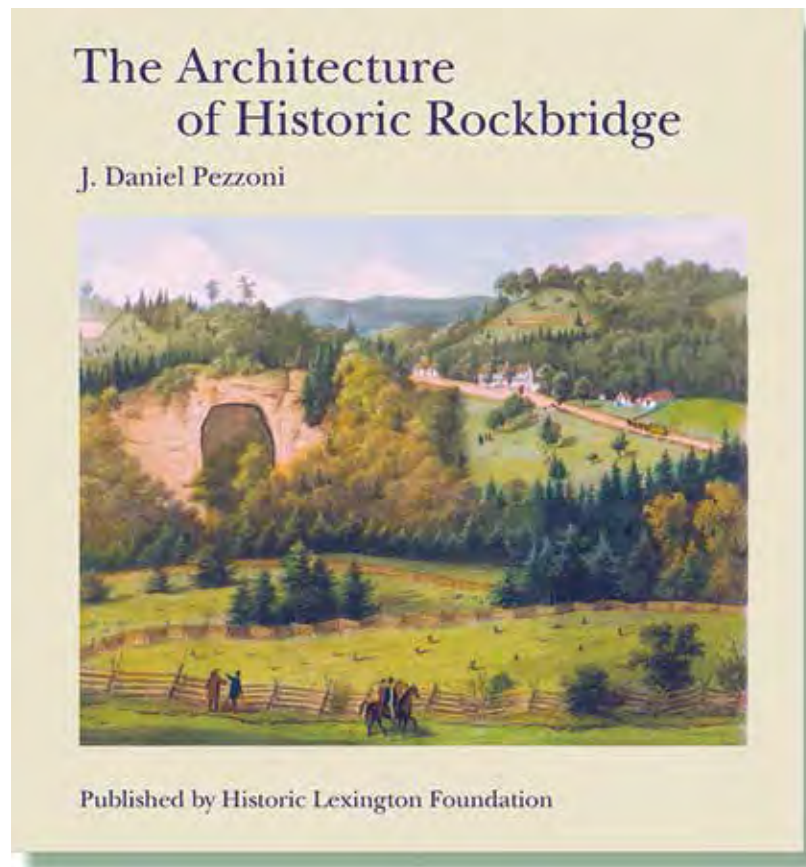


HISTORIC LEXINGTON
FOUNDATION

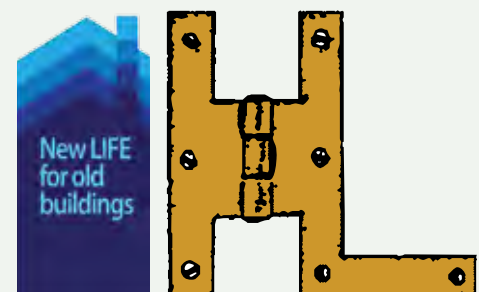
Summer 2015

Newsletter



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- >The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge
- >Recognition for Jordan's Point
- >Survey of Buildings in Lexington Historic District
- >Preservation Month
- >Thanks to Contributors





From the President's Desk

Celebrating Fifty Years Of Saving History

For Historic Lexington Foundation, 2016 will be a banner year. When I consider what has been accomplished by HLF in the last fifty years, I am both amazed and humbled. Two members of our present board were original founding members and we will rely on the memories of Mary Stuart Gilliam and Matt Paxton, Jr. to guide us in the planning of our celebration. A centerpiece of this celebration will be the publication of *The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge* by Dan Pezzoni, a companion book to *The Architecture of Historic Lexington*, published by HLF in 1977. The earlier book was written by former HLF presidents Royster Lyle and Pamela Simpson, whom we honor in the upcoming volume.

As the current president, I wish to acknowledge a few of the many accomplishments HLF and its dedicated board now have in place. First, preservation has been on the minds of many in the past year as we see the difference on Main Street in Lexington. The Facade Grant Program has enabled many of our businesses to re-do their public face. Secondly, our new membership program has increased the size and productivity of our organization, and our programs for the public have increased in volume and value accordingly. Our annual Founders' Awards have encouraged and recognized those who have made significant efforts to enhance their historic properties. Two of our board, past and present, have actively participated in the development of the Miller's House Museum and HLF intends to be a sponsor of a Jordan's Point Historic District application. We have also facilitated plans for an updated survey of the Lexington Historic District.

I wish to thank our many supporters whose generous financial backing has made it possible for us to publish this important book on the architectural history of Rockbridge County and also to acknowledge our many friends who have let us know that they are a part of our mission. I extend gratitude to those who "get it"... that is, this effort of preserving and saving history. We all know who you are. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Beverly Tucker
President
HLF Board of Directors

(Dust jacket cover image: Natural Bridge from Edward Beyer's Album of Virginia (1858) courtesy of the Library of Virginia)

Board of Directors 2015

Beverly Tucker
President


Suzanne Barksdale Rice
Vice President

Peter Grover
Treasurer

Alison Bell
Secretary

Arthur Bartenstein
Mary Stuart Gilliam
Dee Joyce-Hayes
Robert Keefe
Bruce Macdonald
Matt Paxton, Jr.
Gene Sullivan
Rick Wolf

Don Hasfurther
Executive Director

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



The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge

In 1977, Historic Lexington Foundation published *The Architecture of Historic Lexington* with text by Royster Lyle, Jr. and Pamela Simpson and photographs by Sally Mann. To date, the book has gone through three printings and is still very much in demand.

It had been their intention to publish one day a similar book on Rockbridge County, but because of other obligations this never happened. For Pam, one of those other demands was her long-term involvement in Historic Lexington Foundation, an organization for which she served as president on several occasions.

The organization never forgot what it owed them, and soon their goal will be a reality. *The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge* will be available in late October. It is being published as a companion volume to the Lexington book. The book's preface is a tribute to Pam and Royster written by Matt Paxton, Jr., one of the founders of Historic Lexington Foundation. The book's author is Dan Pezzoni, an architectural historian who lives in Lexington with his wife Leslie Giles, a former executive director of Historic Lexington Foundation.

The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge records the wonderfully rich and diverse architectural history of Rockbridge County, including Lexington and Buena Vista. Organized thematically, the book traces the county's architecture from the 18th century through the post-World War II period. The hardcover volume is abundantly illustrated with more than 300 images, approximately one-half in full color.

Historic Lexington Foundation will begin selling the book in August at a pre-publication price of \$40, a 20% discount of what the book will cost once published. We will also offer the Lexington book as a package, also at a discount over its retail price. Those who purchase the Rockbridge book will be invited to a book signing in the fall. If you would like to receive an order form call HLF at 540-463-6832 or email us at hlf@rockbridge.net. The book may also be purchased by going to our website www.historiclexington.org.



Buena Vista Company Building
Courtesy J.D. Pezzoni



VMI Mess Hall
Courtesy VMI Archives



The Kessler House, Fairfield
Courtesy J.C. Foreman, SC, WLU

Lexington to Undertake Survey of Historic District

A lot has happened in Lexington's downtown since the area received state and federal historic district designation in the early 1970s. It was in that period that Historic Lexington Foundation began acquiring and helping to save historic buildings that were threatened from demolition by neglect. Among those acquired by Historic Lexington Foundation were the Alexander-Withrow Building, the Jacob Ruff House, and the Central Hotel (McCampbell Inn).

In 1971, when the historic district nomination was written, the National Park Service required only a minimal amount of information documenting the architecture and history of the building or district under consideration. As an example, the totality of the information on Lexington's churches reads: "Several churches remain on Main Street: with the most significant being the Lexington Presbyterian Church, a massive Greek Revival structure built in 1843 at the intersection with Nelson Street."

The City of Lexington is now committed to seeing that the National Register nomination is updated. In addition to better documenting Lexington's architecture and history, there is another important reason for this undertaking. To be a "contributing" structure in a historic district—a structure that contributes to the historic significance of the district—a building generally has to be 50 years or older. In 1971, this meant that those structures built after the early 1920s were not considered "contributing" to the historic district.

This is important, as "contributing" buildings are eligible for state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits, a significant incentive for property owners to undertake the restoration of those buildings. And when property owners use the tax credits, the restoration is done under the supervision of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), thus ensuring that the restoration is done properly. Once the nomination update is completed, many more buildings in the downtown will be eligible for these tax credits.

As the first step in the nomination update, the City of Lexington will be undertaking a survey of all properties within the state/federal historic district. To achieve this, DHR has committed matching funds and will be administering the survey. Historic Lexington Foundation assisted in this process and has also committed funding for the nomination update.



Alexander-Withrow Building (c. 1970)



Alexander-Withrow Building (August 2015)



Central Hotel (c. 1970)



McCampbell Inn, formerly Central Hotel (August 2015)

Preservation Month Features Historic Rockbridge Resorts

In recognition of 2015 National Preservation Month, Historic Lexington Foundation sponsored a presentation on The Historic Resorts, Inns, and Hotels of Rockbridge County. HLF chose this year's topic in part as a celebration of recent restoration activity on The Georges (the Alexander-Withrow Building and the McCampbell Inn), the Robert E. Lee Hotel, and the Natural Bridge Hotel. The owners of The Georges and the Robert E. Lee Hotel were 2015 recipients of HLF Founders' Awards for historic preservation.

Architectural historian Dan Pezzoni, who delivered a lecture on the area's historic resorts, inns and hotels to mark Preservation Month, is also the author of a forthcoming HLF book entitled *The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge*. "Recent developments at Natural Bridge remind us that tourism has always been an important aspect of Rockbridge County life", notes Pezzoni. "The early county boasted numerous hostelries to cater to the traveling and partying public, among them Lexington's Shields Tavern where William Clark breakfasted in 1809 on his way to give his report on the success of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to Thomas Jefferson, and Steeles Tavern which lent its name to a community. Something of the feel of the old inns is preserved in Brownsburg with its complement of early tavern-residences."

In the nineteenth century the owners of allegedly curative mineral springs developed fashionable springs resorts where "taking the waters" drew hundreds of summertime spring-goers from hot, humid, fever-ridden lowlands. The grand lady of the Rockbridge resorts was Rockbridge Alum Springs, which is said to have developed around a deer lick where hunters drank the

water for their "diseased glands and stomach troubles." A veritable city in the wilderness sprang up at the site in the 1850s replete with hotels and guest cottages, a bandstand, a bowling alley, and the obligatory spring pavilion, an architectural confection capped by a statue of Hygeia, the Greek goddess of health and hygiene. Jordan Alum Springs, Wilson Springs, Cold Sulphur Springs, and Rockbridge Baths were other important watering holes.

The railroad-fueled urbanization boom of the late 1800s resulted in the construction of mammoth hotels in the new communities of Buena Vista, Goshen, and Glasgow. Of these, only the rambling turreted Hotel Buena Vista (the main building of Southern Virginia University) survives. The railroad was superseded by the automobile which spelled the end of the springs resorts as newly mobile vacationers set their sights on more distant horizons, although Natural Bridge, a tourist mecca from the days of Thomas Jefferson's ownership, flourished in the twentieth century. A succession of hotels culminated with the completion of the present "Jeffersonian" brick hotel in 1964. Car travel inspired the 1920s Robert E. Lee Hotel in Lexington, at six stories still the area's tallest building, and the motor courts that mushroomed along highways. Rustic camps developed in the county's mountains and forests, among them Camp Okahawis at the mouth of Goshen Pass and Cave Mountain Lake with its impressive log picnic shelter. Today Rockbridge County's historic buildings are popular for developments like The Georges and Abigail Inn in Lexington and bed and breakfasts in towns and rural areas.



Jordan Springs Grand Hotel. The hotel as built was smaller than pictured here. Courtesy W&L Special Collections.



The c. 1890 Palace Hotel, better known as the Alleghany, overlooking Goshen from the south. Courtesy W&L Special Collections.

Recognition for Lexington's Jordan's Point

Most of the 19th and early 20th structures at Jordan's Point have long been lost. The last of its covered bridges was lost as a result of flooding in the 1940s. Historic photographs and maps are most of what remains to remind one of the industry and commerce that once flourished on what was known by many as "The Island." The black and white photographs on this page are courtesy of Robert Humphris and can be found in Anne McClung's recent book *Dried Apples and Other Vanishing Memories of Rockbridge County, Virginia*.

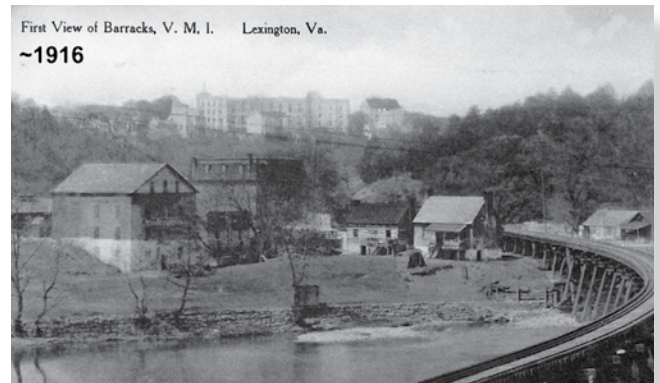
The one building that does remain is the c. 1800 Miller's House. The house was deeded to the City of Lexington by Historic Lexington Foundation and after a lengthy restoration is about to open as a museum. Operated by the Miller's House Museum Foundation, the museum tells the story of Jordan's Point and its industrial and transportation heritage. On the top floor is a model railroad illustrating Jordan's Point during the period when the railroad brought passengers and freight to Lexington.

With the end of the railroad, a section of what had been track between Lexington and Buena Vista is now the Chessie Trail. The trail follows the Maury River and provides hikers views of what remains of the North River Navigation System, the canal system that brought canal boats through the numerous locks between Glasgow and Lexington. Today, the Friends of the Chessie Trail is working to publicize and interpret the trail.

In 2013, Historic Lexington Foundation proposed to the City of Lexington the establishment of a Jordan's Point Historic District. As a great deal of the ultimate nomination will be based on archaeology, Historic Lexington Foundation has collaborated with Washington and Lee Archaeology to assist in the effort. Historic Lexington Foundation expects work on the nomination to begin later this year. This is being made possible, in part, by donations we have received in memory of Mitzi Perry-Miller, an historic preservationist who once lived in Lexington.



Trestle and covered bridge



VMI Barracks, 1916



Miller's House Museum



Circus tents

Thanks To Our Contributors

A list of those whose gifts were received between October 2014 and August 2015

Patrons

Gifts of \$1,000 or more

Mr. and Mrs. Bruce C. Gottwald
Julie and Peter Grover
Mr. and Mrs. H.E. Ravenhorst

Benefactors

Gifts of \$500-\$999

Frances B. Brooke
Marguerite Old

Sustainers

Gifts of \$250-\$499

Mr. and Mrs. John P. Ackerly III
Rogers L. Crain
Cleveland Hickman
Connie and Charles Horner
Pfizer Foundation
Prudential Foundation
Henry Simpson
Beverly and Spencer Tucker
Nan and Rick Wolf

Partners

Gifts \$100-\$249

Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Ackerly
William Badgett
Robert Baldwin
Alison Bell
Elizabeth and Larry Boetsch
Lenny and Rick Bruno
Mr. and Mrs. Edward D.C. Campbell, Jr.
Margaret and Lloyd Craighill
Mimi Elrod
Margaret Davis
Tom Goodwin
Don Hasfurther
Gary Hayes and Dee Joyce-Hayes
Judy and Farris Hotchkiss
Chris and David Howison
Robert S. Keefe
S.L. Kopald, Jr.
Louise and Bill Latture
Sunny and Bruce Macdonald
Pauline and John Mason
Cindy and Grigg Mullen
Nelson and Randolph LLC

Suzanne Read
Re/Max Town & Country
Barbara and Norm Rollenhagen
Lori and Woody Sadler
Sallie and John Sebrell
Sally and Dick Sessoms
Bonnie and Hart Slater
Esther and Jim Stokes
George J. Tompkins III
Harry Warner
Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Watson

Friends

Gifts up to \$99

Luigia and Ugo Benincasa
Carol and Warren Bryan
Norma and Wayne Combs
Elizabeth Donald
Jean Eisenhower
Jane and John Forster
Laura Cameron and Lee McCown
Patricia Hammond
Janet and Leonard Jarrard
Beth and John Knapp
Jim Kostelni
Thomas Litzenburg, Jr.
Rebecca and Holt Merchant
George Pryde
Carol and Dave Reynolds
Suzanne Barksdale Rice
Constance and Ross Schmoll
Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Winston Spence
Dan and Kathleen Vance
Anne and Richard Weed

Contributors to The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge

Arthur and Margoth Bartenstein
Reed H. Belden
In Memory of Sue Belden
Alison Bell
Ugo Benincasa
Elizabeth and Laurent Boetsch
In Memory of Mary and Tom Gentry
Stephanie Bond
Susan Brady
In Memory of Pat and Mary Brady
Col. and Mrs. George Brooke, III
In Memory of Royster Lyle
Gillie Campbell and Michael Seltz

Allan and Marian Carlsson
Philip and Ava Clayton
Ben and Elizabeth Cline
Art and Beth Cusick
In Memory of Jim Hargan and Alice Anderson
Tom and Helen Davis
In Memory of Pam Simpson
Margaret C. Davis
In Memory of Pam Simpson
William Dawson, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. H.E. Derrick, Jr.
Nancy Epley
In Honor of Maury Hanson
James D. and Katherine C. Farrar, Jr.
The Georges Inn
Leslie Giles and Dan Pezzoni
Mary Stuart Gilliam
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Goad
In Memory of Pamela Simpson
Elizabeth Greenlee
In Memory of Royster Lyle
Ben and Carol Grigsby
In Memory of "Soldier John" Grigsby of Fruit Hill
Josephine and Grant Griswold
David Grizzle
Peter and Julie Grover
Allen and Franziska Haight
Dr. Maury Hanson
Will and Janie Harris
In Memory of Bill and Louise Harris
Donald Hasfurther
In Honor of Edlow Morrison
Gary Hayes and Dee Joyce-Hayes
The Estate of James A. Hight, Jr.
Charles and Constance Horner
Mr. and Mrs. Farris Pierson Hotchkiss
In Honor of Beverly Tucker
Delos Hughes
In Memory of Pamela H. Simpson
Tom and Marta Kastner
Mr. and Mrs. Peter C. Keefe
Robert S. Keefe
John Knapp
Mr. and Mrs. William Loughridge
Bill and Barbara Luton
Bruce and Sunny Macdonald
G. Otis Mead, III
In Memory of Royster Lyle and Pam Simpson
In Honor of Sally Mann

Frank A. Parsons
In Memory of Pam Simpson
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew W. Paxton, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. H.E. Ravenhorst
In Memory of Henry L. Ravenhorst, architect, and John W. Ravenhorst, archaeologist
George and Pree Ray
Suzanne Read
Suzanne Barksdale Rice
In Memory of Mary Marshall Dupuy Taylor and Jean and Flournoy H. Barksdale
Rockbridge Historical Society
Alyson and Bennett Ross
Eugene and Nancy Sullivan
Merrily E. Taylor
In Memory of Barbara J. Brown
The Rev. George J. Tompkins
Elizabeth K. Tracy
Spencer and Beverly Tucker
In Memory of Elizabeth B. Tucker
Dan and Kathleen Vance
Susan and Ted Van Leer
Virginia Military Institute
Mr. and Mrs. Harry W. Warner
Washington and Lee University
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Watson
Clara Belle Weatherman
Lyn and Carol Wheeler
In Memory of Winifred and Fred Hadsel
Alec and Linda Wilder
Rick and Nan Wolf
Mr. and Mrs. David W. Zwart

Contributions in Memory of Mitzi Perry-Miller

Joan J. Baker
Jerry W. Biesel, Attorney at Law
Richard B. Brown, III
Mary Ann Collins
Stanley V. Graff
Randi and Ed Halsell
James E. Marks, HUB International
Personal Insurance
Carole and Tom McBride
Park Cities Quail
Texas Premier Title

Photos From *The Architecture of Historic Rockbridge*



Lexington Presbyterian Church and Robert E. Lee Hotel
Courtesy Gail McLeod



Rockbridge Alum Spring
Courtesy Arthur Bartenstein



Remains of brick barn, Balcony Downs
Courtesy Virginia Department of Historic Resources



Natural Bridge 1957. The hotel was largely destroyed by fire in April 1963. Courtesy of the Library of Virginia



Interior of Belfield
Courtesy Sally Mann