

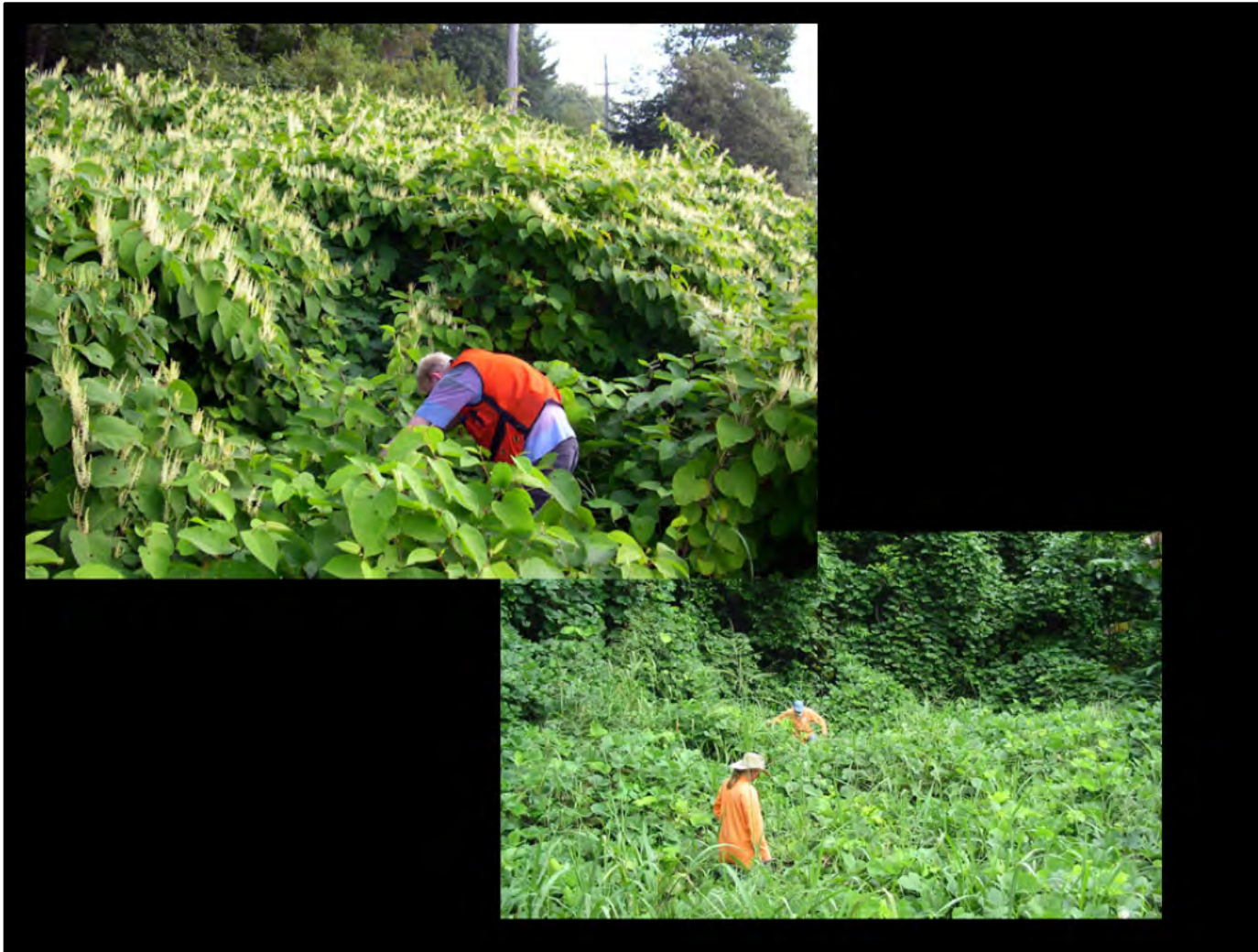
The following power point presentation was prepared for the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council's March 21, 2018 City of Lexington 10-year Comprehensive Plan Update Forum by Arthur Bartenstein. Great thanks are owed Washington and Lee University Library Special Collections and Archives Department for assistance with research and provision of all historic photographs. The program's author was also greatly assisted by both Charles Bodie's *Remarkable Rockbridge: The Story of Rockbridge County, Virginia* and Royster Lyle Jr, Pamela Simpson, and Sally Munger Mann's *The Architecture of Historic Lexington*.



The red rectangle traced on a present-day figure-ground map of Lexington represents the town's first official boundary established 1778. Lexington was then 26 acres.



Now 1600 acres, 60+ times bigger, the red line depicts today's official boundary.



So having grown so much, is Lexington's identity more a boom town spreading out like a weed;



(a view of Mexico City)



or at the spectrum's opposite end, a bonsai town - growth's highly restricted?



Like villages in Germany



Spain, Switzerland, China?

(#3) 800 Year old tree, at Shunka-en, by Kunio Kobayashi

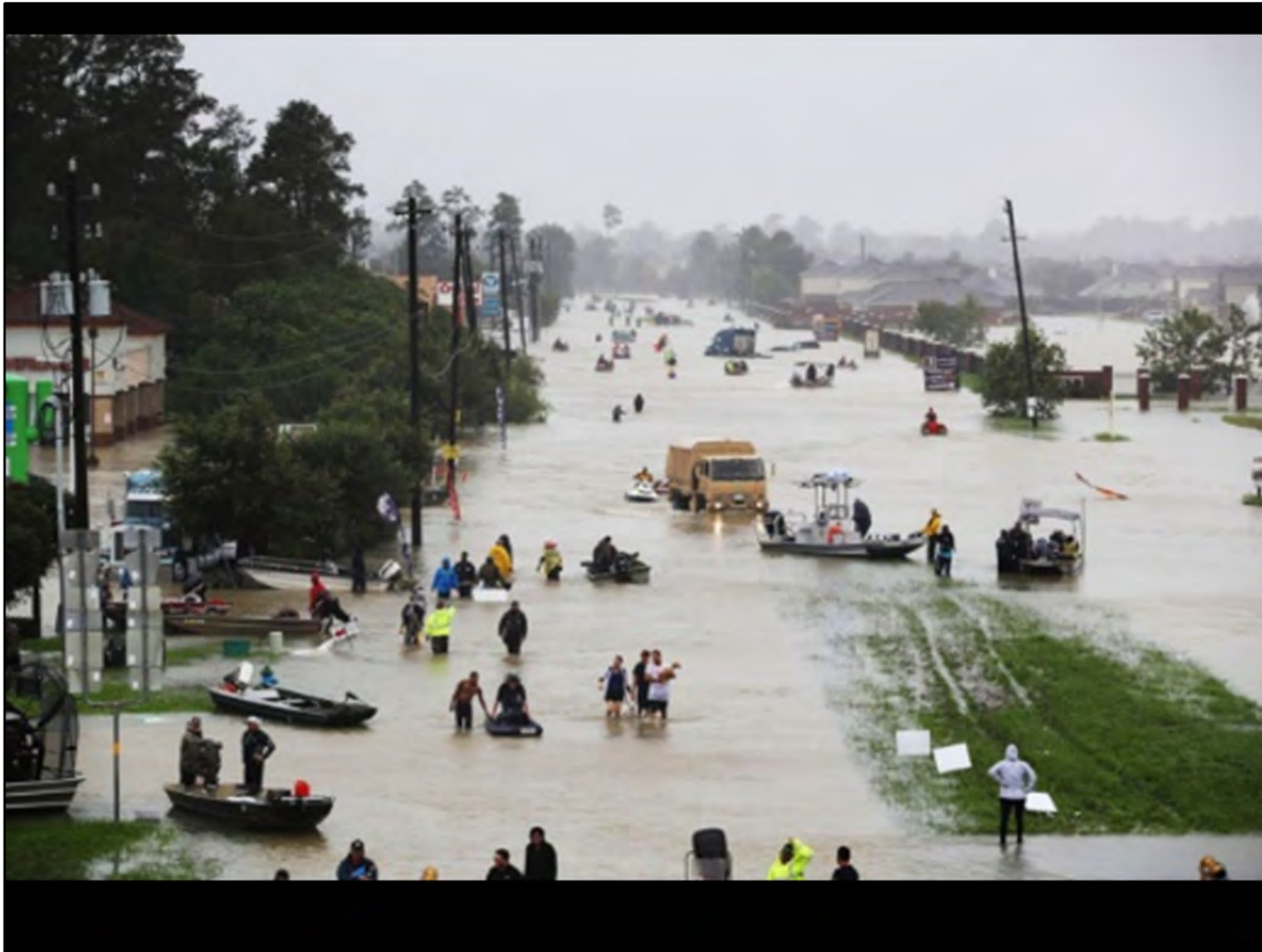


Bonsai literally translates from Japanese to “planted in a container”. Worshipped for perfection of character and beauty, cultivated centuries long by generations of bonsai masters, bonsais come at a price demanding measured, proficient care.

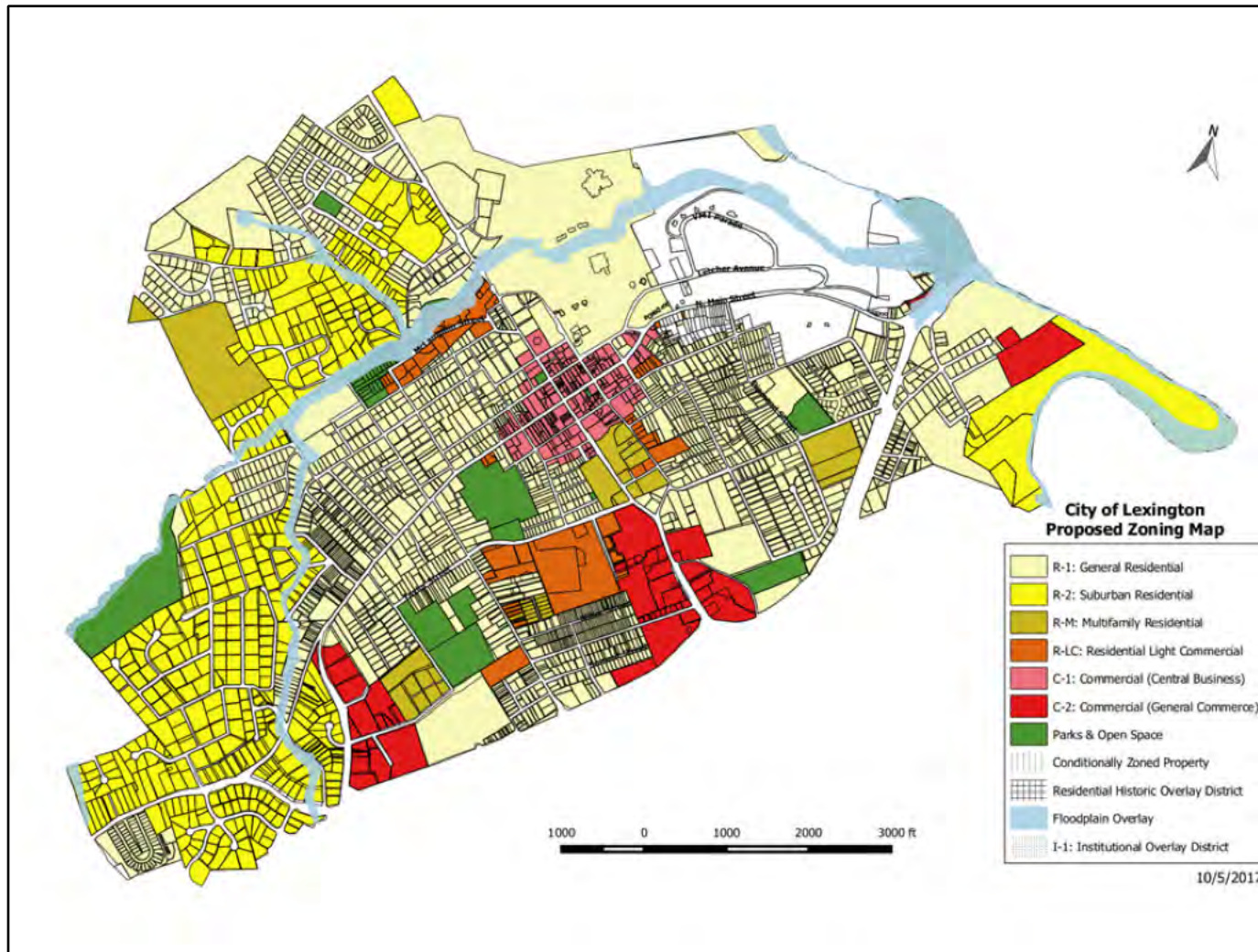
Aged bonsais worshipped for their singular character and beauty are cultivated by generations of gardeners. No question, bonsais demand care: water, fertilizer, occasional pruning and repotting.



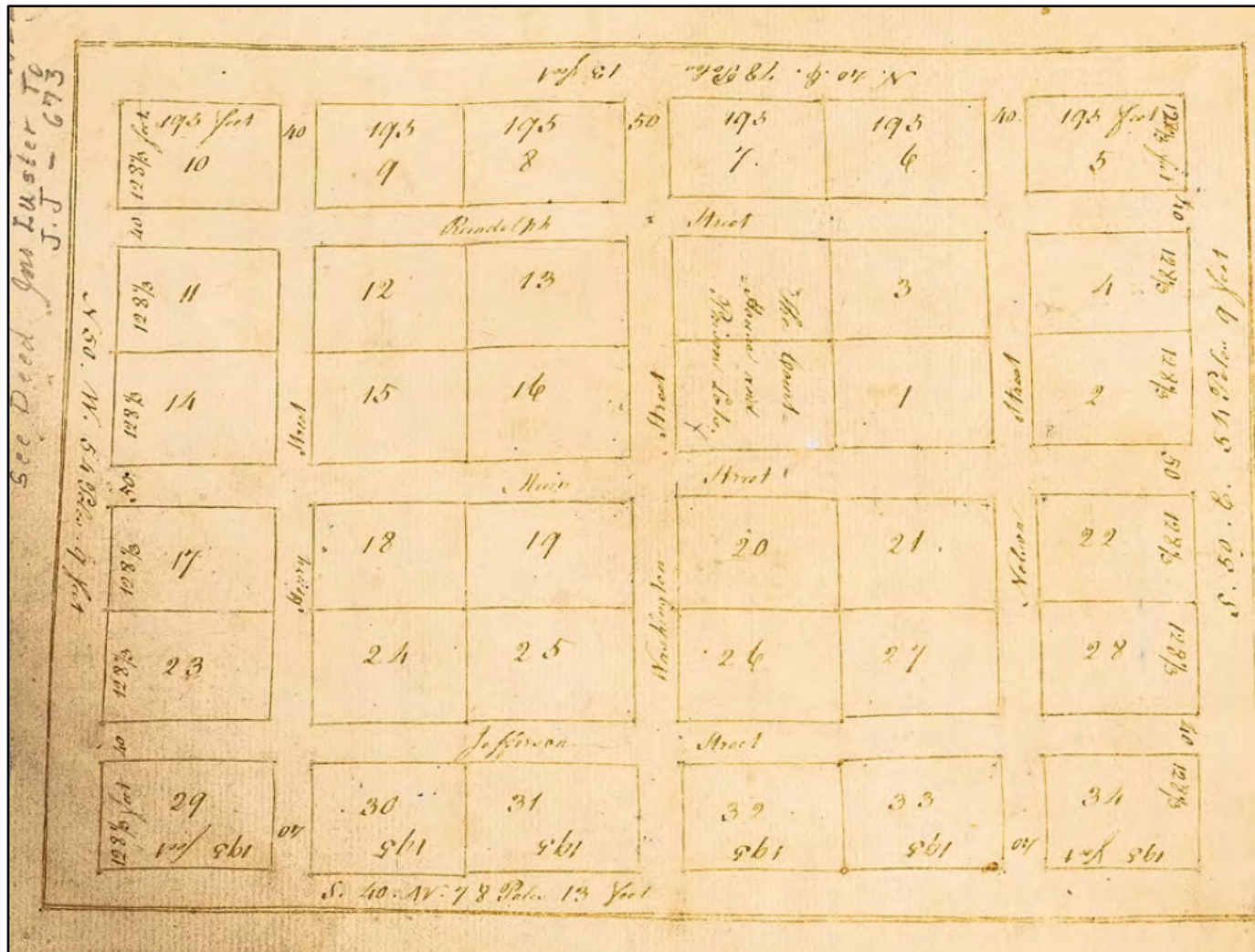
Bonsais in rare cases may occur in nature. Clinging above the Maury, this arbor vitae is quite likely centuries old.



Fair to say, uncontrolled growth may also come at numbing cost to both quality of life and environment. Houston after Harvey!



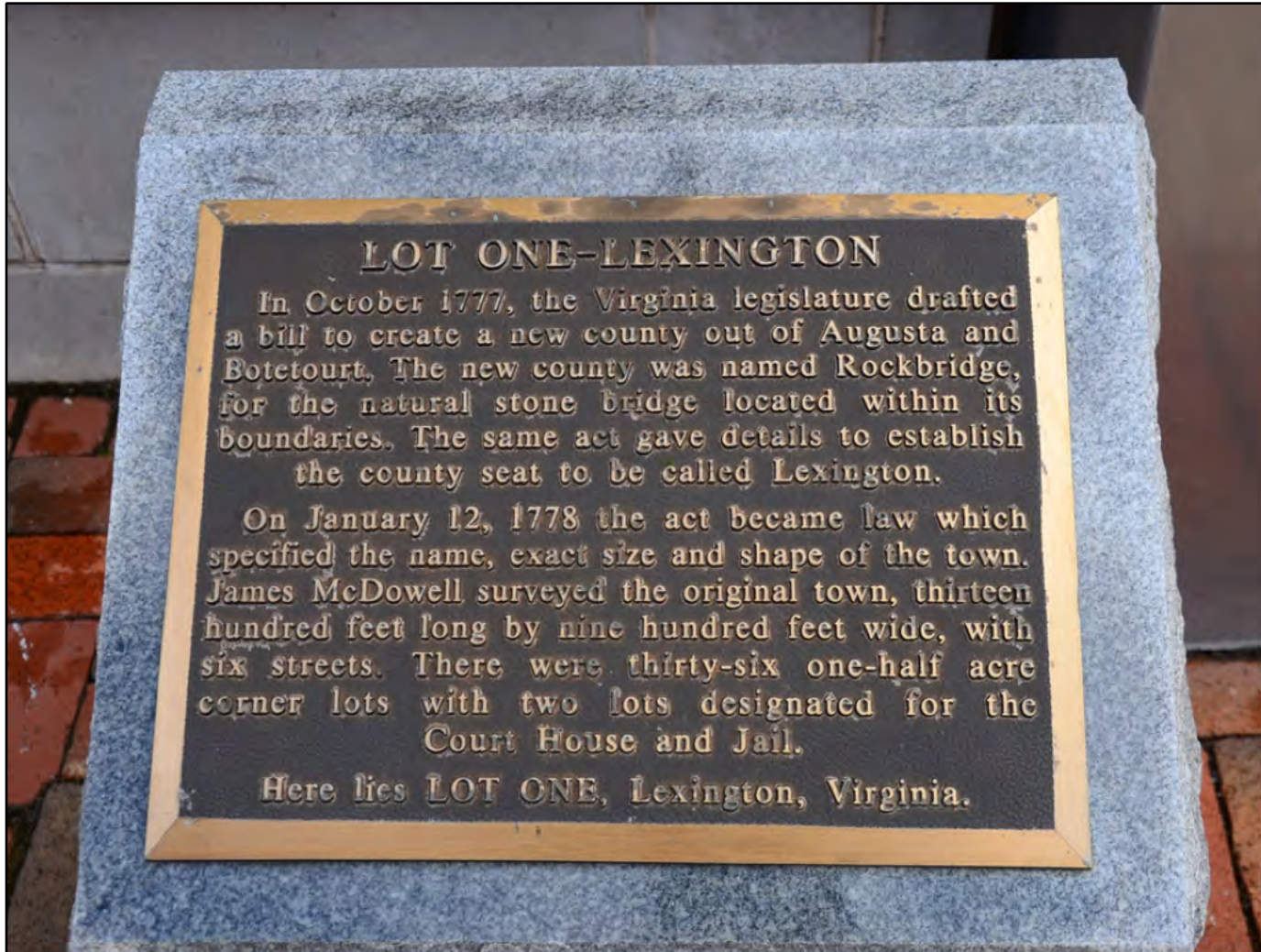
The City of Lexington's most recent, 2007 Comprehensive Plan opens with a one page *"History of Local Planning Efforts"* the first sentence of which reads: *"The first comprehensive plan for the City of Lexington was adopted 1975."*



240 years ago, 1778, James McDowell drafted this plan for Lexington – a rectangle! McDowell’s plan was fully implemented.



And, as this sidewalk memorial to the plan informs,



survives!



It's not just individual buildings qualifying as "historic"!

This is an aerial view of today's downtown; exact same street and grid block pattern!

North-south Randolph, Main, Jefferson.
East-west Henry, Washington, Nelson.

“Though Lexington was carefully laid out by the surveyor, it was hardly planned. There was little thought given to the topography or the aesthetics of the new town.”

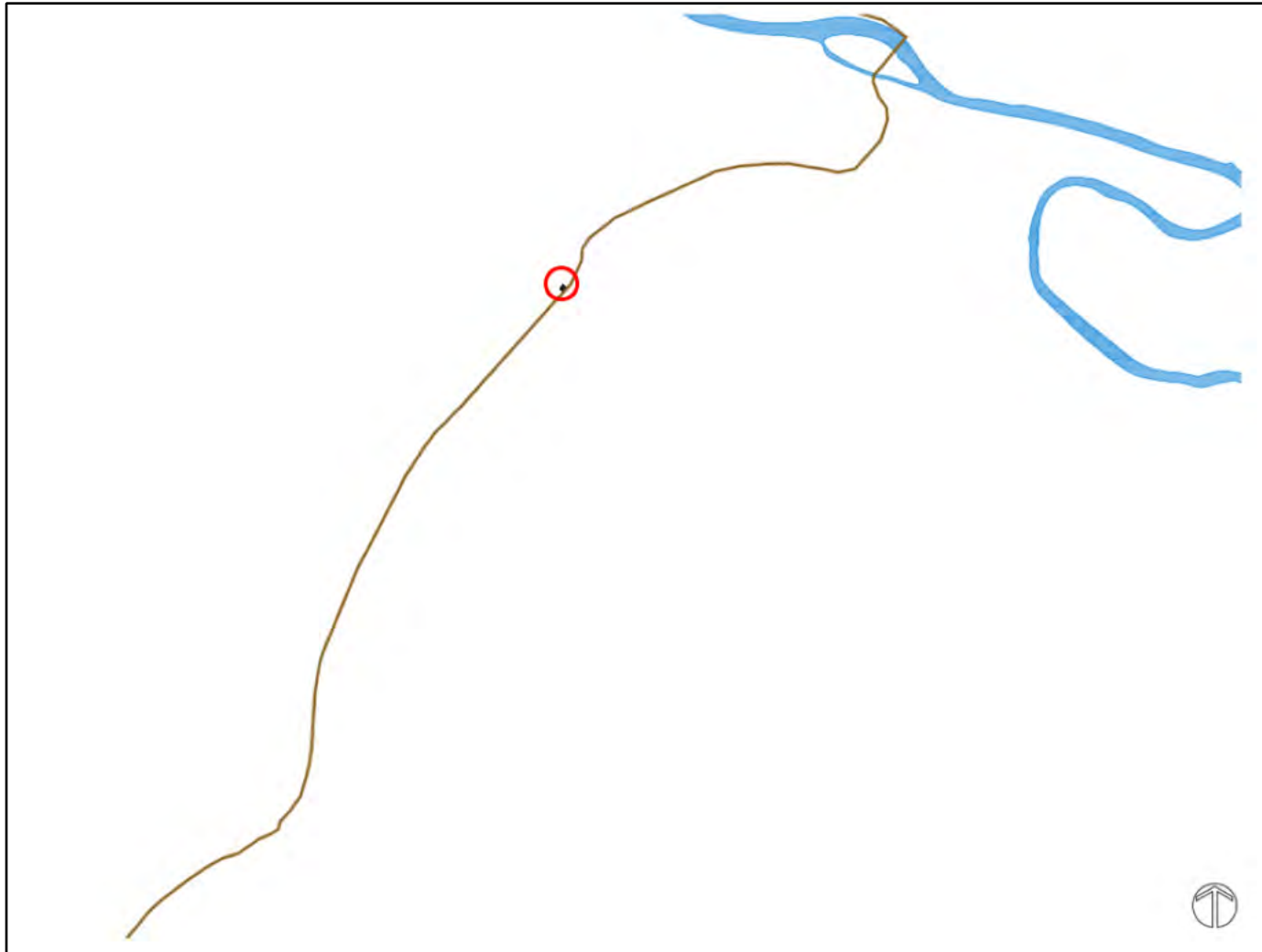
Pam Simpson & Royster Lyle
Architecture of Historic Lexington,

Royster Lyle and Pam Simpson have nothing good to say about McDowell’s scheme:

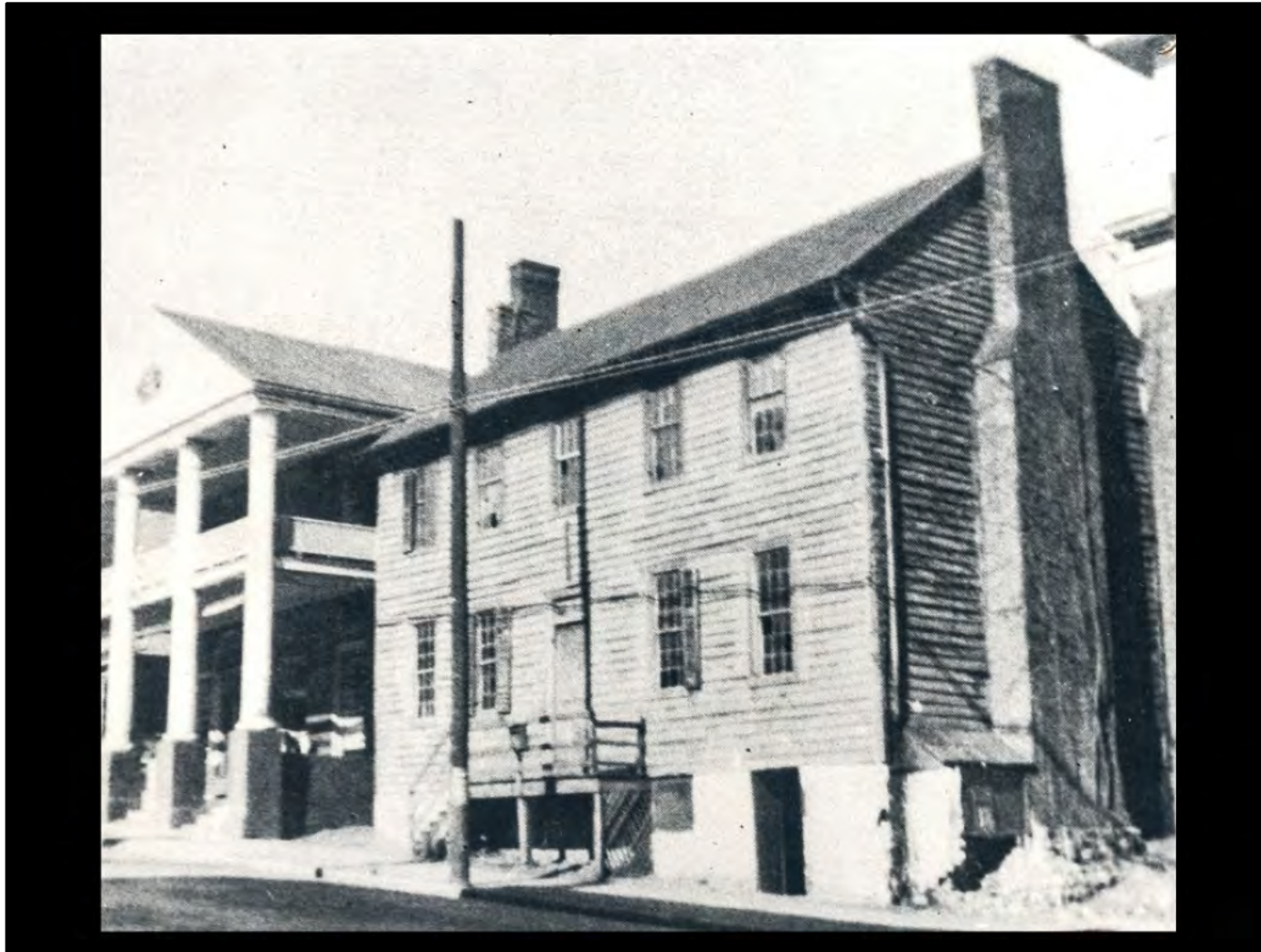
(to quote directly from their *Architecture of Historic Lexington*) *“Though Lexington was carefully laid out by the surveyor, it was hardly planned. There was little thought given to either topography or aesthetics of the new town.”*



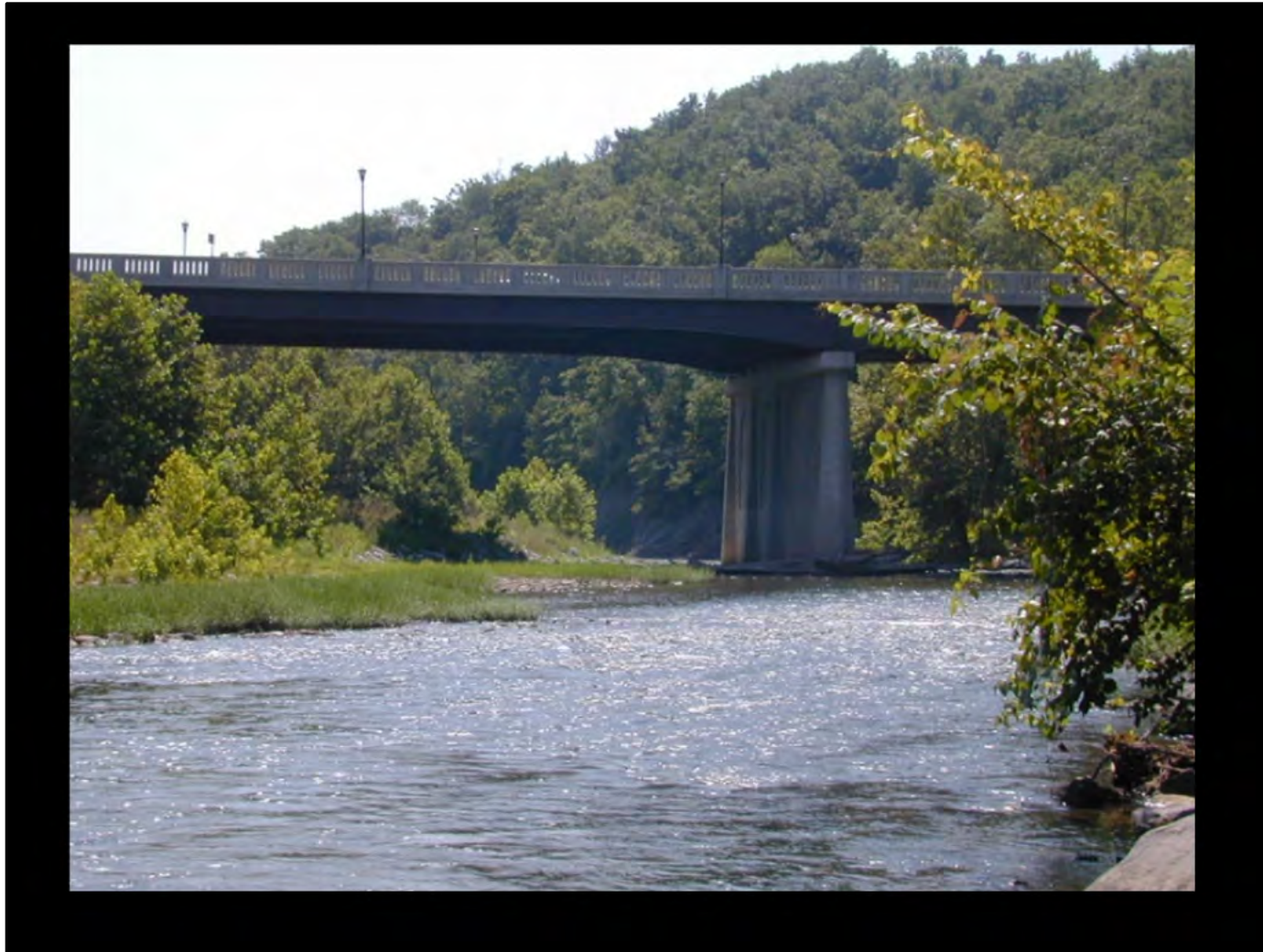
Whoa! Time for *A Closer Look*!



Lexington started out just the Valley Pike and Isaac Campbell's farmhouse circled in red.



Pam and Royster conjecture this timber frame house was Isaac's family residence – so the town's oldest building until torn down - 1939.



Campbell's income was supplemented by a ford crossing the Maury, then known as North River.



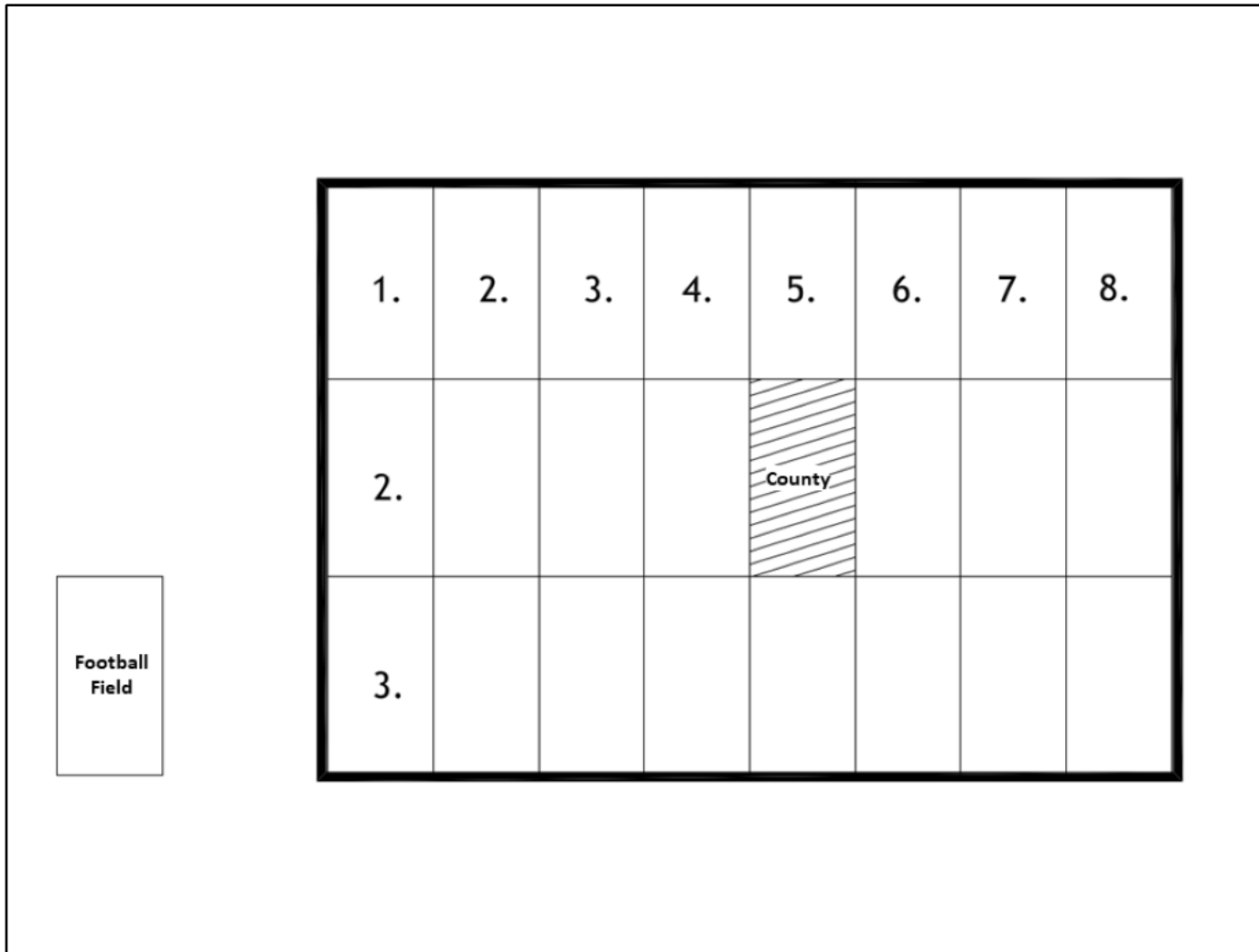
What was to become Lexington was still part of Augusta County, frontier capital of which was Staunton.

Staunton was of course a long and difficult horse and buggy trip. Rockbridge and Botetourt Counties were formed from parent Augusta principally for the convenience of attending court and/or conducting County business.

This is the famous 1753 Joshua Fry, Peter Jefferson map of Virginia, pre-dating Lexington by 25 years; Peter Jefferson's son Thomas now ten.

Note Staunton, courthouse and the Indian road to Philadelphia crossing the North River. Neither Lexington (yet unborn) nor Woods Creek (likely

insignificant) are depicted.

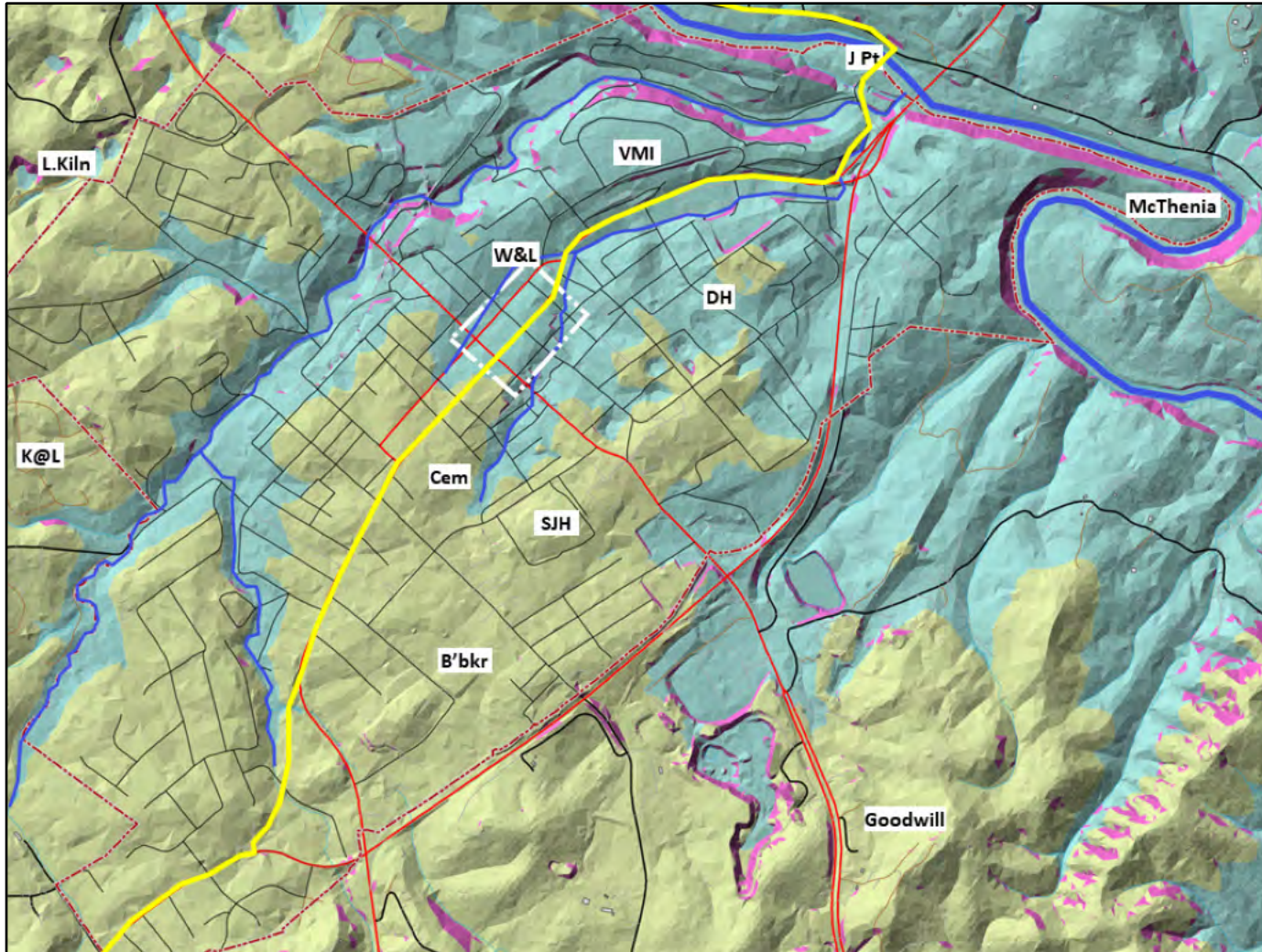


So the House of Burgesses authorized County representatives to locate a 900' x 1,300' town to be named Lexington with one acre set aside for the county seat. Twenty four football fields – 8 across, 3 down.

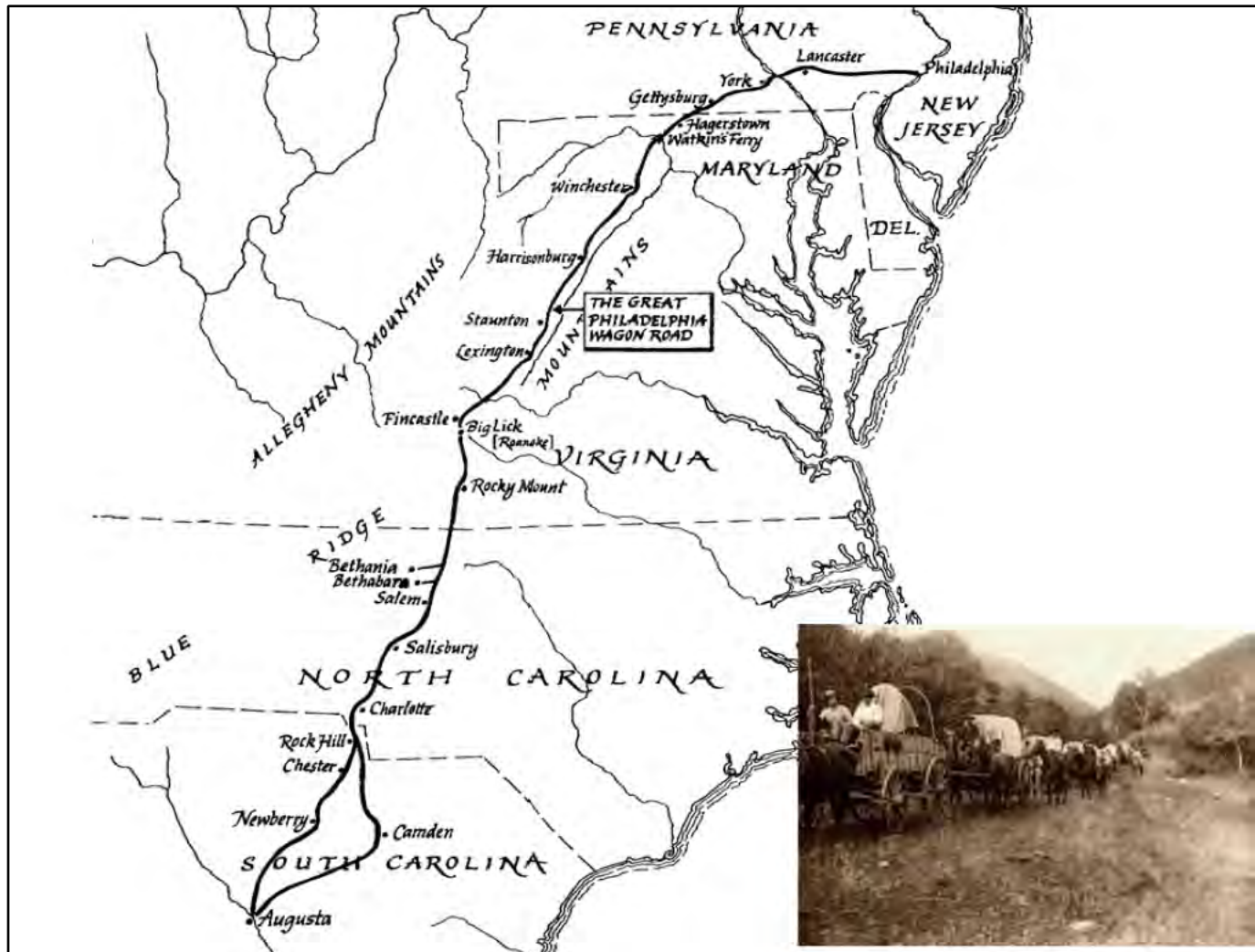
*Ordered that James McDowell Surveyor of this County, do survey the
Land appointed for the Town of Lexington, & that the said Surveyor
meet at Isaac Campbell's to survey the said Land, the 18th day of
this month.*

*Ordered that James McDowell Surveyor of this County, do
survey the land appointed for the Town of Lexington, and that
the said surveyor meet at Isaac Campbell's to survey the said
land, the 18th day of this month.*

A majority of the court-named representatives target a property adjacent to North River owned by Isaac Campbell. The 7th page of Rockbridge County's order Book One directs surveyor James McDowell to meet at Isaac Campbell's to survey the land.



Why was Lexington (white rectangle) located on the Valley Pike (yellow line), also known as the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road, centered on branches of a tributary to a North River tributary to be named Woods Creek, less than a mile from the North River but high enough to not flood? One can think of several reasons.



First, the Valley Pike, also known as the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road, was (like parallel I-81 today) a major frontier and colonial artery – from Philadelphia to Columbus, Georgia.

“Because the road connected one of the great centers of American commerce in Philadelphia through the Valley to the Carolinas by mid-eighteenth-century and to trans-Appalachian frontiers in Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee during the Age of Independence, it entered into the mainstream of American life as one of the great corridors of national development and expansion.”

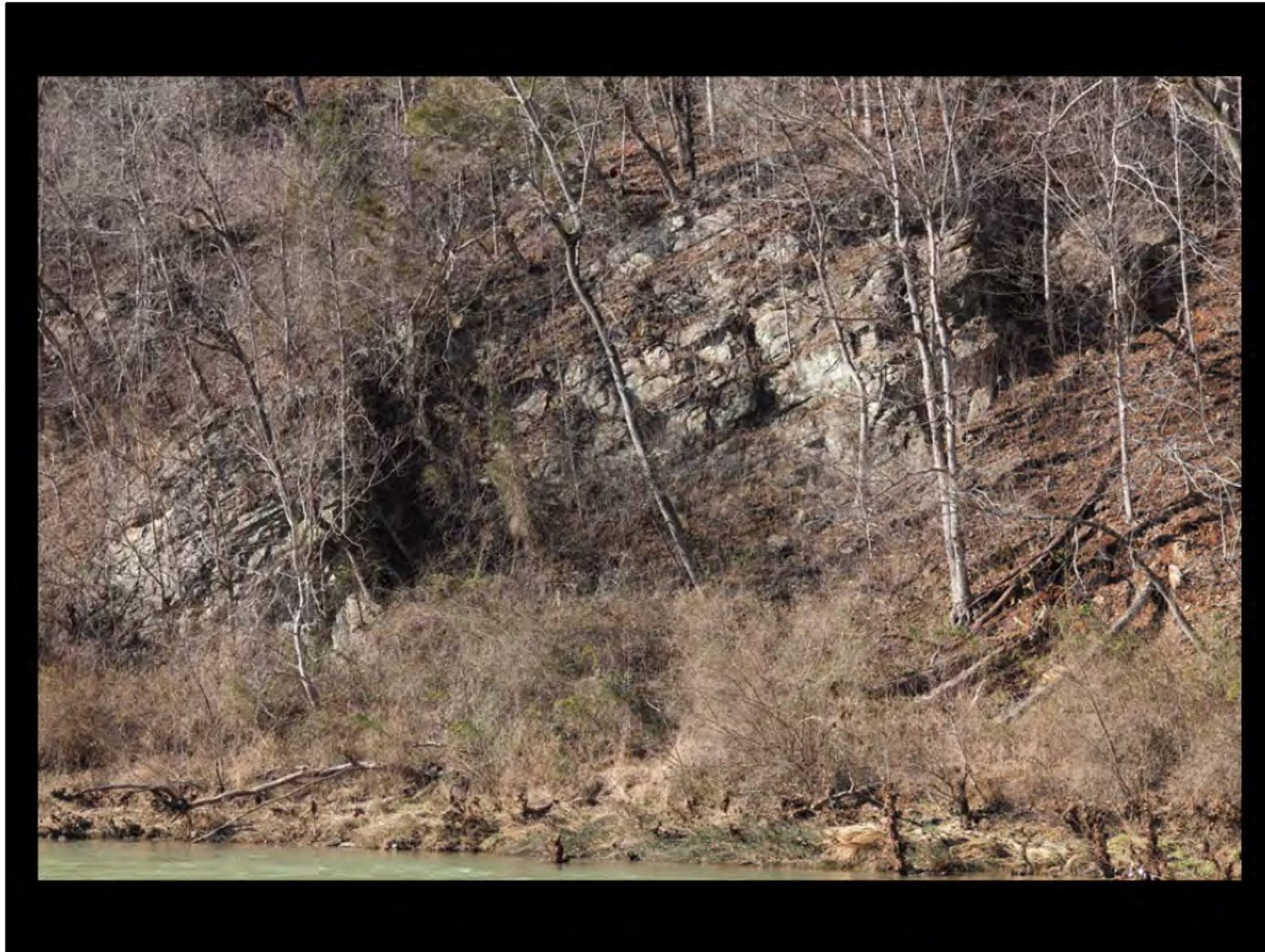
Warren Hofstra

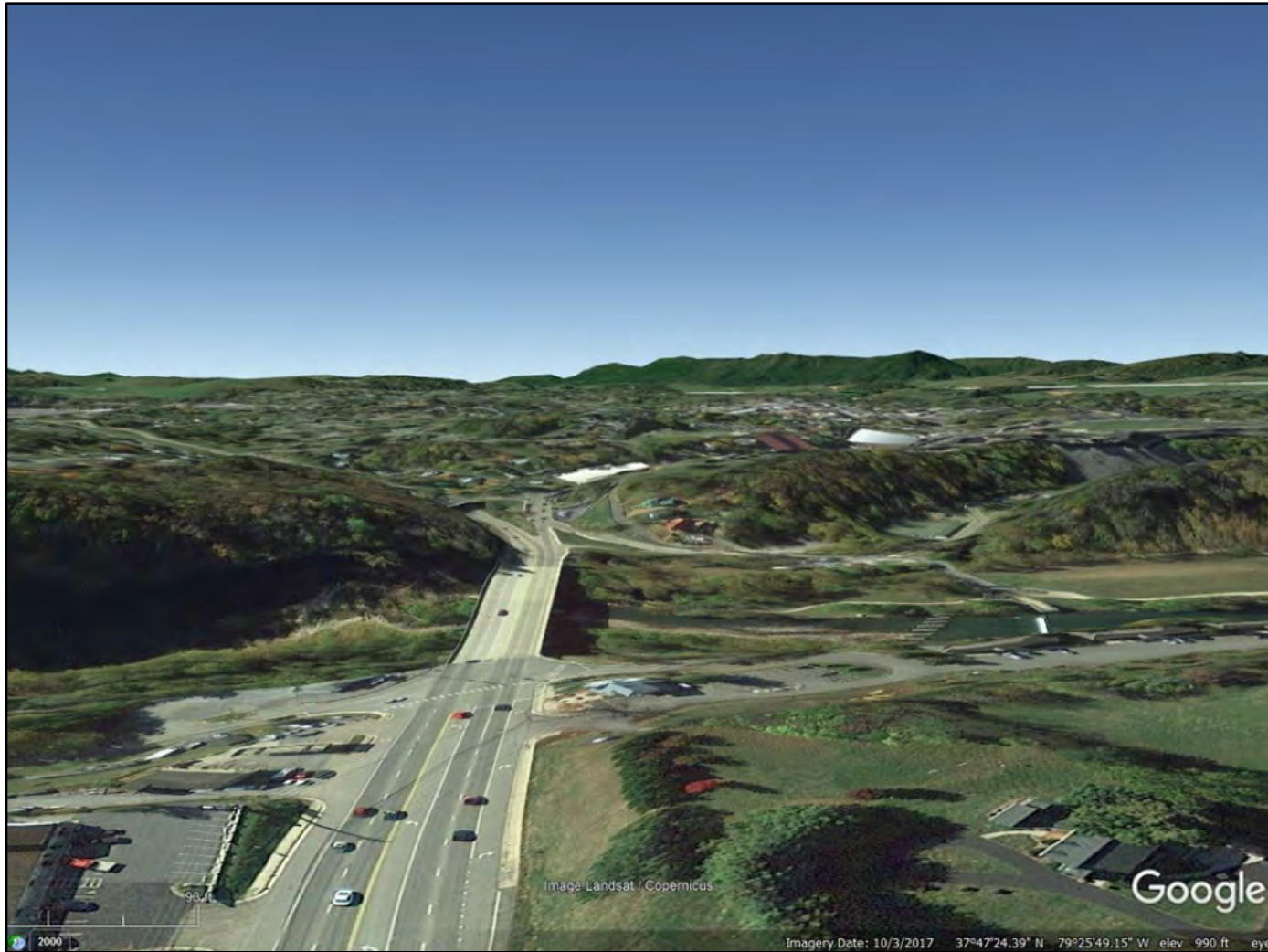
Shenandoah University historian Warren Hofstra explains: *“Because the road connected one of the great centers of American commerce in Philadelphia through the Valley to the Carolinas by mid-eighteenth-century and to trans-Appalachian frontiers in Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee during the Age of Independence, it entered into the mainstream of American life as one of the great corridors of national development and expansion.”*

Improvised as a hunting and migration route north to south across the North American continent via the Shenandoah Valley, initial credit for the Valley Pike is due native Americans.



The Valley Road crossed the Maury at the site of Lexington because lined by cliffs,



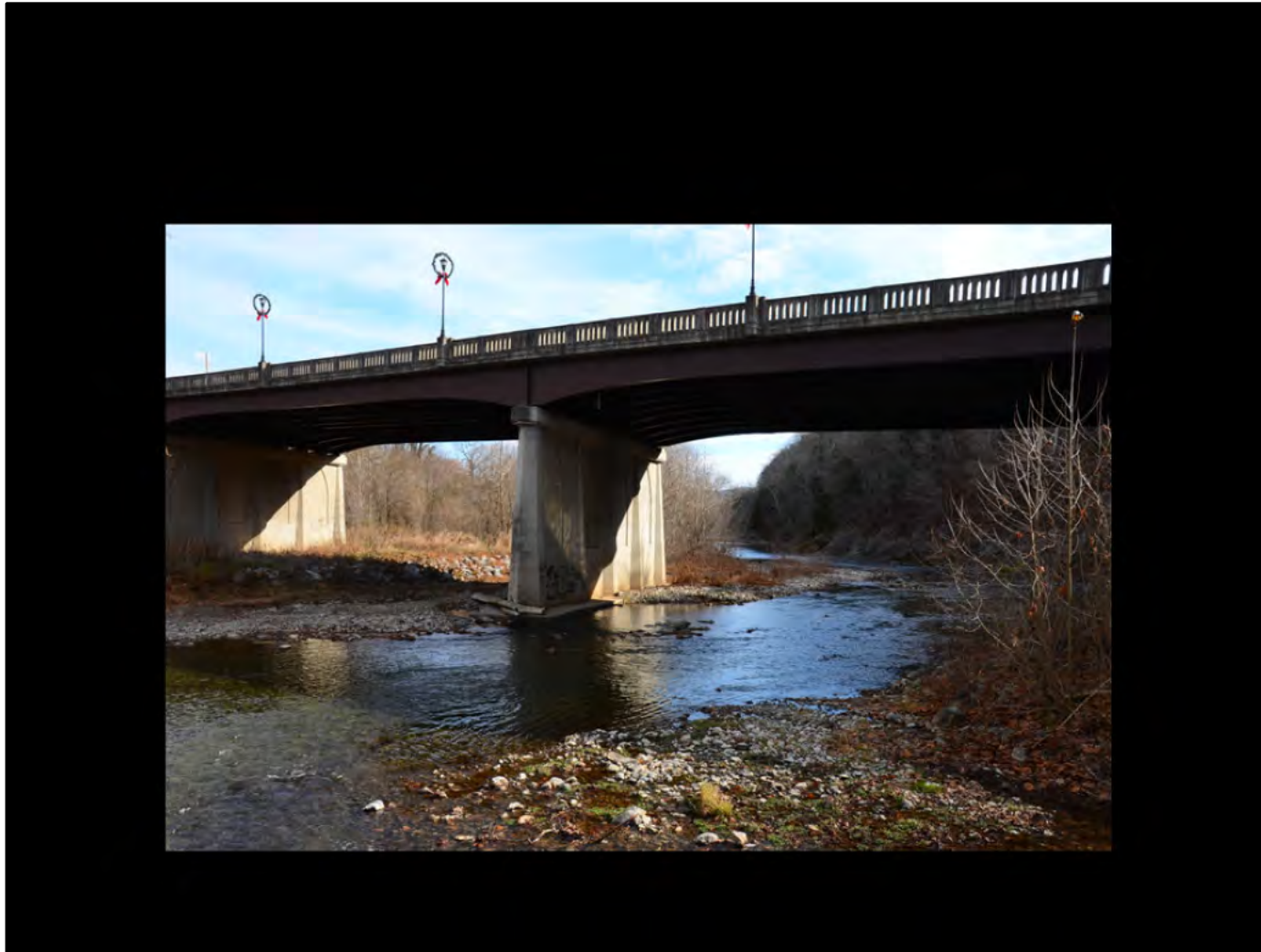


the Woods Creek confluence allowed access to the river.

A Google birdseye view looking south from Hunter Hill.



The “pass” into Lexington as viewed from the ground.



The confluence of Woods Creek and the Maury.



So, being on the Valley Pike's the first reason.

Second, related to the first, Lexington was also at a critical, east/west crossroads given routes west following the Maury River upstream – already well “roughed-in” thanks to Indian trail routes.



and east, the promise of navigable passage via the James River through the Blue Ridge at Balcony Falls. Eventually, a canal better exploited this route. Beyer's engraving is of Glasgow.



Third, both the Maury River and Woods Creek offered reliable water power.



Fourth, Lexington's where it is because of the site's abundant fresh springs. Those springs fed the old Town Branch – a stream now mostly buried under VMI's Indoor Training Facility; Cameron, Kilbourne, and Cormick Halls; and Alumni Memorial Football Field; and Route 11's bypass merger.



Town Branch



culverted under the VMI's new Indoor Training Facility.



Town Branch emerging at Woods Creek



directly below Beechenbrook Chapel (visible above culvert)



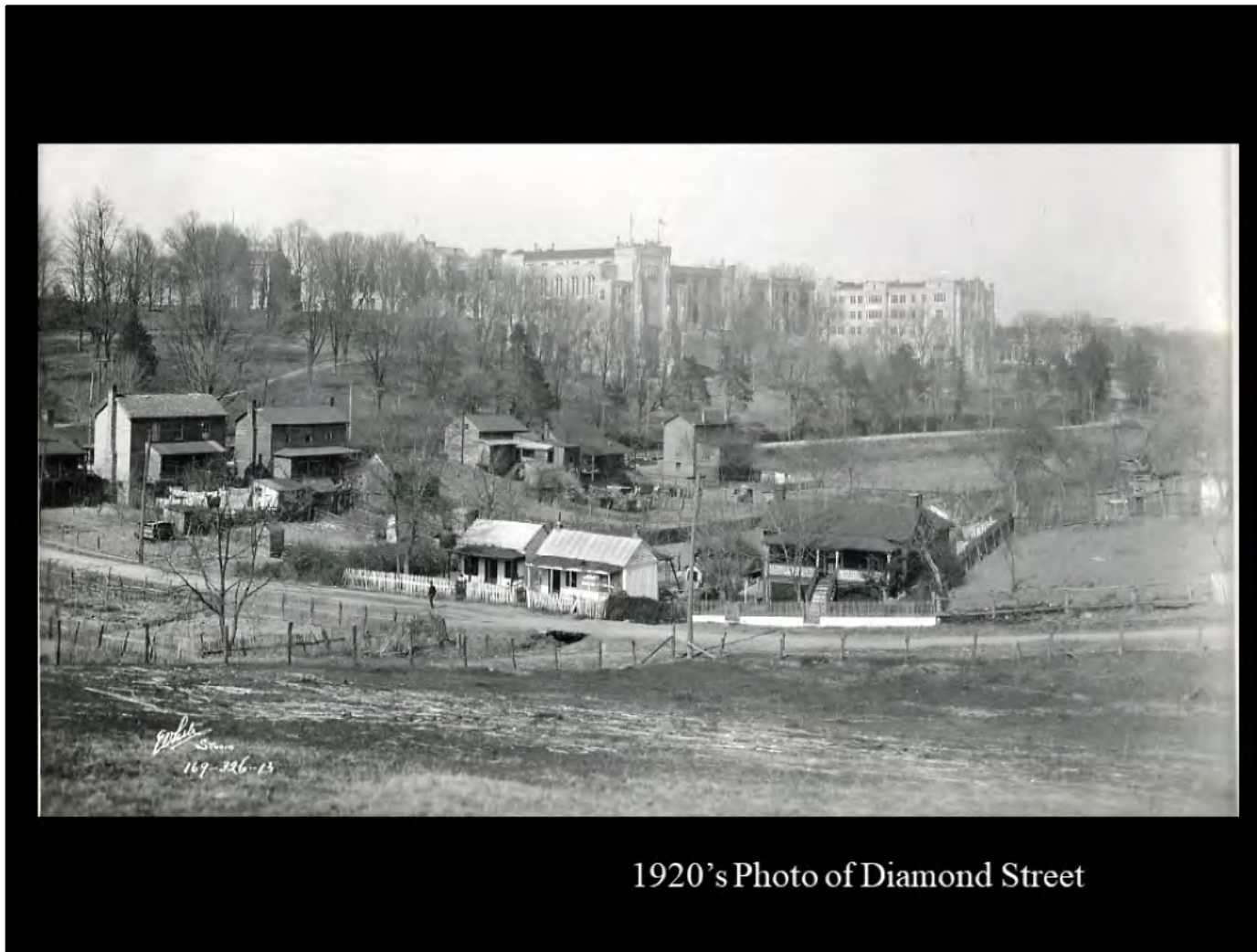
and in direct shadow of the Route 11 Bridge.



4.8 Sir William Fox, *Military College, W. Lexington V.*, 1853, watercolor, 9½ x 13⅕ in. (Courtesy of National Library of New Zealand)

A.J. Davis, Barrack front completed 1851

1851 view of the Town Branch stream valley's descent to the Maury.



Diamond Street's Town Branch crossing - 1920's.



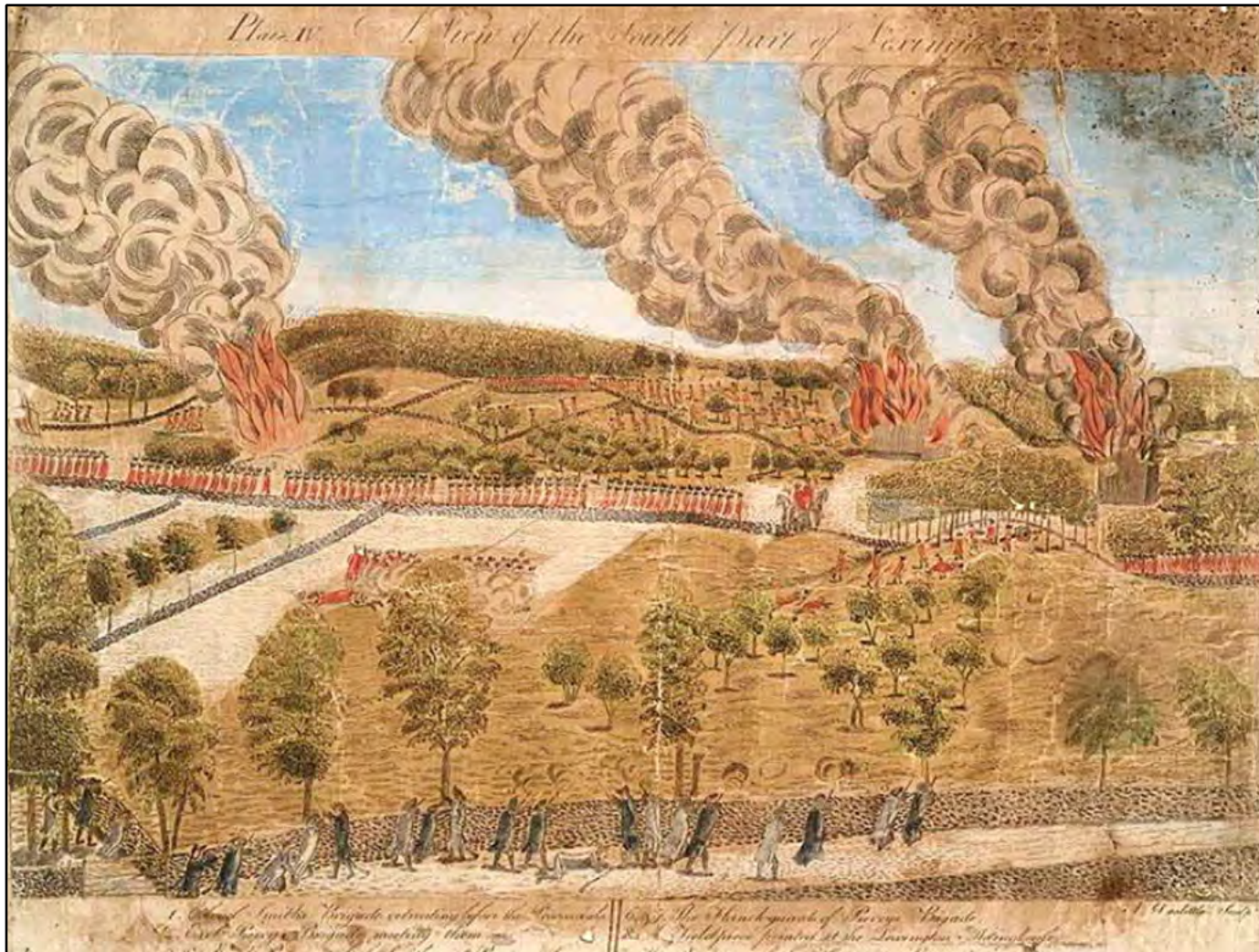
Today's Indoor Training Facility blocks foreground of the preceding Diamond Street view.

1778. For the Examination of Hugh Galbraith, who stands bound
in recognizance for his appearance, charged with the suspicion of
Feloniously being concerned in the Murder of Cornstalk Indian,
his son, and two other Chiefs of the Indians, on the Fifth day of
November last. Present John Bowyer, Samuel McDowell,

1778. For the examination of Hugh Galbraith, who stands bound in
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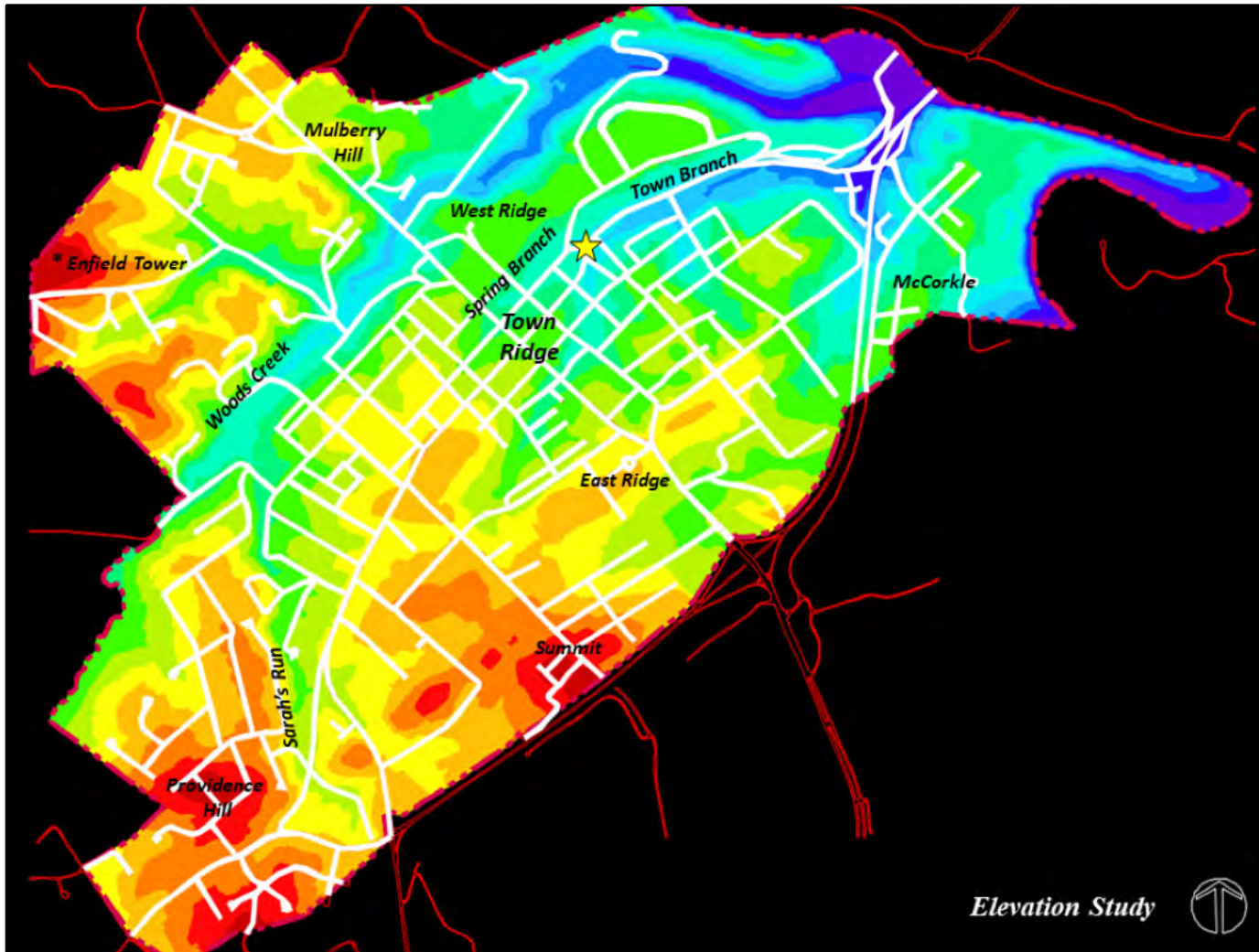
Fifth, ease of defense. Both Indians and the British crown continued real threats.

This second excerpt from Rockbridge County's Order Book One, immediately following Lexington's plan, exonerates a Rockbridge County boy's vengeance murder of the Shawnee Nation's Chief Cornstalk. The text is verbatim.



And - with the American colonies' war with England still raging. A contemporary depiction of the Redcoats' retreat from Lexington, Massachusetts just three years prior to Lexington, Virginia's establishment.

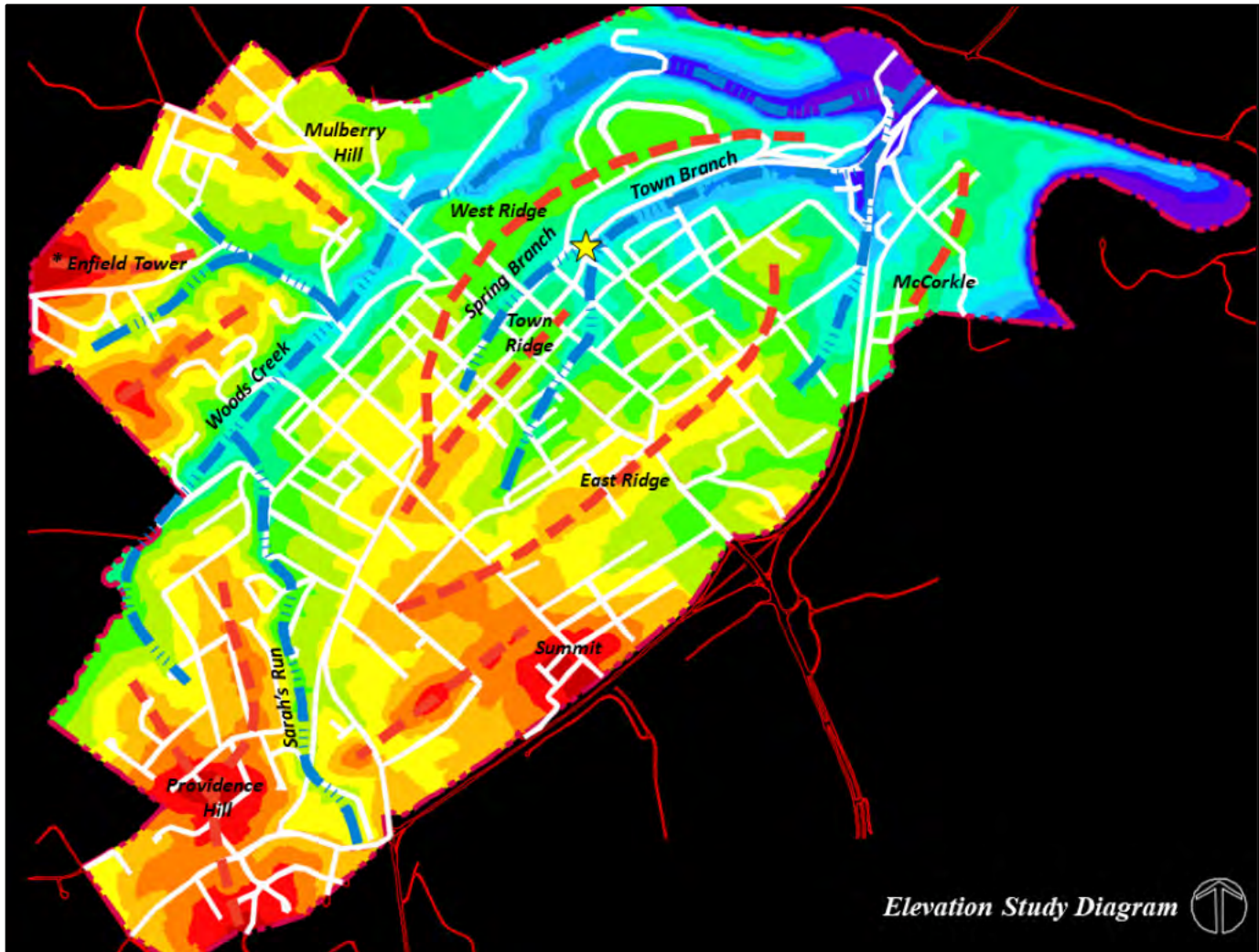
And finally, because Isaac Campbell was willing to donate up to ten of the state mandated 26 acres



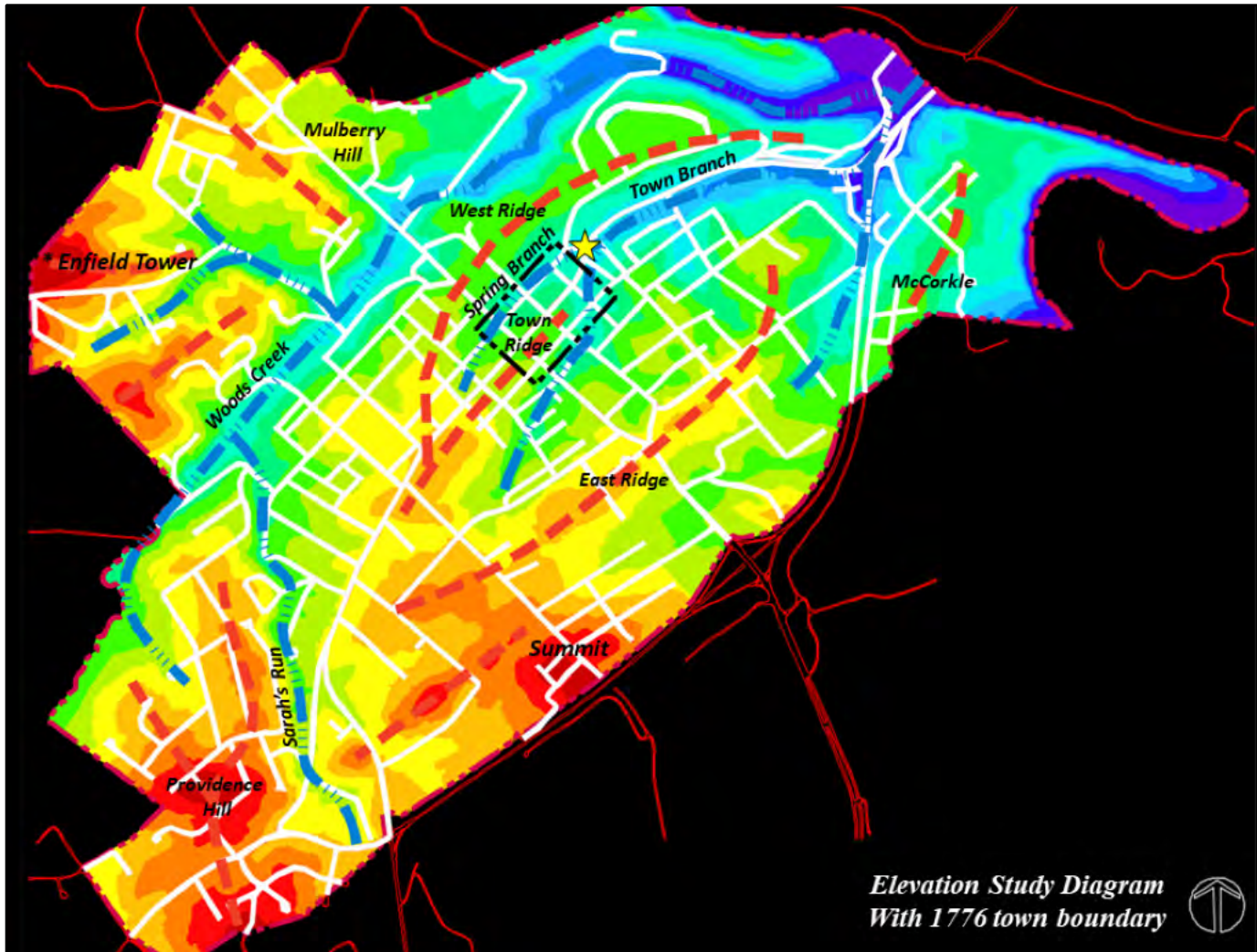
So let's pretend we're Isaac Campbell and surveyor James McDowell figuring out where Lexington should go. The star's Isaac Campbells present dwelling.

This is an elevation study. Blue's low – red's high. Each color represents a 20', vertical interval.

Lexington's present day streets are ghosted in white. (Note how well the streets match terrain patterns. Street-grids angle with terrain. Lexington's original plan was adjusted to terrain.)



Here's the same study diagramming major ridges, creeks, and swales.



The site found by Campbell and McDowell would be easily defensible – the ridges shelter Lexington like clasped hands. The original VMI arsenal made sense commanding the Maury's rampart cliff walls and narrow, Woods Creek, Route 11 pass.



Casmir Bohn view - 1857

The town's guardpost!



Miley, 1867 - 1869

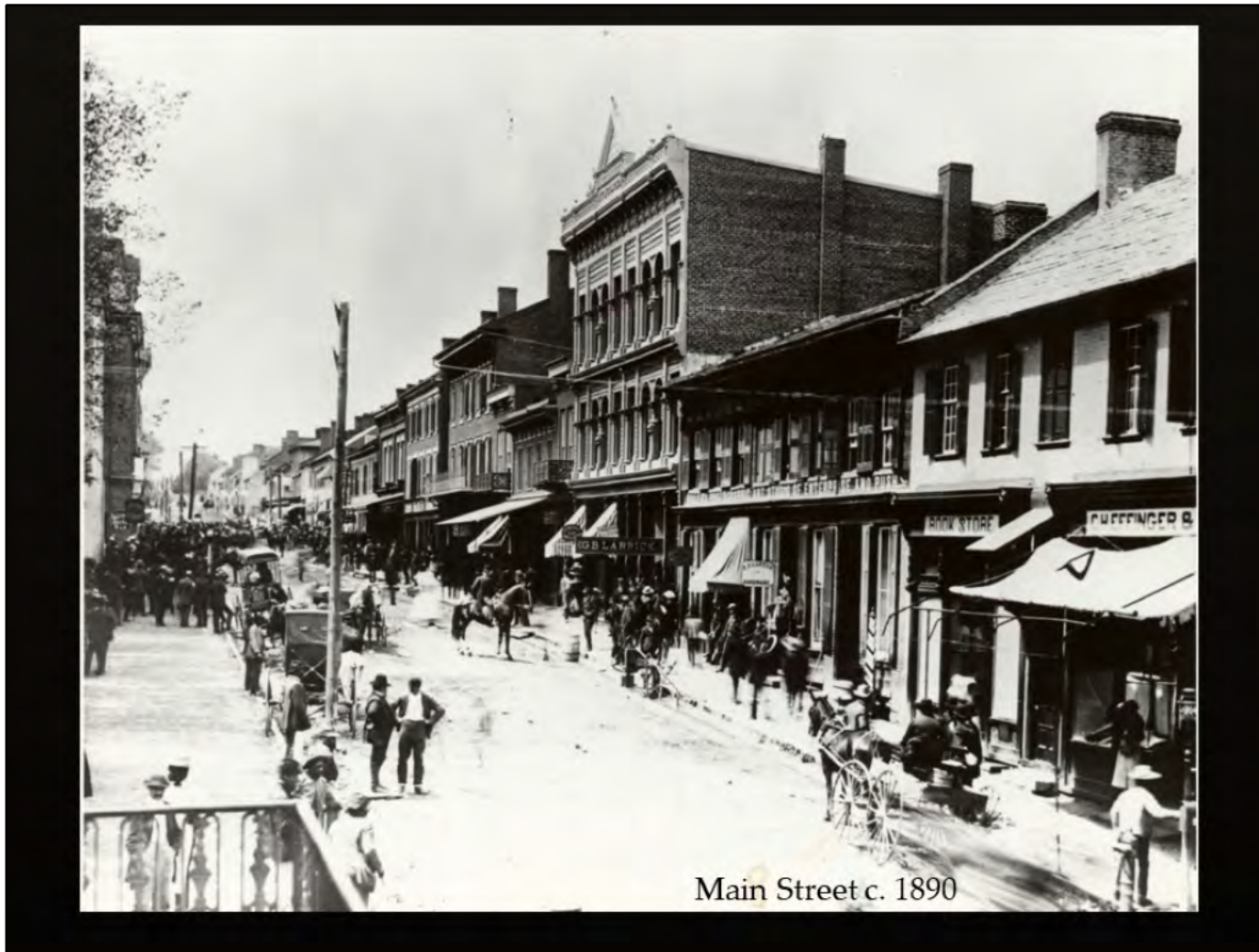
The town shouldn't be too steep so easy to build on. On the north-south axis, the grade's relatively gentle.



Albeit a more dissected east-west axis –



but not insurmountable.



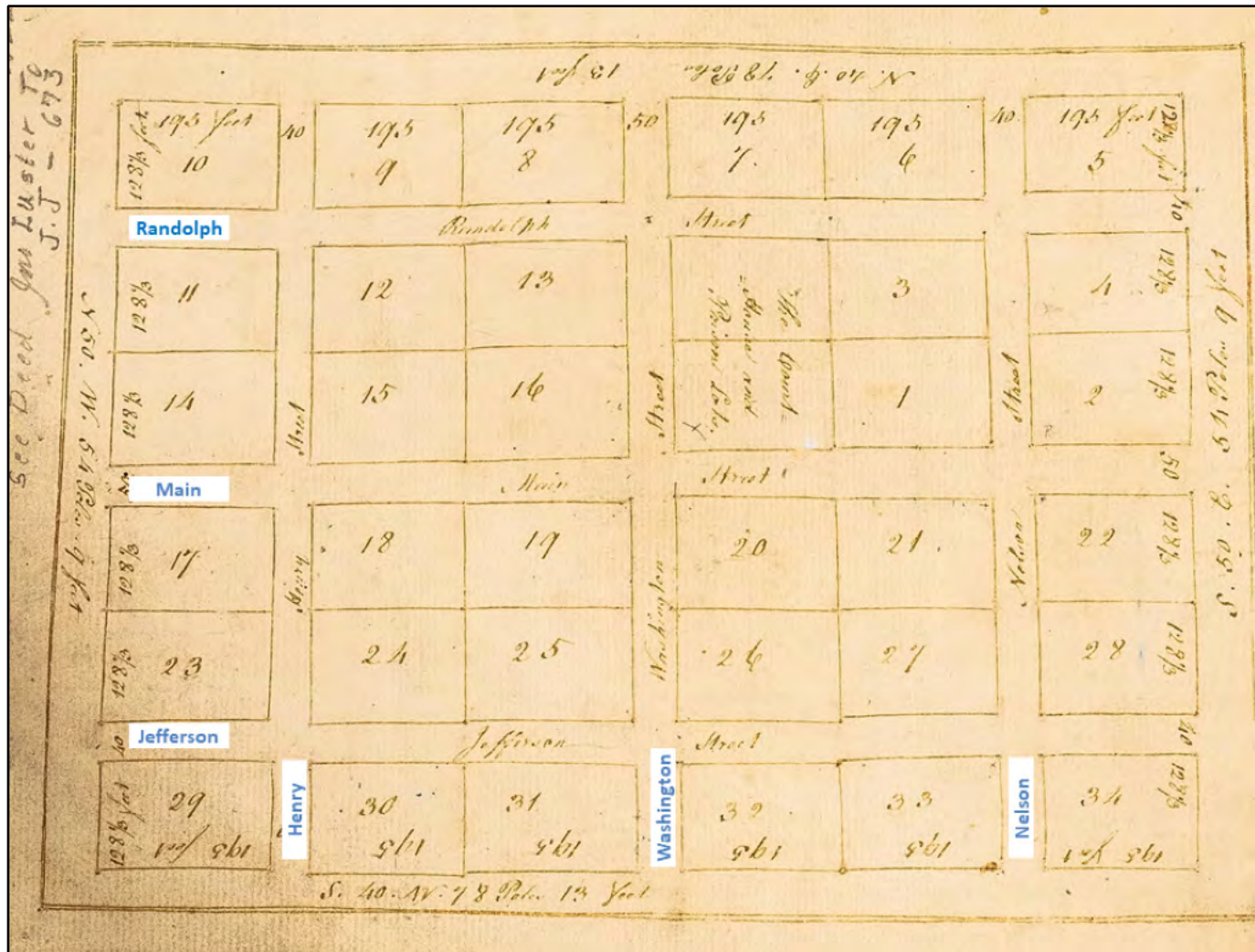
Main Street c. 1890

accessible to the main road so shopkeepers survive



4.8 Sir William Fox, *Military College, W. Lexington V.*, 1853, watercolor, *A.J. Davis, Barrack front completed 1851*
9½ x 13⅕ in. (Courtesy of National Library of New Zealand)

and as accessible as possible to the Maury River but not too close to flood.



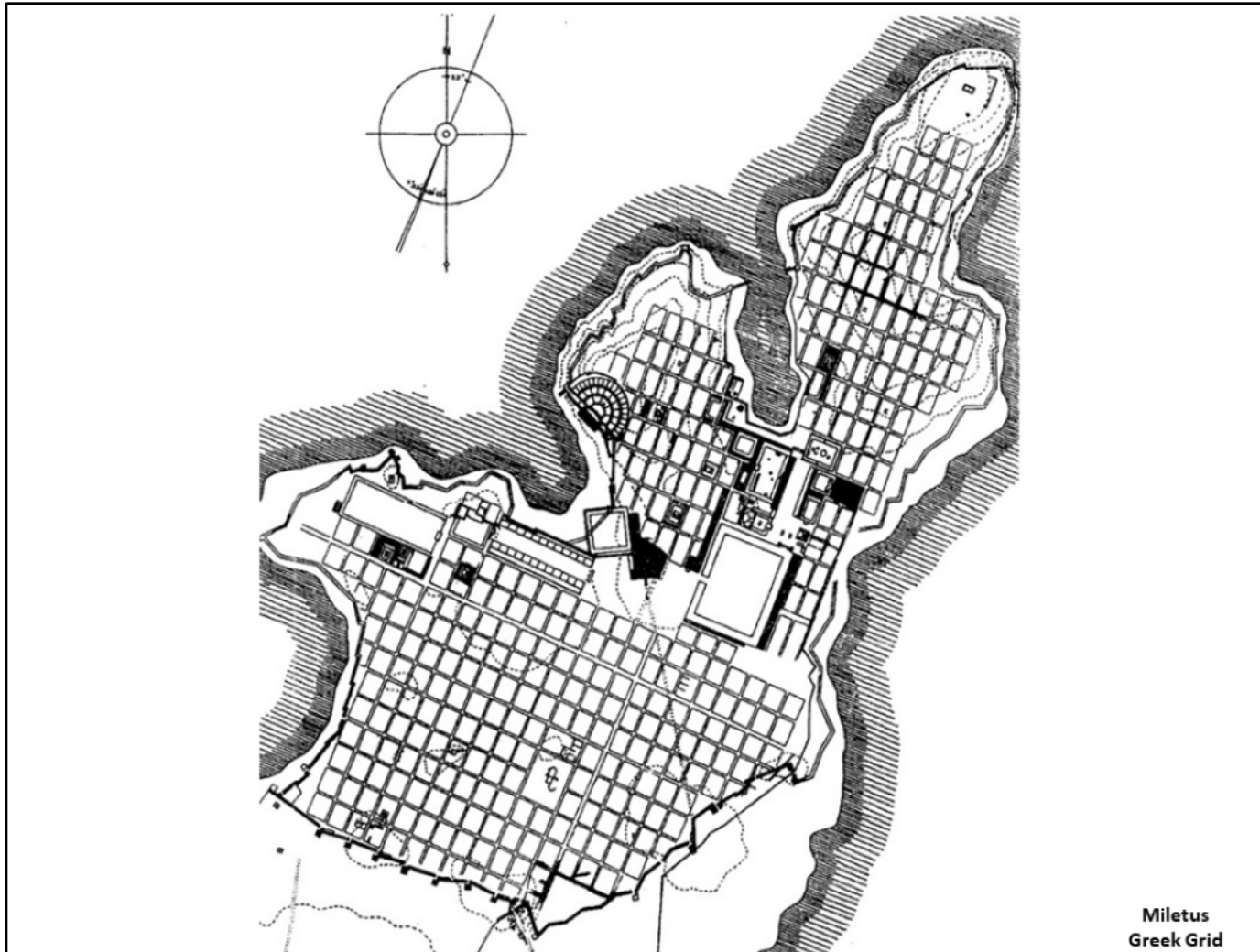
James McDowell came up with a simple, rectangular grid plan defining three streets aligned with the existing Valley Pike with Main Street centered on the Pike, and three streets perpendicular. All streets were named from the start for Virginia patriots – Washington, Jefferson, Henry, and Nelson; Washington at the time 46 years of age - the eldest; Jefferson just 35; the youngest member.

“Colonial settlement occurred in the era of the Renaissance, which began in the early 15th century in Italy and endured until the industrial, sociopolitical, and artistic revolutions of the late 18th century. Colonial North American architecture and town planning, therefore, reflect the humanistic and classical ideals of that era.”

Kornwolf

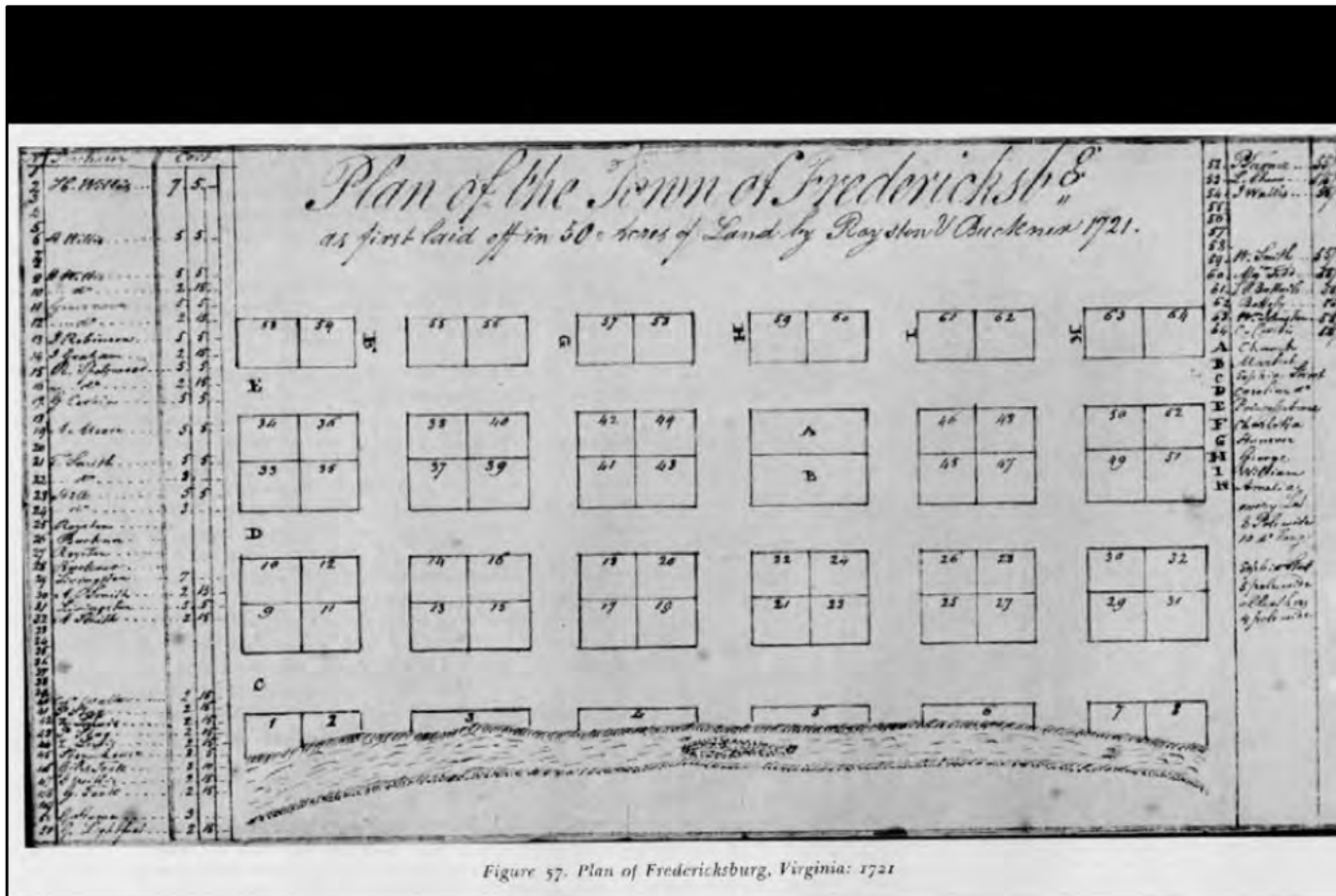
Why the grid?

As Kornwolf's *Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial North America* explains, *“colonial settlement occurred in the era of the Renaissance, which began in the early 15th century in Italy and endured until the industrial, sociopolitical, and artistic revolutions of the late 18th century. Colonial North American architecture and town planning, therefore, reflect the humanistic and classical ideals of that era.”* Medieval town planning was freer; organic. Renaissance planners reverted to the abstract order of classical Greek and Roman urban design.



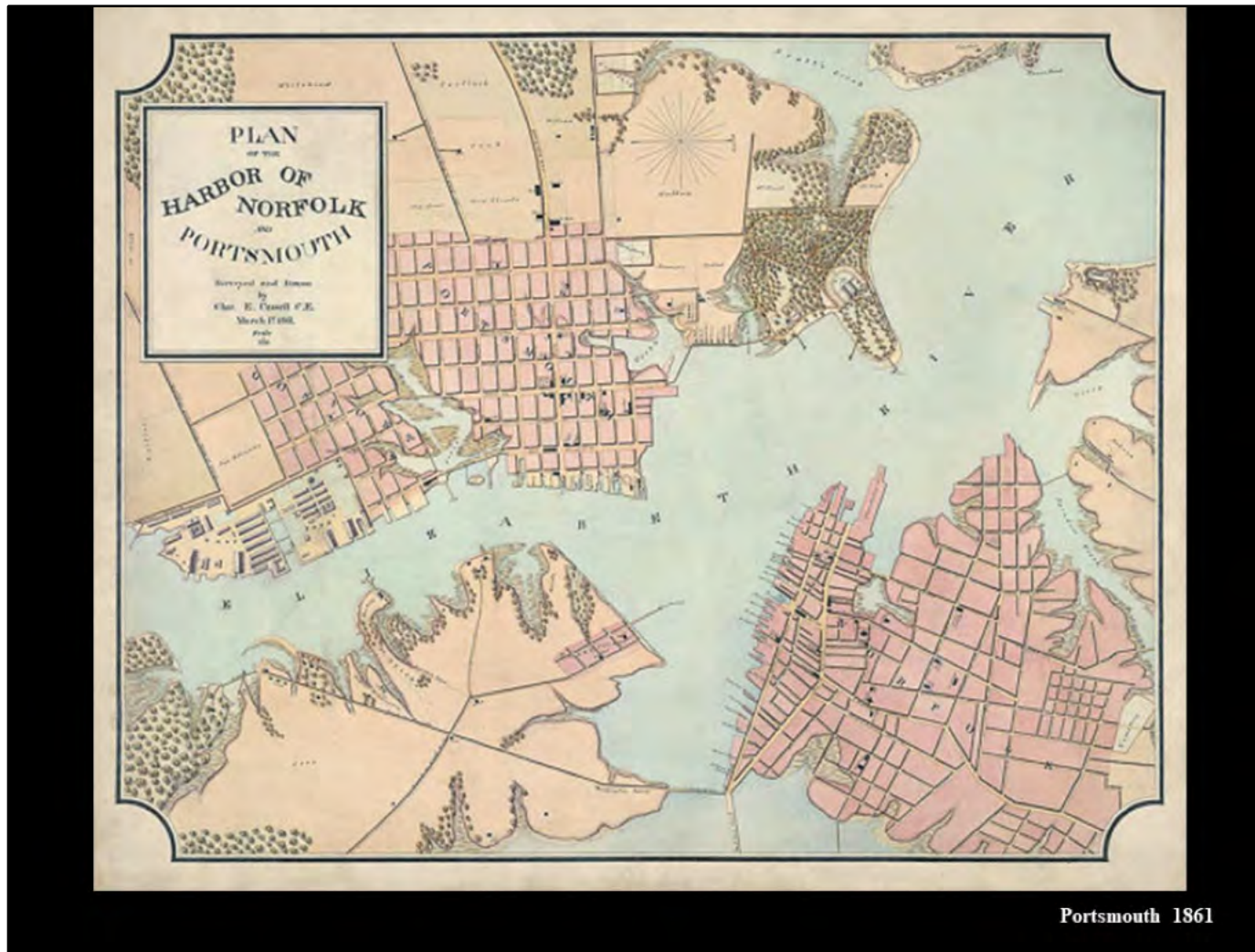
Miletus
Greek Grid

The Greek City of Miletus.



Fredericksburg 1721

Fredericksburg, 1721 – the same grid! A and B are church and market sites.

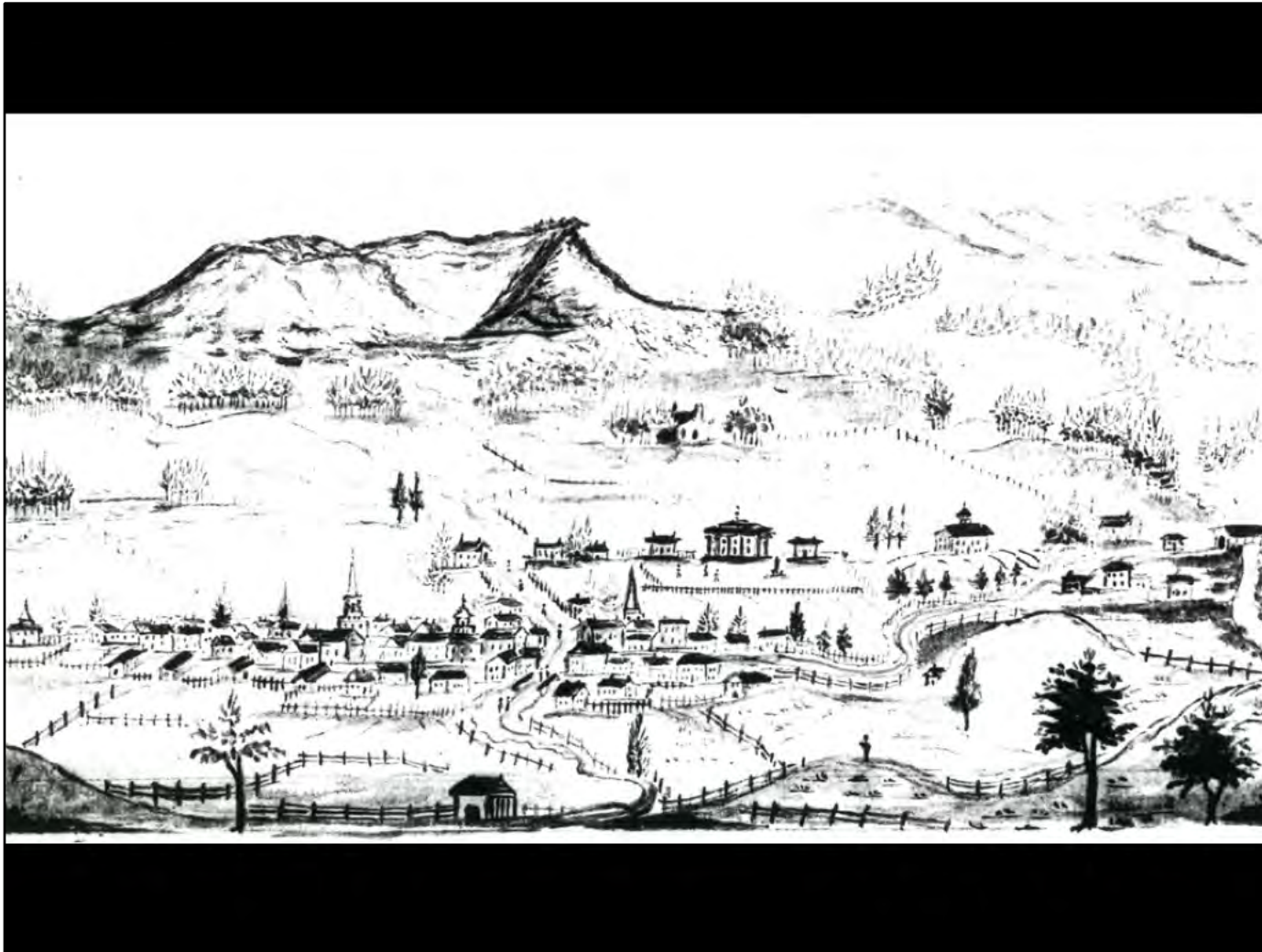


Norfolk and Portsmouth. Note Norfolk's contrasting, medieval organic pattern.



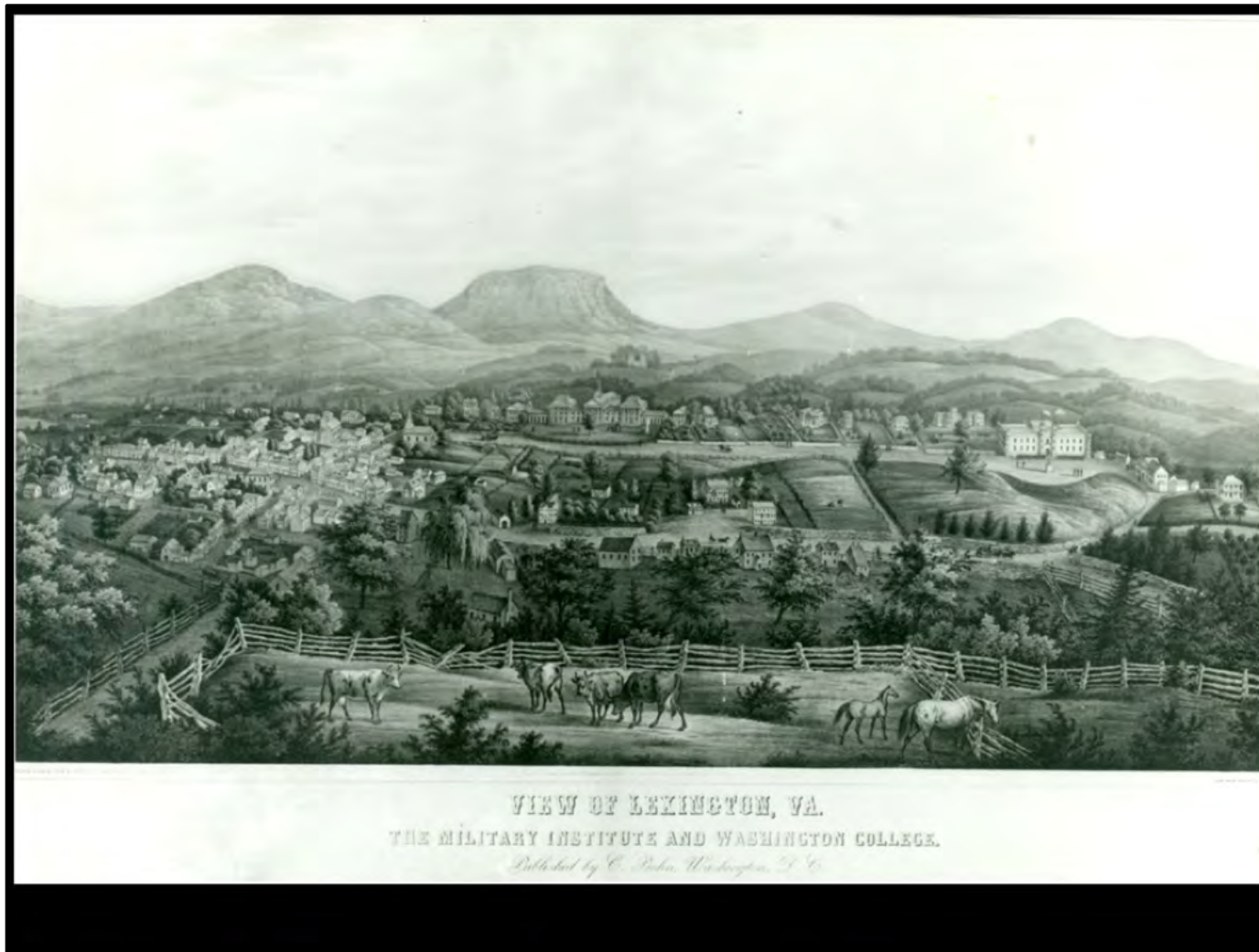
Are Pam and Royster right – “The town was hardly planned with little regard for either topography or aesthetics?” What Royster and Pam perhaps fail to keep in mind is that for the size city James McDowell was entrusted to survey, the site was nearly perfect. Lexington’s original planners might only be faulted for failing to have envisioned that Lexington might soon outgrow its bounds; doubling, tripling, ultimately many times more than quadrupling in size.





So one might argue that Lexington was, in effect, bonsai'd from the start – by challenging topography for town growth and expansion.

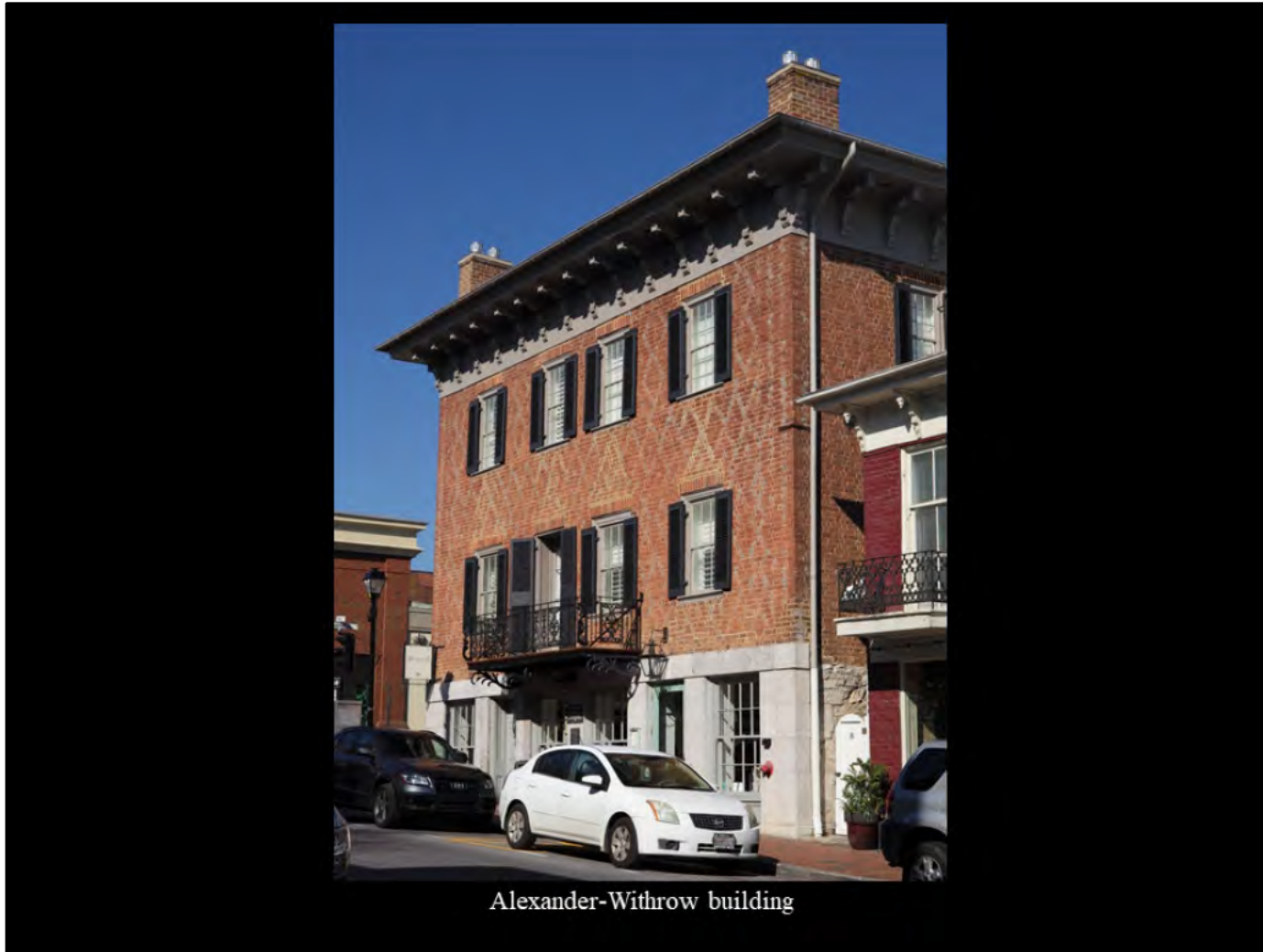
Immediately she “took off” by filling in – and, as seen here, some cheating outside the lines.



There were 50 residences by the mid-1790's, most of the lots filled with a population over 250.

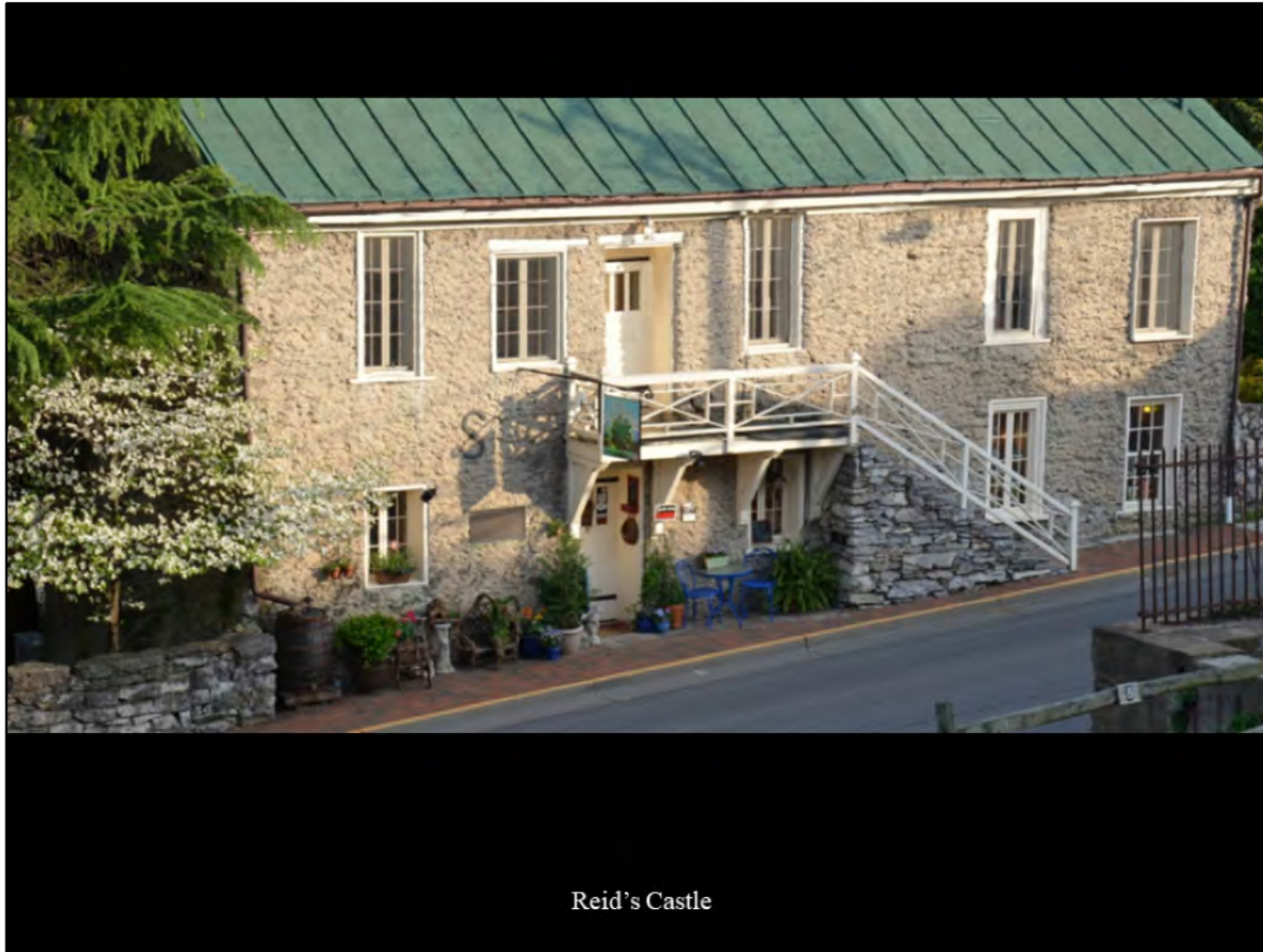


An 1804 visitor found a “handsome little village with good buildings”. By turn of the century, there were tanners, shoemakers, coopers, gunsmiths, blacksmiths, hatters, tailors, printers, carpenters, cabinetmakers, stonecutters.
The Great Fire, 1796, burned down most of the town –



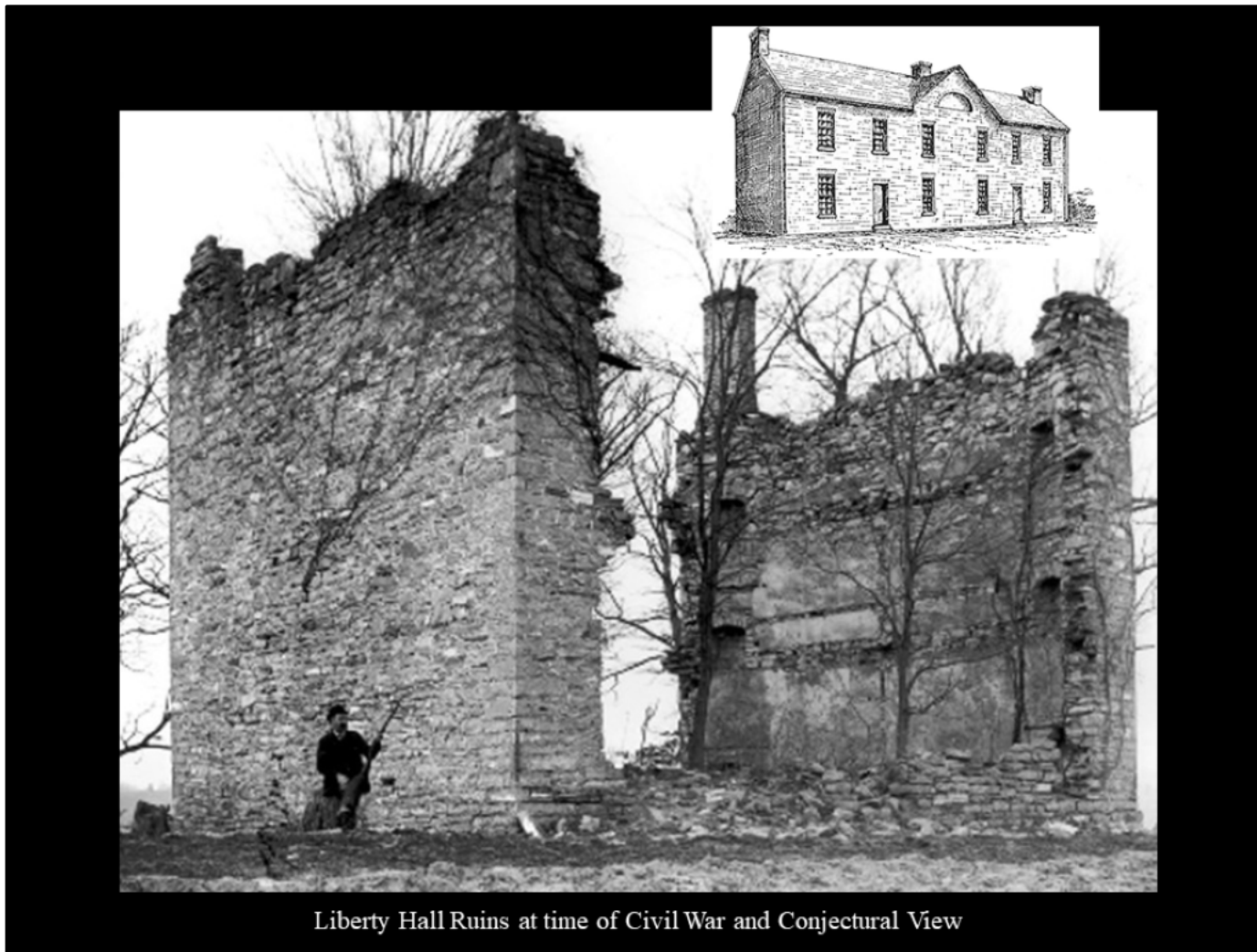
Alexander-Withrow building

exceptions including the Alexander Withrow House of brick



Reid's Castle

and Reid's Castle of stone. After the fire, the preferred building material became brick and stone, the brick made locally from clay soils.



Liberty Hall Ruins at time of Civil War and Conjectural View

A big deal was Liberty Hall Academy establishing less than a mile west of Lexington in 1782, five years after the town formed.



Casimir Bohn engraving, 1856-57

As Paul Turner makes abundantly clear in his now classic history of American campus planning, the American university from infancy is caught up in the early colonists' pastoral vision of America.

Starting in the colonial period, Americans departed from tradition by creating individual colleges in separate locations rather than clustering them at a university, thus intensifying the autonomous nature of each college as a community in itself.

They strengthened it further by another innovation, the placing of colleges in the countryside or even in the wilderness, an unprecedented break with European tradition. The romantic notion of a college in nature, removed from the corrupting forces of the city, became an American ideal.

Another trait that typifies American college planning is its spaciousness and openness to the world. From its very beginning the American college rejected the European tradition of cloister-like structures in favor of separate buildings set in green open space.

Paul Turner

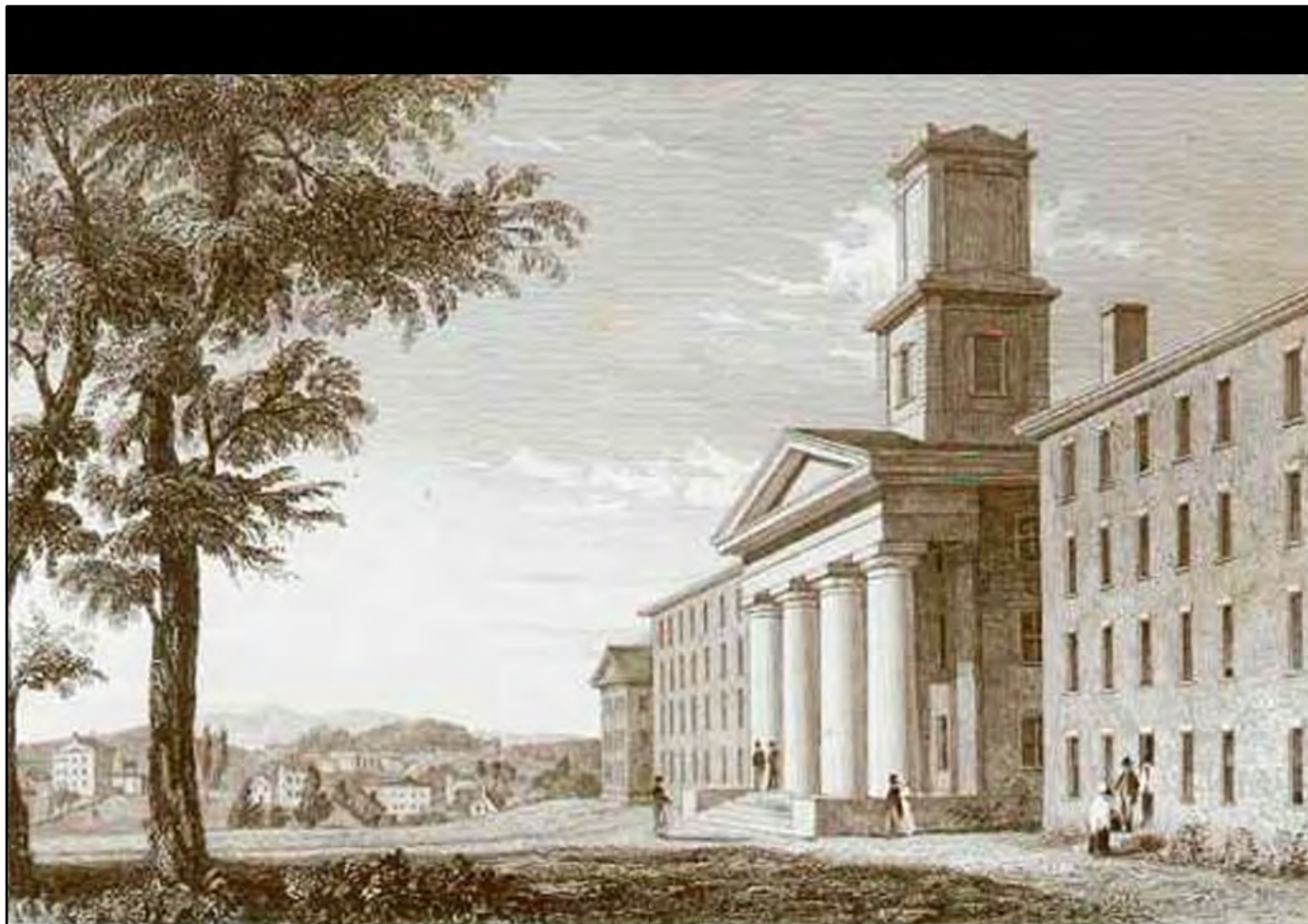
Starting in the colonial period, Turner notes, Americans departed from tradition by creating individual colleges in separate locations rather than clustering them at a university, and thus they intensified the autonomous nature of each college as a community in itself. They strengthened it further by another innovation, the placing of colleges in the countryside or even in the wilderness, an unprecedented break with European tradition. The romantic notion of a college in nature, removed from the corrupting forces of the city, became an American ideal. Another trait that typifies American college planning is its spaciousness and openness to the world. From its very beginning the American college rejected the European tradition of cloister-like structures in favor of separate buildings set in green open space.



Examples Princeton

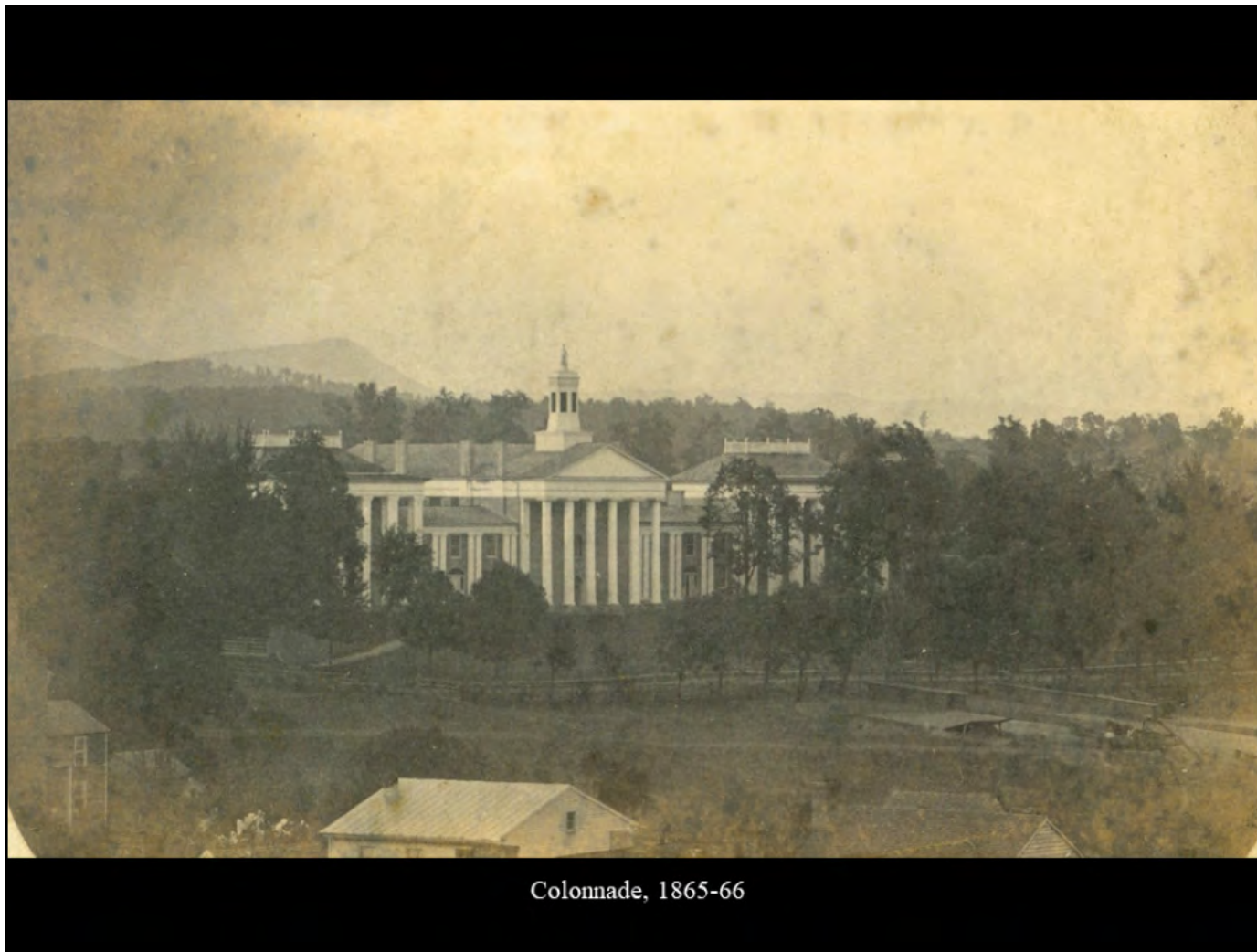


Dartmouth. This is the founding of Dartmouth in the Wilderness, with Indians present.



College Row, Amherst College, Mass. Engraving by J. Archer, 1828

Amherst.



Colonnade, 1865-66

Such themes are unmistakably present in Henry Ruffner's 1847, *Early History of Washington College*. Henry Ruffner was an 1813 graduate; then faculty member and president of Washington College 1819-1848.



Every college, Ruffner writes, should own all the land within a mile or two of its buildings. (Sound familiar?) It should have a village of its own, inhabited by tenants from year to year – virtuous, intelligent families of merchants, mechanics, gentlemen and professional men, including the officers of the institution, amongst whom the students should board and lodge as members of their households, - not more than five or six in a house.



It would be easy to people a village with a select society; for many of the best families of the country would deem it a privilege to reside there, for the convenience of educating their sons;



And I might add marrying their daughters – Lexington debutantes.



And, Ruffner adds, short leases would always enable the trustees to expurgate the place, if any evil should intrude. The college income would then be derived from rents, and the necessary buildings, besides dwelling houses, would be a chapel, some lecture rooms and a library



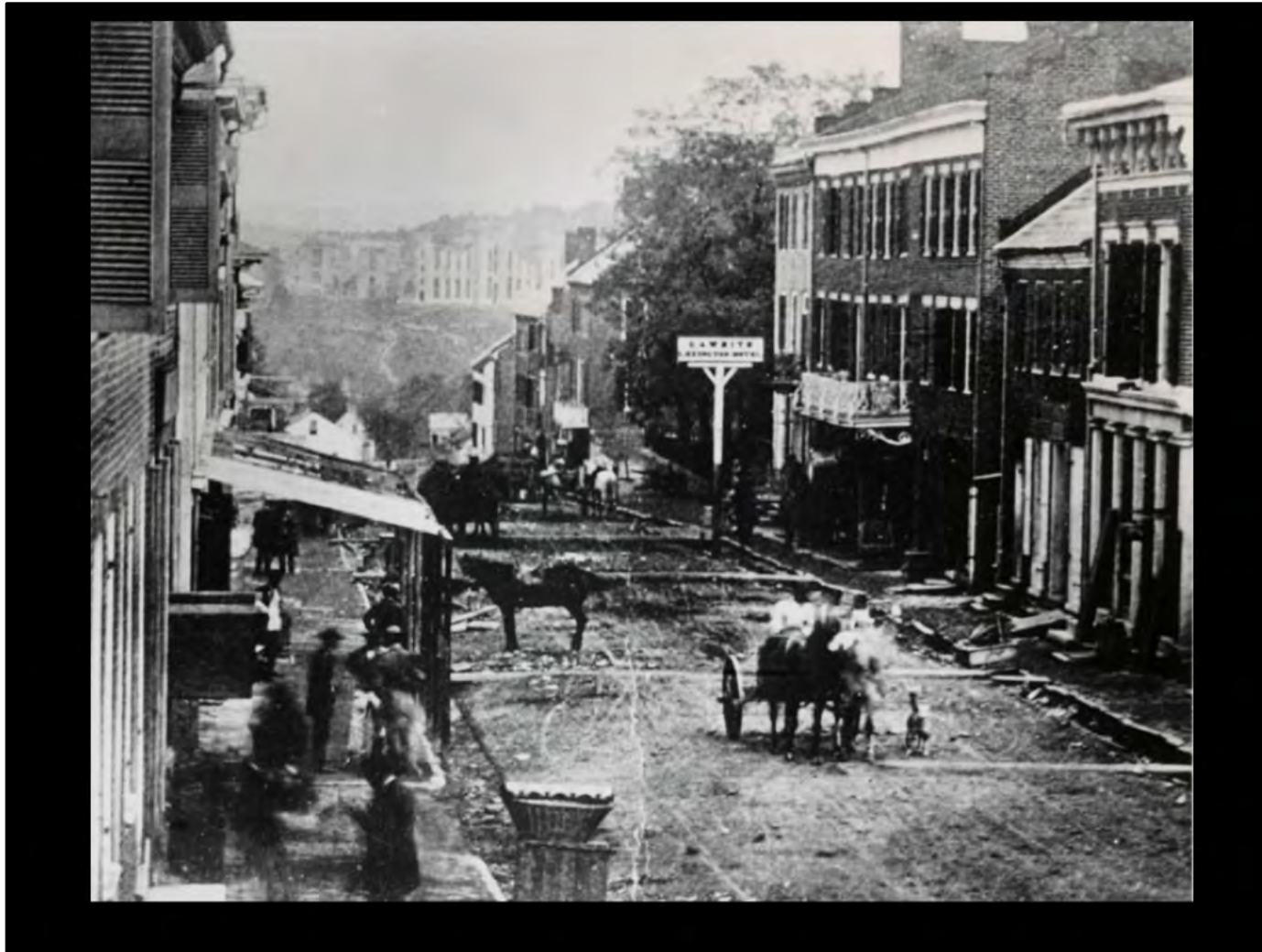
Initial edifice – 1847 lithograph

VMI joins Washington College at the western ridge's north pinnacle in 1835. Starting out as a state arsenal in 1816, VMI is invented as a means to package military training with a general, liberal arts education – initially a joint venture with Washington College; to attract state money.



Casimir Bohn engraving, 1856-57

In the spirit of cooperation, a carriageway was originally installed between Washington Street and VMI's south gate linking the schools – but when the two begin feuding, Washington College blocks the southern access from Washington Street - eventually, Robert E. Lee converts this so-called campus avenue to today's meandering, pedestrian walk.

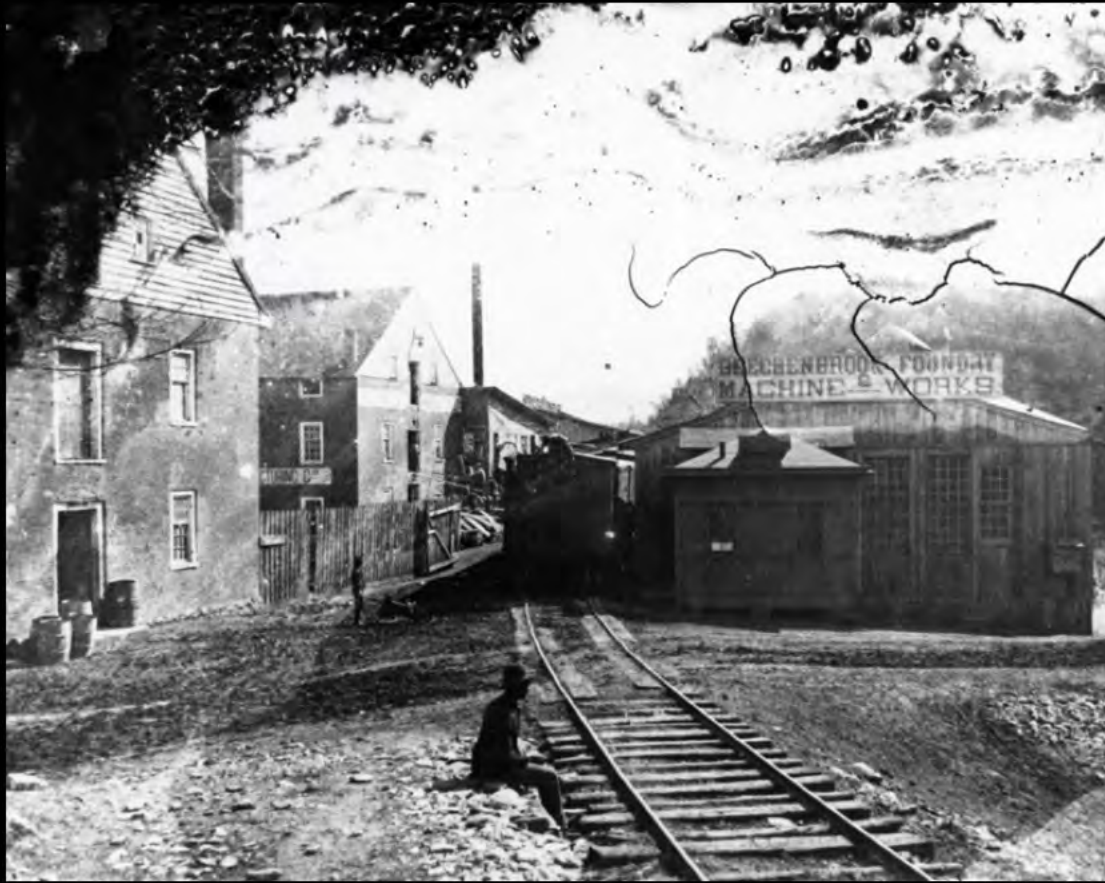


The town continued to grow with a population just over 2,000 by 1860 slightly larger than neighboring Staunton. Four coach makers, a coach painter, three jewelers, and a silversmith, candy manufacturer, seamstresses, brickyards and lime kilns, cabinetmakers and saddlers, tan yards and hatters. This view, just following VMI's bombing – note the busy streets.



Lexington Roller Mills, Jordan's Point

Entrepreneur John Jordan who expires just prior to the Civil War, age 77, builds up the area's iron industry with Buffalo Forge's William Weaver, completes the James River and Kanawha Canal link to Lexington; operates textile, grist, and sawmills at Jordan's Point; and constructs the town's major buildings including both Washington College and VMI.



Jordan's Point Industry



Today's Lee Avenue's fine homes (which with Washington College landed on the western ridge, west of the Spring Branch) date from the 1820s and like both colleges, Jordan's Point, and the Presbyterian Church – stepping outside the town's first boundaries.



The Pines - 1819

The Pines built 1819 by Benjamin Darst, Sr., a local builder.



Samuel Darst's home on Lee Avenue, Lexington, built 1824-1826

Beaumont on Lee Avenue built by Samuel Darst, Benjamin's son.



Miley, 1900 - 1920

The Lexington Presbyterian Church designed by Thomas U. Walter is completed 1845. Walter, most famous for design of the U.S. Capitol, considered dean of American architecture between Latrobe and Richardson.



Miley, 1867 - 1869

All this remarkable ante bellum prosperity and early growth beyond the town's original square boundaries definitely shares a downside.



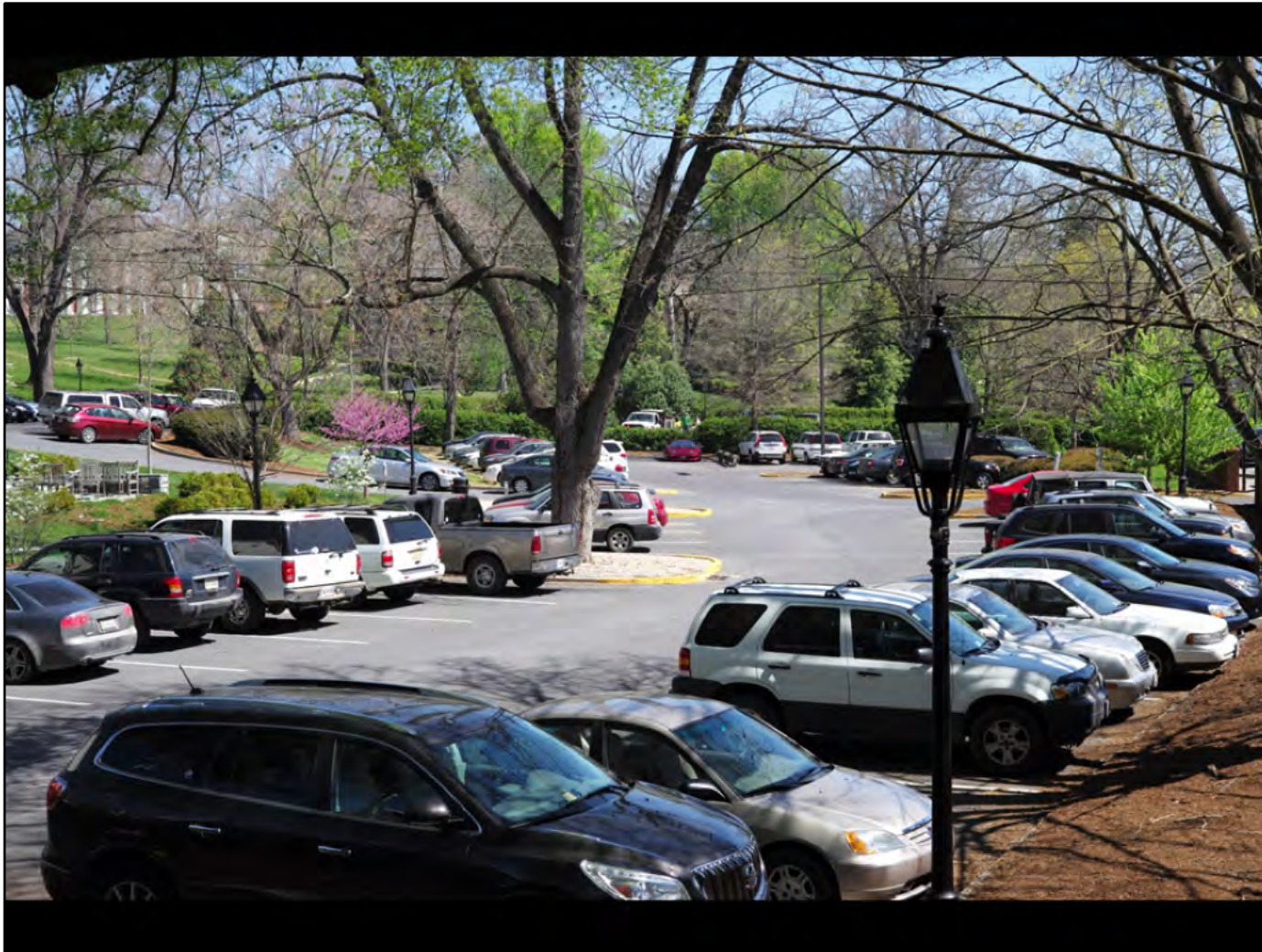
The Lexington Gazette publishes the following letter 1853 signed Sally Ann:

Our streets and alleys are knee deep in mud and filth – and piles of clay – rock – odd ends of old planks, scaffold poles, brick bats which obstruct the way at every turn, imperil the shins and life of every passenger. The neat, beautiful appearance of our town was once the pride of our citizens and the admiration of strangers, but now sir, the town presents more of the appearance of a badly wrought stone quarry or dilapidated brickyard than anything else I can imagine.

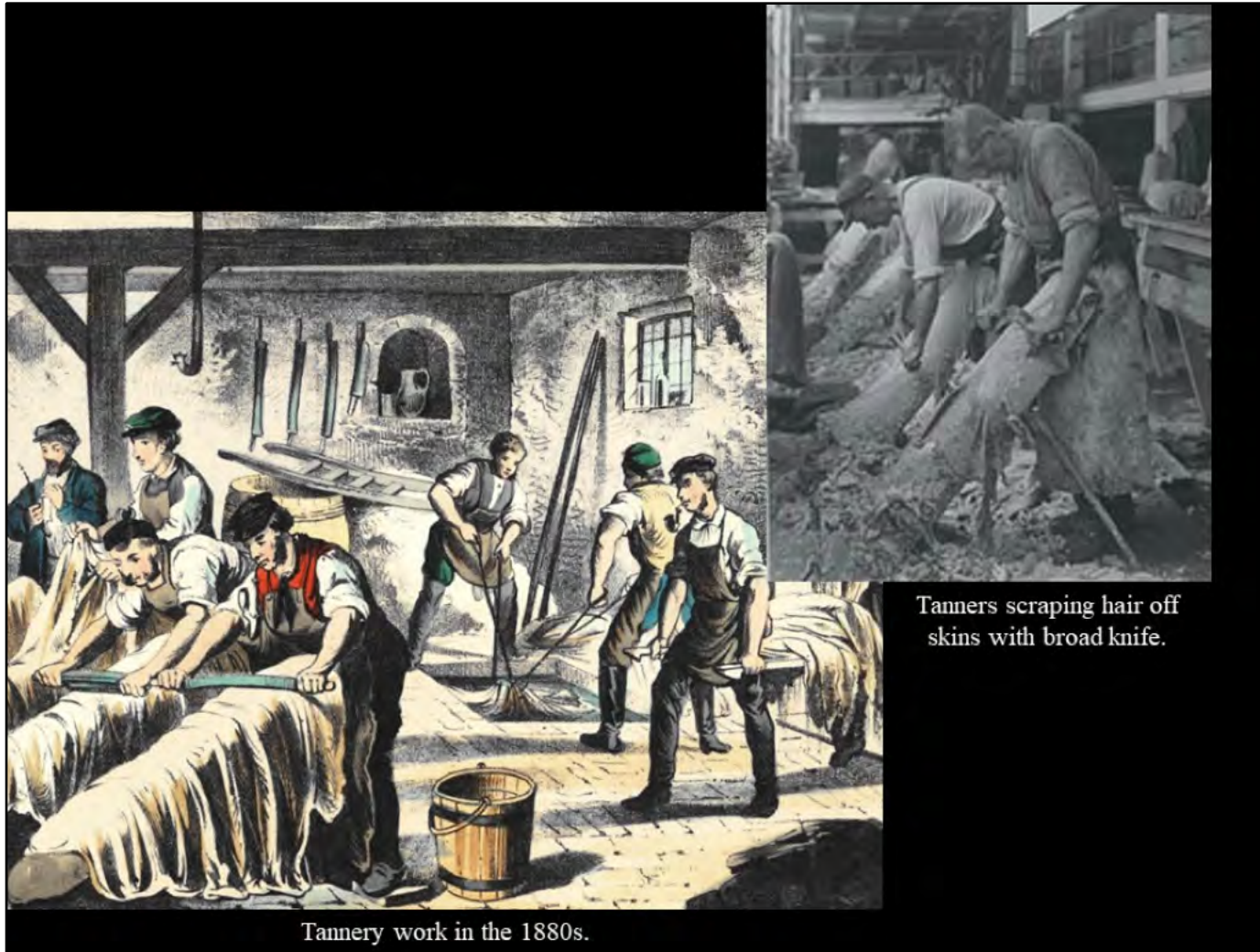
The Town Council had its work cut out, removing the most offensive pig sties, and “necessaries” close to front ditches. It forbid at-home slaughter operations and declared as nuisances horse-feeding stalls along streets and alleys.



Samuel McDowell Reid, Washington College alum, long-time trustee, clerk of the court, and three-term state legislator is taken to task for fouling the corner of Washington and Jefferson, Washington College's doorstep. Reid owns a tannery – evidently a quick way to profit



at the corner of Jefferson and Washington.



Tanneries are a notorious polluting, foul smelling, environmentally degrading, cottage industry. Stonewall Jackson and J. T.L. Preston partner on a neighboring tannery.

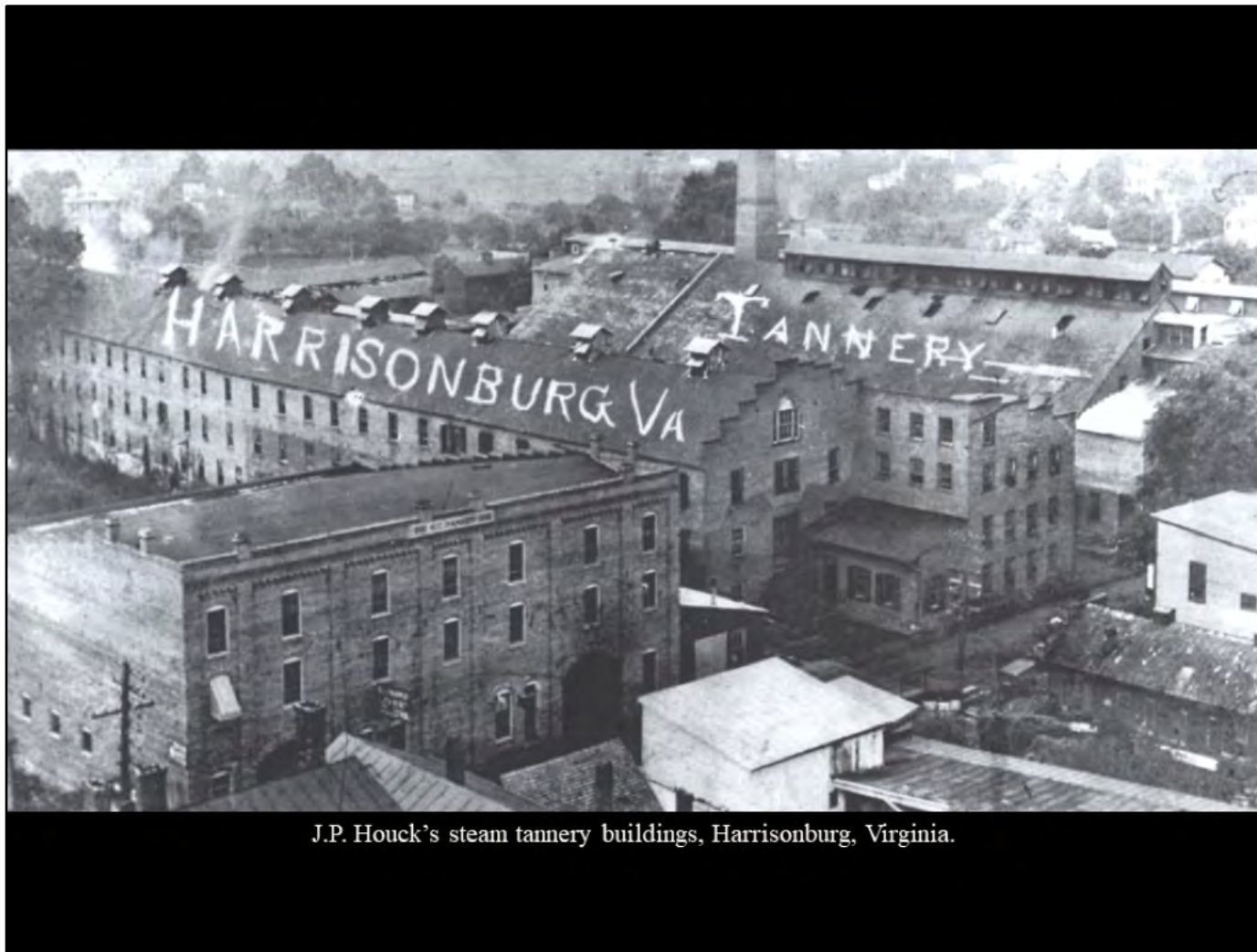
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It appearing to the satisfaction of the Board, that a lot of grounds owned by Col Samuel M^d Reid, on Jefferson Street, lying immediately below and adjacent to the lot of Joseph Hoffmanns heirs is covered in part with stagnant water and offensive substances and is dangerous to the health of that neighbourhood. It is therefore ordered, that the said Col Samuel M^d Reid be notified by the service of a copy of this order, that unless said offensive substances, are removed and the receptacle of stagnant water filled up and raised before the 10th day of March next, that then the said trustees will forthwith proceed to have the same done, and the costs thereof levied and assessed upon the said Reid according to the provisions of the 28th section of "An act reducing into one the several acts concerning the town of Lexington in the County of Rockbridge, passed December 18th 1841."

Hugh Barclay Pres

Lot owned by Samuel Reid on Jefferson Street, is covered in part with stagnant water and offensive substances dangerous health. If not removed, the said trustees with forthwith proceed to have the same done and the costs thereof levied upon the said Reid.

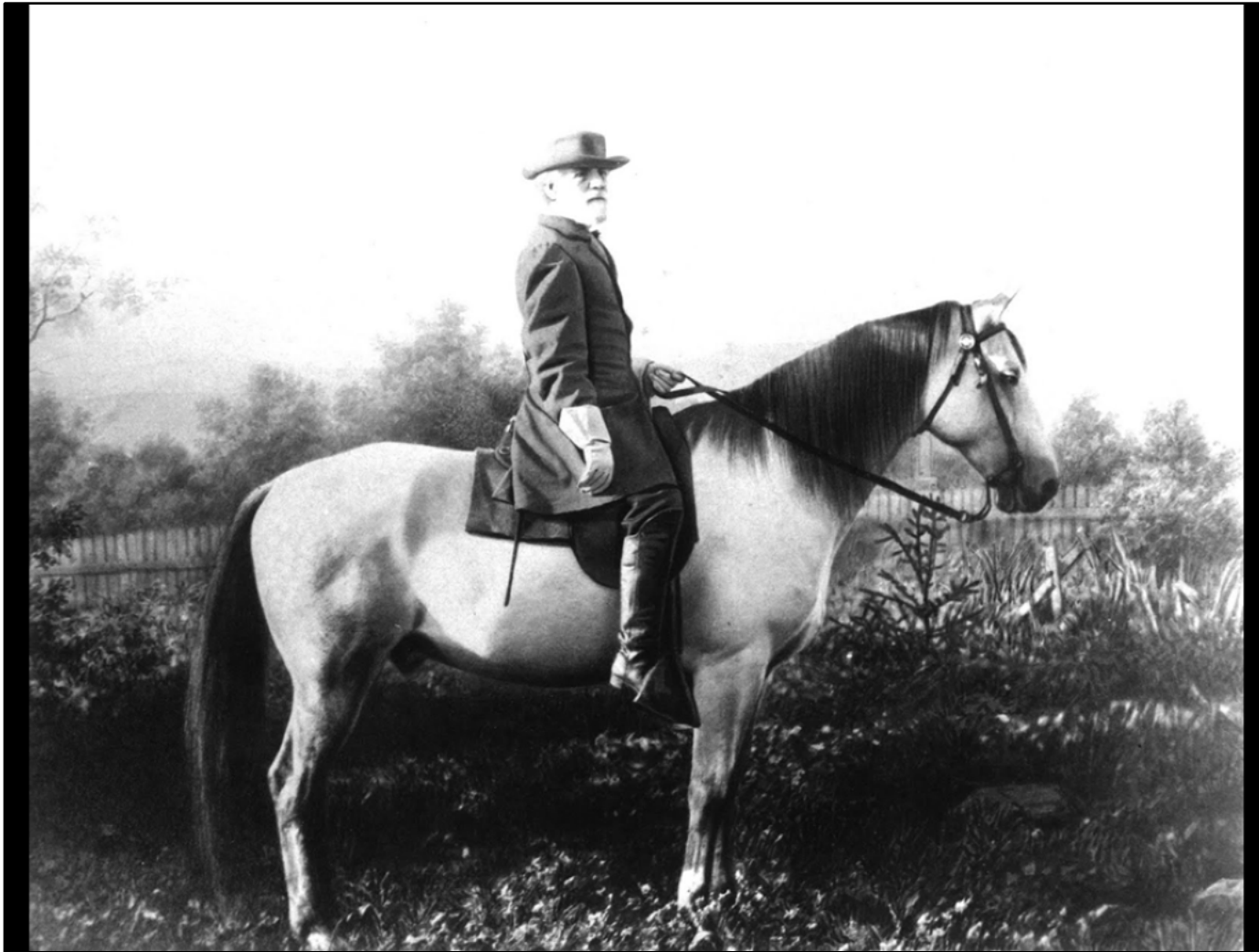
December 1841, Hugh Barclay

Reid's tannery lot is written up by fellow Washington College board member Hugh Barclay, president of the town trustees, cited for stagnant water and offensive substances, dangerous to the health of that neighborhood requiring either Reid to clean up the mess, or the town will do so at his expense.

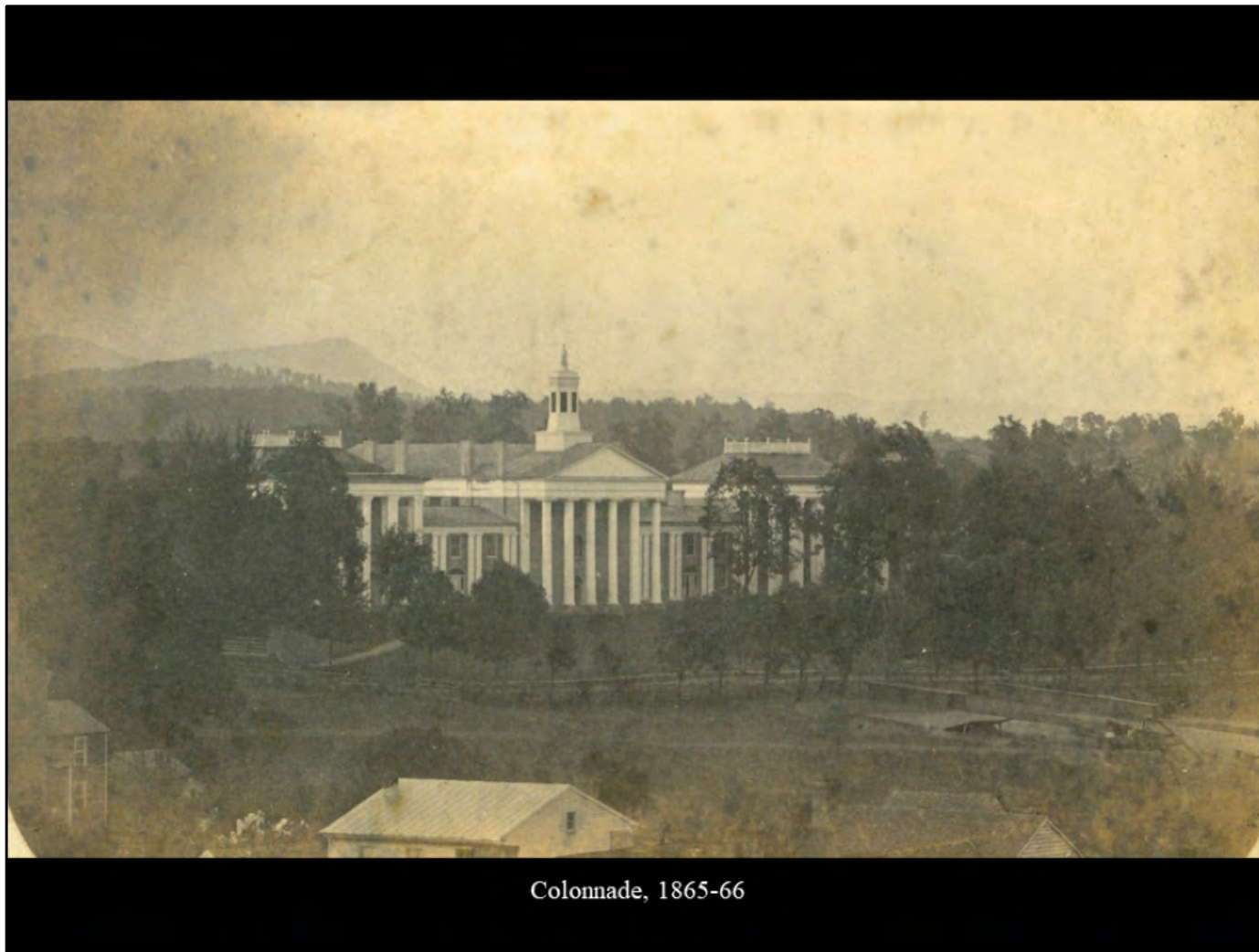


J.P. Houck's steam tannery buildings, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Eventually the tannery problem took care of itself. With railroads, Mom and Pop tanneries couldn't compete with larger rail-linked operations such as Harrisonburg's Houk's Tannery.



September 1865, Robert E. Lee arrives in Lexington to lead Washington College.



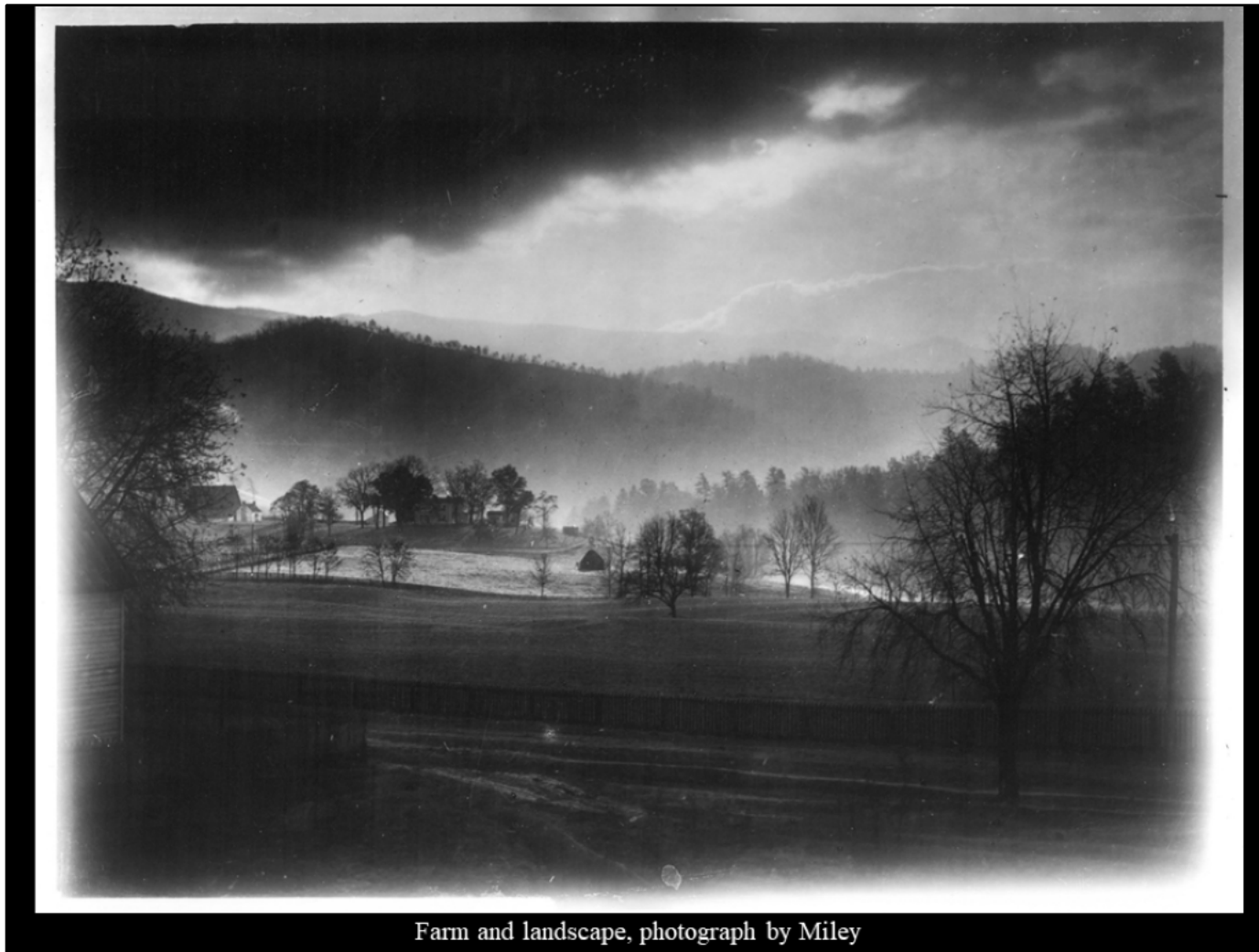
Colonnade, 1865-66

He writes Mary, his wife, the following day, *"I have not yet visited the college grounds. They seem to be beautifully located, and the buildings are undergoing repairs."*



Eleanor Agnes Lee (1841–1873)

Forty days later, Lee's letter to Agnes, his third daughter begins, "*I miss you dreadfully.*" The letter ends: "*Lexington is a beautiful spot by nature – man has done but little for it.*"



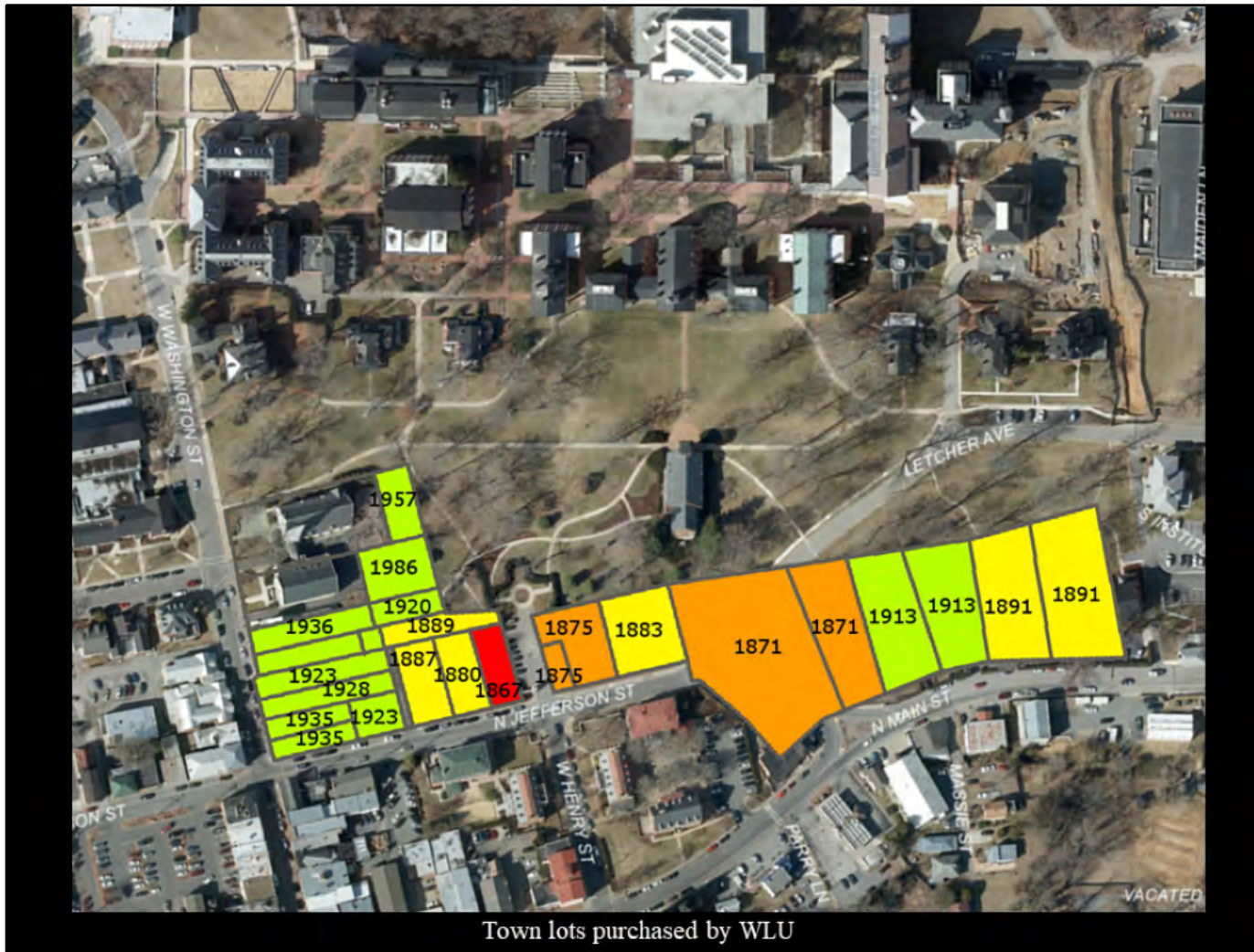
Lee's an admirer of the pastoral landscape – even during war, 1861 he writes home:

I traveled from Staunton on horseback. A part of the road, as far as Buffalo Gap, I passed over in the summer of 1840, on my return to St. Louis. If anyone had then told me that the next time I travelled that road would have been on my present errand, I should have supposed him insane. I enjoyed the mountains, as I road along. The views are magnificent – the valleys so beautiful, the scenery so peaceful. What a glorious world Almighty God has given us. How thankless and ungrateful we are, and how we labor to mar his gifts.

This a Miley photo.



Lee rolls up his sleeves; right away goes to work, personally directing landscape improvements to the college campus. As mentioned, he rids the front lawn of the crossing avenue.



Lee also maneuvers to close down the tannery and purchase real estate fronting Jefferson Street. The graphic illustrates dates of purchase by W&L – the red under Lee’s presidency.



Lee Chapel, photograph by Miley, 1869

General Lee tastefully adds a Chapel cloaked in shade trees,



he grades pathways and installs specimen shade trees.







Robert E. Lee is clearly not opposed to all growth. In July 1870, he accepts presidency of the Valley Railroad, throwing his personal weight behind a business venture critical to the region's economic health.



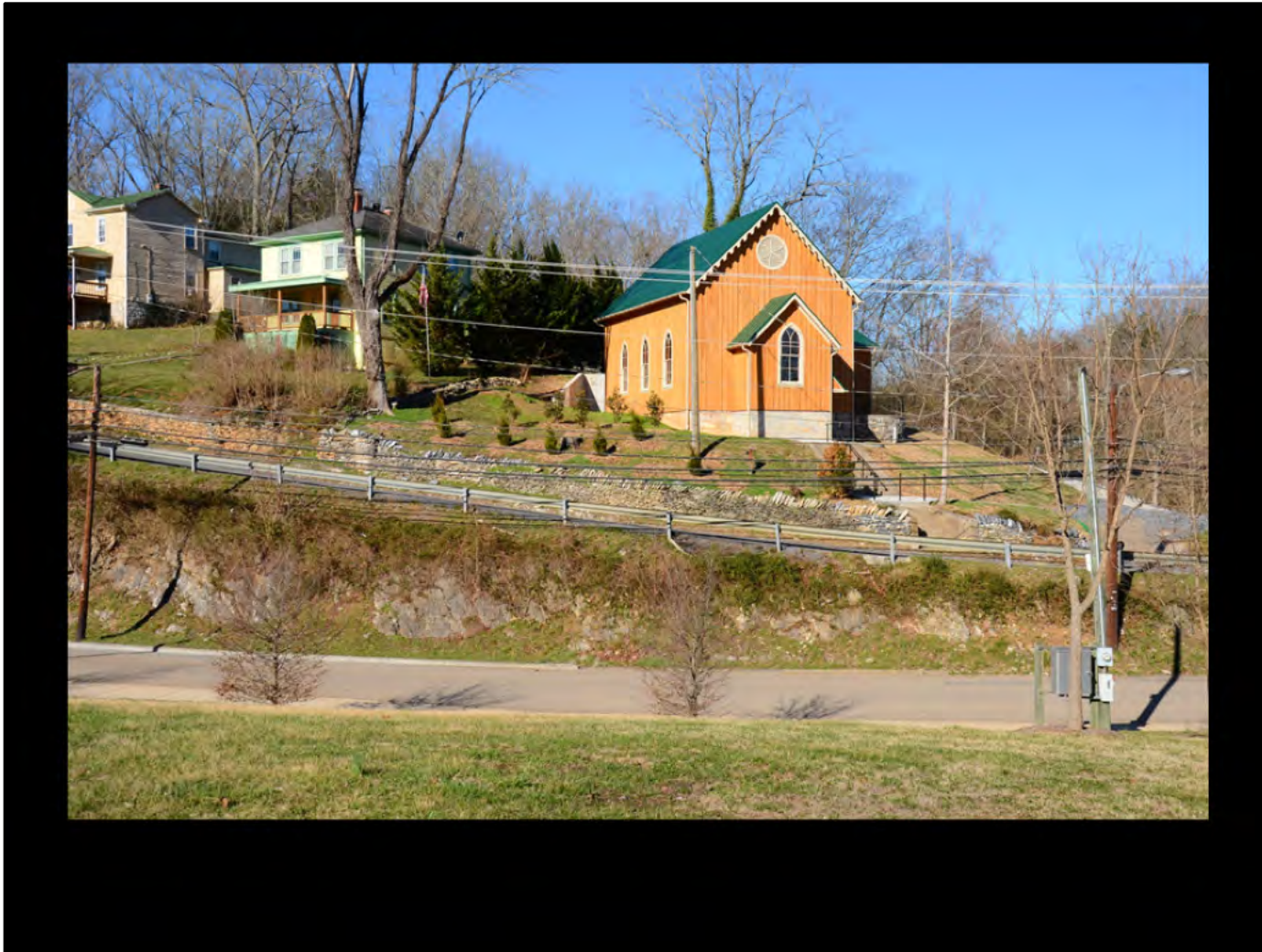
By the 1870's, the town was clearly prospering with expansion occurring down South Main and Taylor Streets. Lexington drew many African American families released from rural slavery.



New fashionable neighborhoods arose on White, Preston, and Jackson Streets.



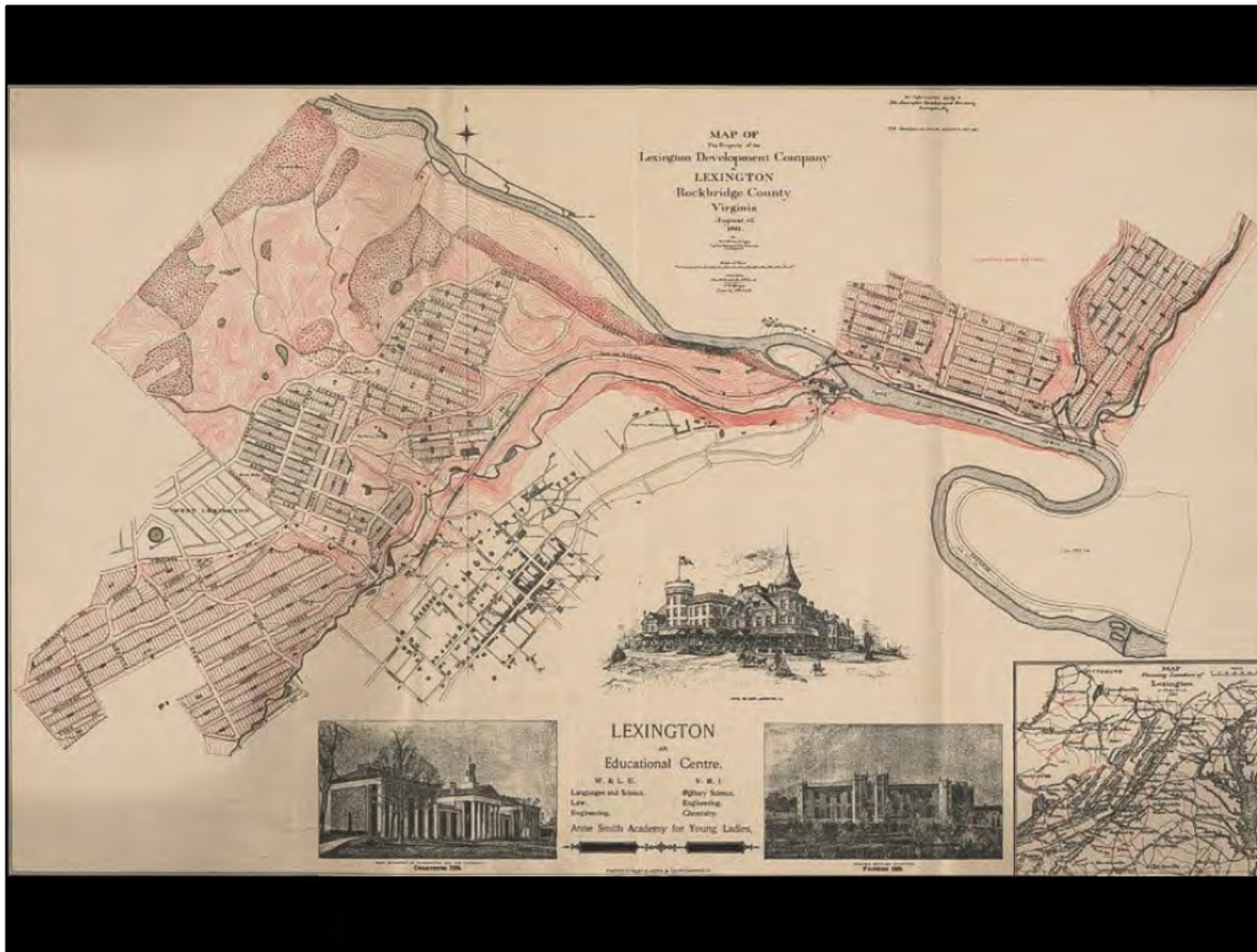
Also South Main Street.



Beechenbrook Chapel dates 1873.



The town boundaries are re-drawn.



Then came the Golden 90's. Announcing establishment of the Lexington Development Company, the Rockbridge County News claims: *"The old town has aroused from her lethargy, has caught the spirit of the times, and girding her loins to march to the front and take her place among the most vigorous and prosperous towns of the land."* The story adds: *"Lexington has long been walled in by old estates. These lands are now available."*

The company's prospectus boasts: *There are six passenger trains daily, giving easy and quick communication to all points East, West, North and South.* After noting the C&O's spur to Lexington, the document identifies four additional, major rail lines with intentions of serving Lexington and concludes: *Lexington, Virginia, will become one of the great railroad centers of the South. The prospectus also extolls the area's, magnificent water power – the cheapest of all power sources, ag and mineral resources, and established industries in addition to fine educational resources, and natural wonders such as*

Natural Bridge.



A prime player was to be the Union Steel Company relocating to Lexington from Louisville. The facility's 250' x 80' stone foundation lies buried below W&L's Washburn tennis courts.

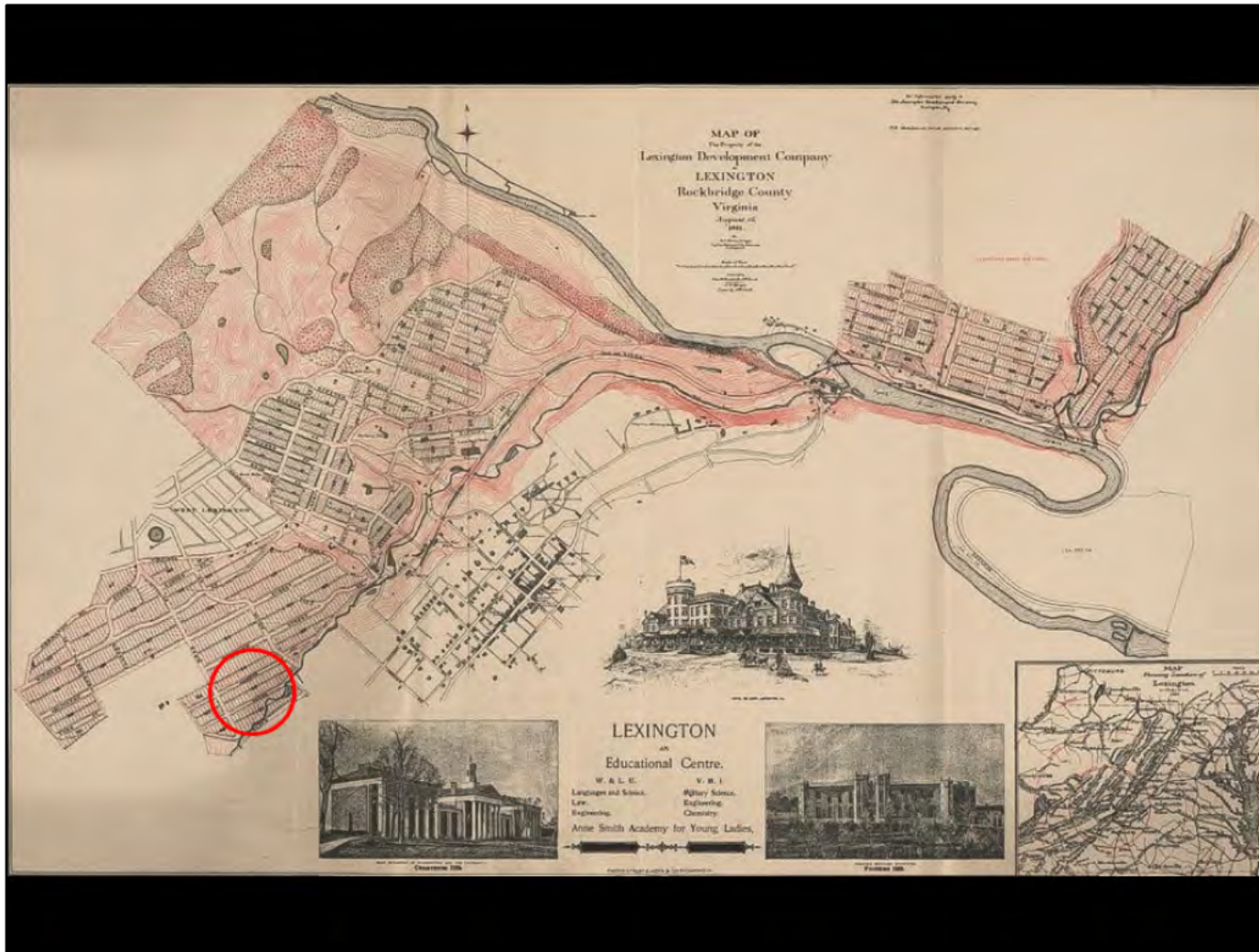


De Hart Hotel at Castle Hill, c. 1891

Within less than a year from inception, Lexington's great boom, explains historian Stuart Moore, was in a state of collapse, with nothing to show for it but a vast, empty hotel (the Castle Hill), a ready-made site for tennis courts, a wide expanse of unsold lots, and a financial tangle of the first order.



Moore credits a William McKeever with exposing this Ponzi scheme. McKeever proclaimed: *"If, indeed, the said purposes of the Company were to build a town or city, then this description of the land they bought was a bald exaggeration, misleading in the extreme. Had the Lexington Development group said 'much of it was bluffy, with creeks, ravines and kilnpots, where the gazelle could scarcely scale', their description would have been more accurate and the deception less palpable."*



The red circle caddy-corner to the engraving of W&L illustrates the Lexington's Developments Company's impractical, proposed development pattern (given steep slope) for approximate location of the previous slide.



Telephone and electrical service emerges in the 1890's.



The first automobiles show up around 1900 with Model-Ts going into production 1908.



Courtesy of Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives Room, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, Virginia



Conceived for age of the Conestoga Wagon,



arriving a bit late for the great canals,



never quite making it in the Rail Age, today's Automobile Age was supposed to put battered Lexington back in the game!



Here's a steam engine departing Lexington photographed by Michael Miley.

LEXINGTON---THE CROSS ROADS!

Due to its unique location Lexington is bound to receive an enormous volume of tourist traffic from now on. Heavy tourist travel means national advertising without expense and inevitable gains in population, business, industry, bank deposits and investments.



AT THE CROSSING OF LEE HIGHWAY AND ROOSEVELT MIDLAND TRAIL

Lexington is the only town south of Chambersburg, Pa., which is the cross-roads of two transcontinental highways—Lee Highway and Roosevelt Midland Trail.

The Midland Trail is on the program for hard paving to the West Virginia line and will be the short cut from the Great Lakes region and west to Florida.

Last year over 33,000 visitors registered on the book in the Lee Chapel. Many thousands more will visit the shrines of Lee and Jackson as road improvements progress.

Lexington is growing, will grow faster year by year, and as it grows is spreading westward, enveloping Monroe Park.

This makes Monroe Park the outstanding real estate investment today in Lexington at the original pre-development prices. For nine days more the old prices prevail. On May 1st they will be advanced to take into account improvements completed or under way.

Call and Let Us Show You Monroe Park

“Lexington is Growing West”

MONROE PARK INC

L. W. FARRIER, President Phone 68

The automobile facilitated suburban growth, starting out in Lexington with Monroe Park, initially outside the town's limits. A 1927 Monroe Park advertisement, Lexington – The Cross Roads! announces: *Due to its unique location, Lexington is bound to receive an enormous volume of tourist traffic from now on. Heavy tourist travel means national advertising without expense and inevitable gains in population, business, industry, bank deposits, and investments. The add goes on: Lexington is the only town south of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, which is the crossroads of two transcontinental highways – Lee Highway and Roosevelt Midland Trail.*



Robert E. Lee Hotel, Lexington's first (still only) high rise) is completed and opens 1926 to accommodate the anticipated title wave of motoring tourists. Six stories, it yields 72 rooms, 56 baths, and capacity to expand an additional 100 rooms.



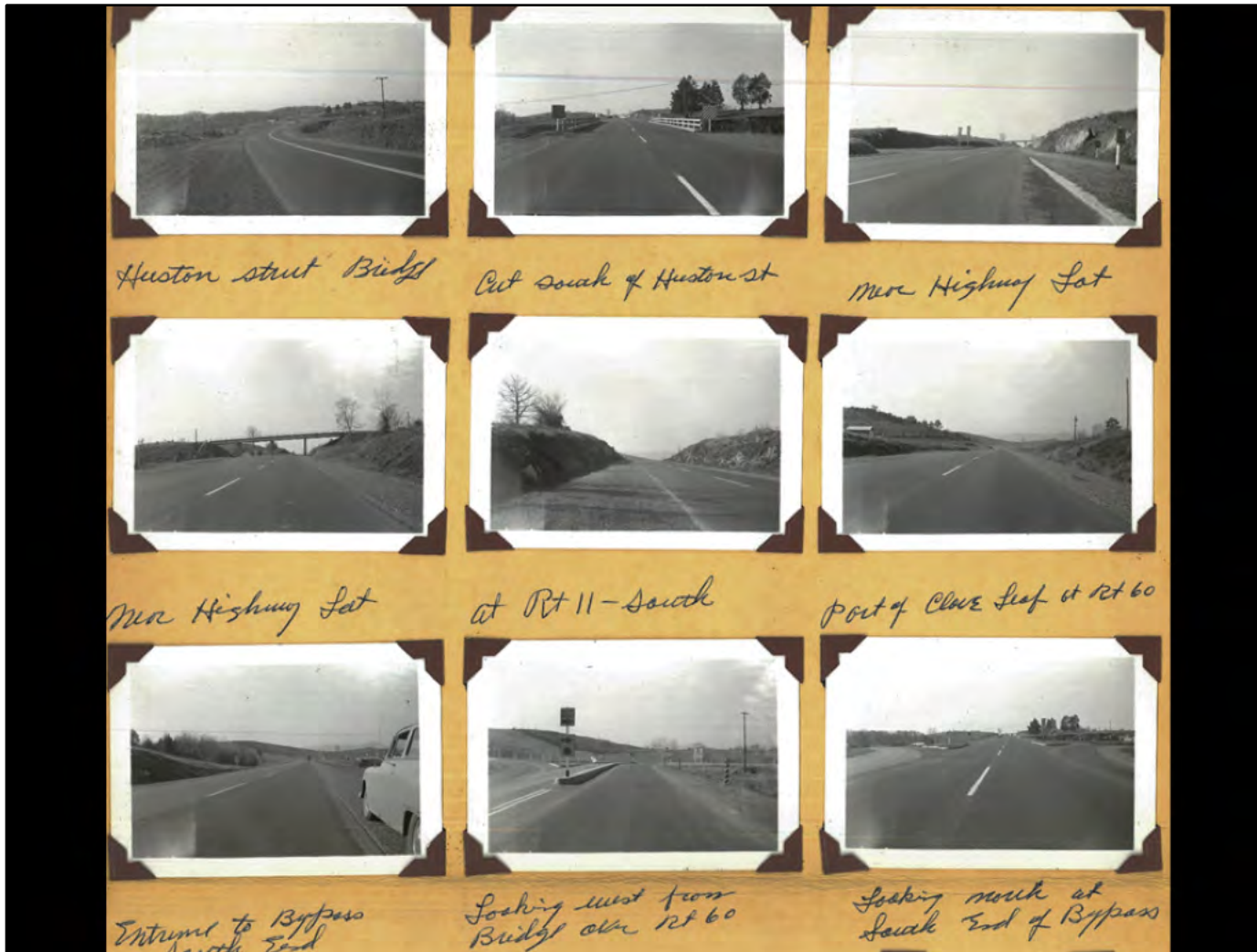
Chances are the Robert E. Lee Hotel was constructed before the town's outfitted with a zoning code. Virginia's enabling legislation for municipal zoning codes arrives 1927. By today's regs, the Robert E. Lee Hotel couldn't be built. Lexington's 1957 zoning code limits building height in commercial districts to 4 ½ stories or 75' – the Robert E. Lee Hotel tops out at roughly 75'. Lexington's 1970 zoning code and all subsequent Lexington codes limit commercial building height to 45'. Sometime between 1957 and 1970, the town made up its mind – no more skyscrapers, Lexington should stay a small town.



Charles Bodie writes: *A handful of watchdog groups began to show up at council meetings. A triggering event in 1936 was a proposed Texaco service station at Main and Nelson. The idea of another downtown service station rallied critics, who feared that the town was being overwhelmed by crass commercialism. They charged that the structure was unattractive, threatened Lexington's dignity and beauty, did not fit with surrounding structures, and would add to traffic congestion. The council rejected the plan after a crowded public meeting – but the station was built anyway triggering lawsuits.*



Cornerstone now occupies this space.



Needless to say, Lexington's bypass also didn't come without strife. As expected, the enhancement tears commerce away from downtown business. A compromise - signage at the north, south, and east exits -



but sure enough tourists homes, gas stations, motels, and restaurants fade – some still in decline. The bypass is completed 1955.



County land values between the bypass exits and town boundaries soar.



1980's Aerial View of East Nelson Street

I remember as a boy, hardly being able to move on Lexington's busy, gritty sidewalks, diminished 1934 by Main Street widening. Downtown business customers found no parking.

Lexington's new County entrance corridors exploded overnight with box outlets surrounded by acres of parking.



Instead of the White Front on Main Street, we now shopped at Kroger's - where Advance Auto and Cook Out now lie.

Planning Commission Calls For Annexation Feasibility Study



CALL FOR ANNEXATION STUDY—The Lexington town planning commission gathers around the table in the town council chamber for the presentation Thursday night of a request for authority to have experts make a "feasibility study" of municipal annexation. Council authorized the study. Standing from right to left are Dr. E. C. Griffith, commission chairman, and M. R. Beebe, T. F. James, W. N. William, Jr. and M. W. Paxton, Jr. Town Councilmen seated around the table (left to right) are Charles Sutin, D. E. Brady, Jr., John V. Berberich III, (town manager and clerk), C. S. Glasgow (town attorney), I. R. Bowling, A. M. Foltz, I. C. Baker and William Broadhurst. Mr. Bowling presided in the absence of Mayor Paul A. Holstein, who was out of town.

Experts Will Be Retained

The Town Council Thursday night authorized the planning commission to employ experts to study the "feasibility" of municipal annexation of adjoining areas.

The commission appeared before the Council to request such authority.

In making the request Dr. E. C. Griffith, commission chairman, emphasized that the study would "in no way commit the Council to annexation or to a policy on annexation."

Dr. Griffith told the Council that the planning commission, appointed last summer, had been meeting twice monthly and that its main business had been preparation of a town zoning ordinance which is now about completed.

"In all our study on this matter and on the future of the town," he said, "we have been constantly confronted with the problem of the

The town maneuvers 1959 to annex County property between it and east and south bypass exits. That's Matt Paxton Jr. standing far left.

Annexation Believed Feasible

Would Double Size Of Town



The town would more than double its size and increase its population to 1,699 in an annexation proposal now under study by the Town Council.

An experts report discussed at length at Thursday night's council meeting indicates that this annexation would be feasible.

The town would have to absorb an estimated \$16,000 deficit the first year and thereafter the revenue from the annexed areas should more than balance the required expenditures, the feasibility study showed.

The proposed annexation area would include, on the east, all the territory east to the highway, on the south all to the Providence Hill area, and on the west the residential developments out as far as the reservoir and West Lexington. There would be no territory taken in south of Mary's River.

Action Deferred

Council deferred any action on the proposal until a committee can meet with the county supervisors and the county school board to present the matter to these interested parties.

The new Central District Elementary School would fall within the proposed annexed area, though the great majority of its pupils would still come from the county after annexation.

One of the points to be worked out in the proposed annexation would be the ownership and operation of the school.

The Town Council received copies of the feasibility study at its January 16 meeting.

After studying the report, Council met Thursday with the planning commission, which had requested the study, and Glenn D. Ruffner, of the Roanoke firm of Hayes, Scott, Matern and Matern, which did the six-month study.

Expert Forecasts

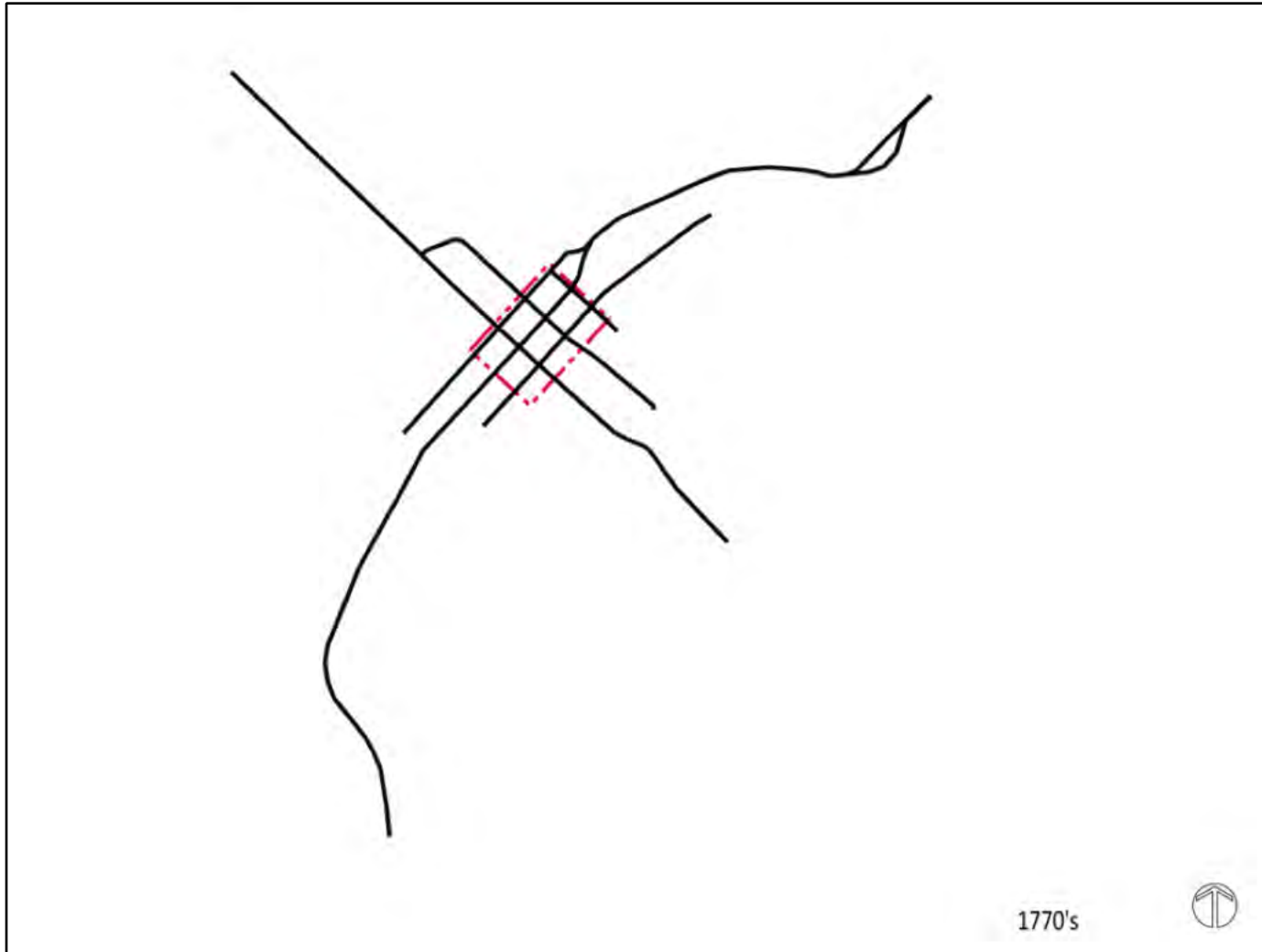
Mr. Ruffner answered a number of questions.

See Annexation Page 2

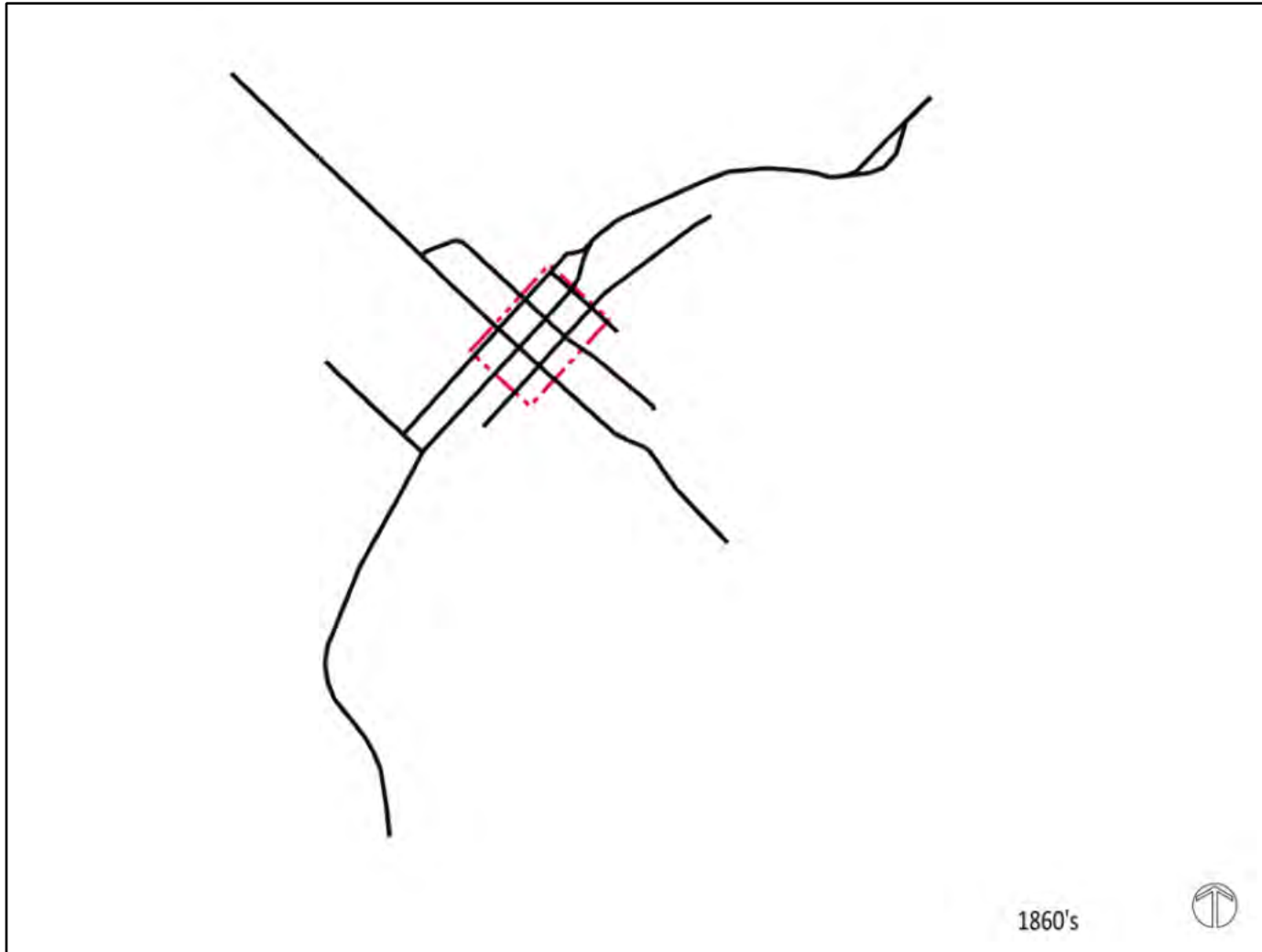
Features Of Annexation Discussed

All aspects of the local municipal annexation picture were carefully

Was next the right move, assuming City status, 1966, effectively locking down Lexington's boundaries; eliminating altogether jurisdiction of neighboring lands?

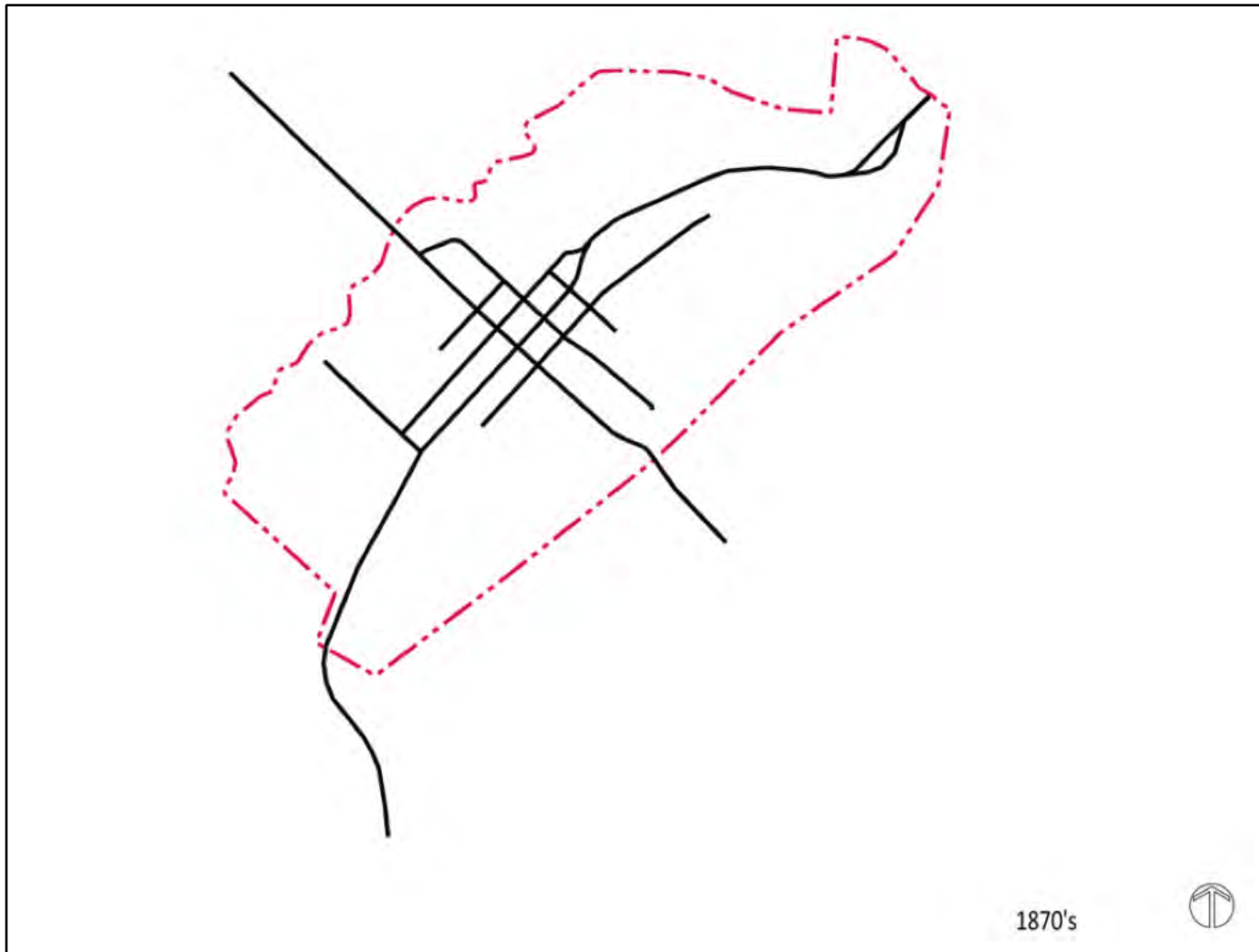


The following sequence illustrates Lexington's street by street growth.



1860's









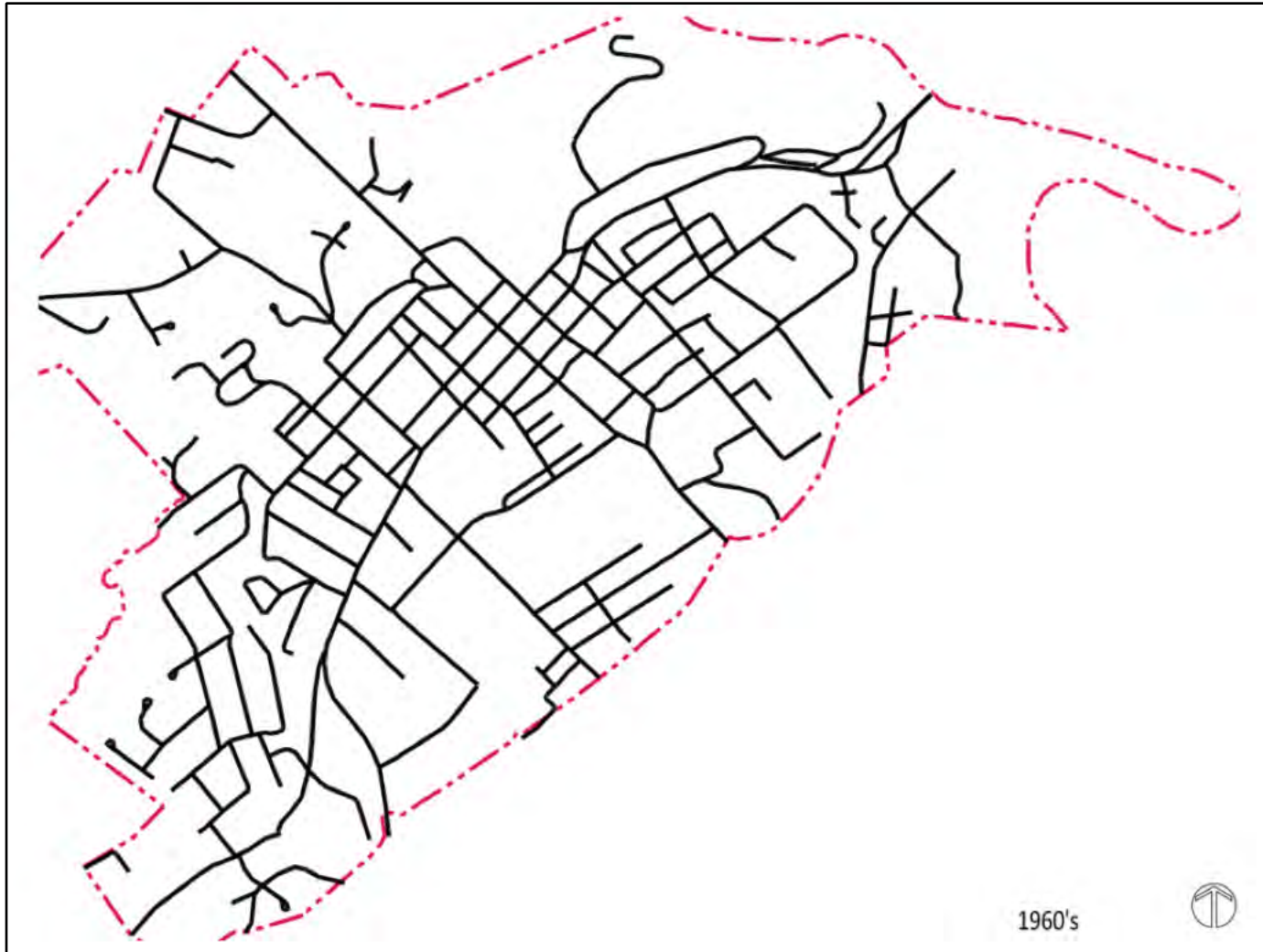






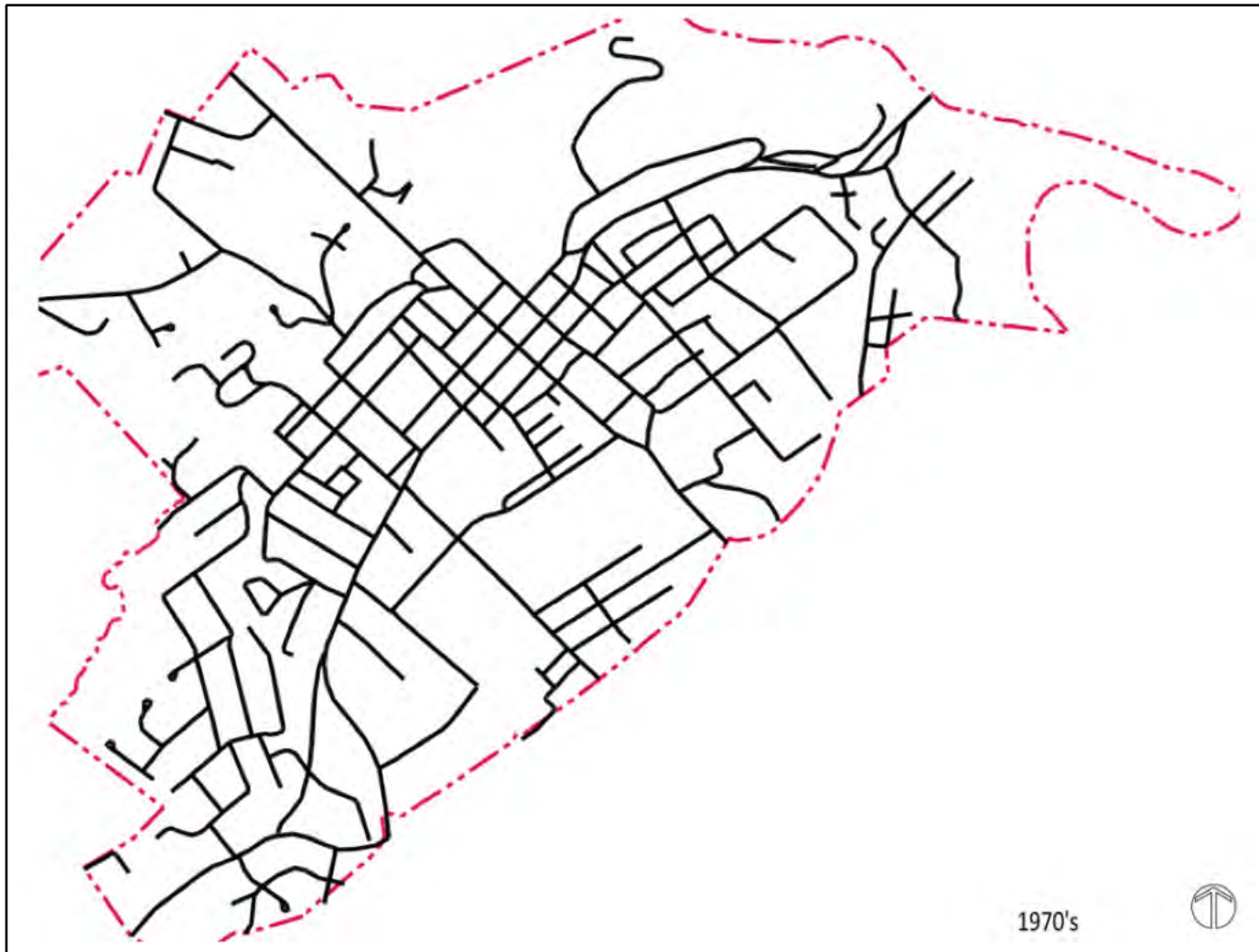




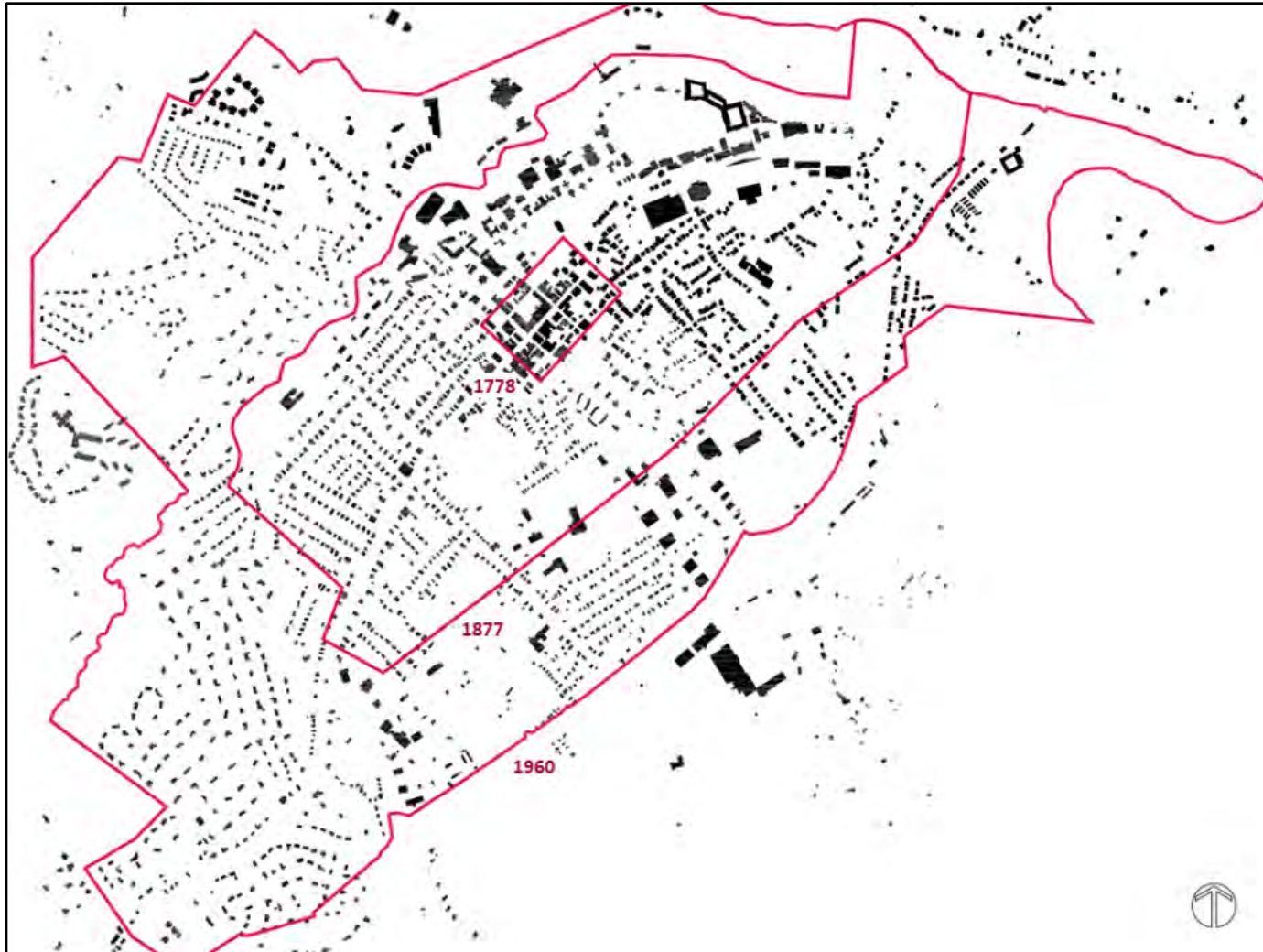


1960's





Like roots in a bonsai container.





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Rockbridge Area Conservation Council
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