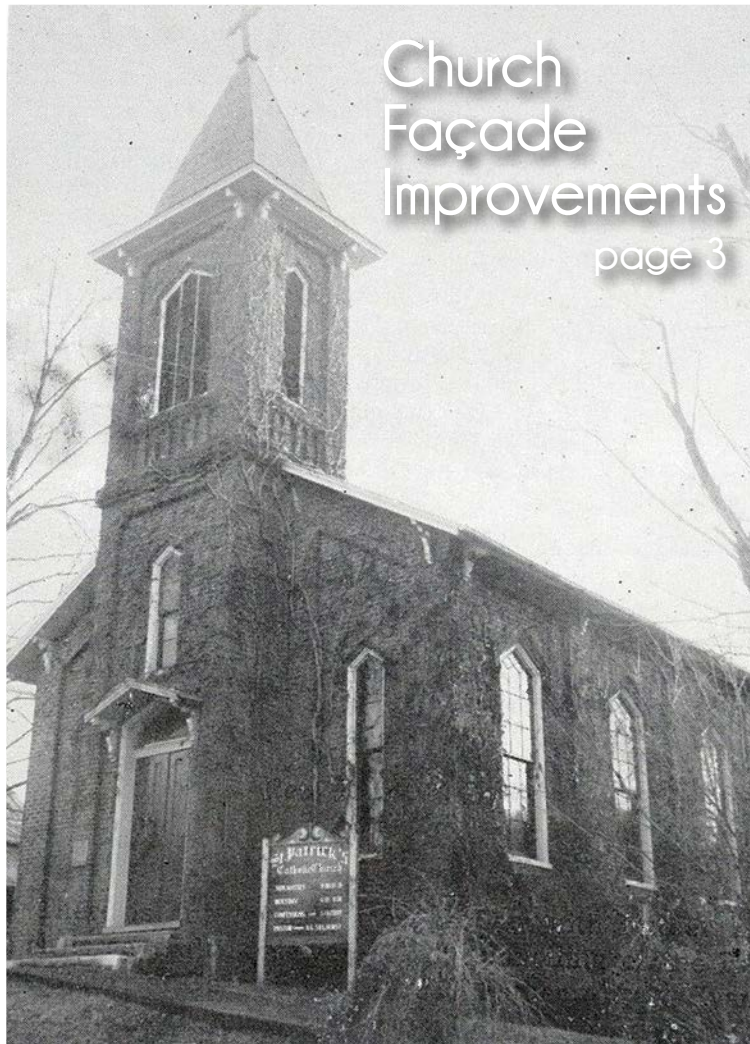


HISTORIC LEXINGTON

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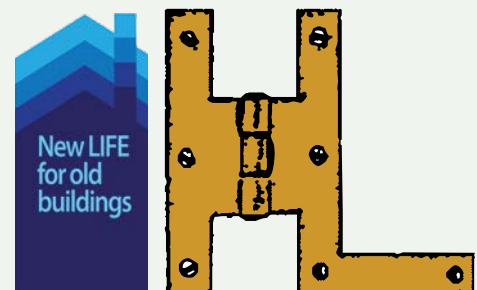
Summer 2020

Newsletter



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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends of HLF,

I naively made my way into this new decade full of ideas and plans. Isn't it natural to think that things will look fresh and hopeful? Little did we know what was in store. It is a time that feels much like a science fiction movie complete with people who blink as they look out over masks that cover their faces.

It didn't take long to understand that everything was going to be different. There was something called a coronavirus that messed with our plans, our events, our contact with others, and it is a situation difficult to describe or maneuver. This new way has not been easy. Historic Lexington Foundation has looked for every possible way to keep things moving forward; phone conferences, Zoom, Facetime, emails, texts, the *News-Gazette*, and special mailings, whatever it takes to stay in touch. It is unrecognizable compared to the past.

The new decade did bring one recognizable item, and that would be me, back as president. I am glad to be here again. I suppose it is only natural to take a look back, but I prefer looking forward. We have an outstanding board that still views their service as an honor and work both important and exciting. But it is you, standing behind us, that makes this work. Your support will help save or restore the structures that are chapters in the Rockbridge County story. Should it be a cemetery, a church, a one room schoolhouse, a slave dwelling, or a store front, it is what makes this story worth telling. It is our job to tell it and encourage you to listen. There are projects in this issue of the Newsletter that are so important that we welcome the opportunity to see them accomplished.

I have to admit that this time of isolation and introspection has been definitive. It has allowed us to determine who and what is of value and with whom we most want to be. With this understanding we will make our way through this patch and should we happen to look back, we hope to find that you are still there, standing behind us. There is one thing we have learned. We need each other.

Stay safe,
Beverly Tucker

*Cover image:
The Original St. Patrick's Church on
Henry Street, now the Gospel Way
Church of God in Christ.*

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Historic Henry Street Church Undergoes Major Façade Improvements

Under the direction of HLF Board Member Jim Busch, HLF is about to undertake significant improvements to the façade of the historic c. 1873 church located at 109 East Henry Street. The work is being made possible by a generous bequest to HLF by the late Margaret Cole Davis. The church building is owned and occupied by the Gospel Way Church of God in Christ.

Prior to 1873, when the first Catholic parish was formally established in Lexington, there was no Catholic Church building and worshipers had to attend Mass in private homes or in the Lexington Fire House, located at Randolph and Washington Streets. In 1873, construction of the church on Henry Street was begun, and on July 19, 1874, the church was dedicated as St. Patrick's Catholic Church.

The establishment of the St. Patrick's Church parish and the construction of the Henry Street church were spearheaded by John Sheridan, an Irish immigrant who lived in Lexington from the age 14 until his death in 1929. He owned the nearby Sheridan Livery Stable from which he operated a stagecoach line that carried the US mail and connected Lexington, Staunton, and Hot Springs.

HLF benefactor Margaret Cole Davis lived the last years of her life on Lewis Street just blocks away from the Henry Street church. As described by one who knew her, Ms. Davis was a citizen of the world. She was not an elected official or a politician, but was born in Canada, studied in Europe, and lived a life of the mind and spirit. As noted by HLF President Beverly Tucker, "Her gift to HLF not only expresses her commitment to preservation but carries on a family legacy, her mother having been a founding member of HLF."



The cornerstone reads: St. Patrick's Church, Erected A.D. 1873.

HLF is also pleased to announce that for its work on the church's façade, the Gospel Way Church of God in Christ has given HLF an easement on the building's façade, insuring that the character-defining architectural elements of the exterior walls and steeple not be altered without prior written approval by HLF.

Work on the church's exterior will include replacement of the gutters, painting of the church roof and steeple roof, re-glazing and painting of the window above the front door, and repairing and repainting of the soffits and steeple wooden elements. Additionally, HLF is paying for a major upgrade of the building's electrical system. The basement of the church is used as a community food pantry. The electrical upgrade will allow the church to expand this activity through greater refrigeration capacity.



Tim Welsh, Welsh Construction; Jim Busch, HLF board; Tom Carroll, Carroll Painting; and Tony Bostick, Gospel Way Church of God in Christ, oversee the work on the church.

HLF Undertakes Extensive Programs to Maintain and Interpret Lexington's Historic Cemeteries

This spring, Historic Lexington Foundation announced its intention to make the preservation of Evergreen Cemetery and the formerly named Stonewall Jackson Memorial Cemetery (SJMC) a priority in 2020 and the years ahead. The foundation set the framework for this effort when two years ago it contracted with Wellman Conservation LLC, a Maryland-based cemetery conservation firm, to undertake preservation plans for the two cemeteries. The finished plans include a conservation survey of select gravestones, treatment recommendations, and costs of those treatments, including those for the repair and resetting of gravestones.

To focus this effort, HLF has established a cemetery preservation fund and a cemetery committee. Donors to HLF are permitted to direct their donations to that fund. HLF also announced that HLF executive director Don Hasfurthur and board member Skip Ravenhorst have been asked to cochair the cemetery committee. Other members include Mary Newman and Arthur Bartenstein. Committee members, together with other HLF executives, met in May with Shawn Hamric of Hamric Memorials to walk through the two cemeteries and establish priorities for stone repair and resetting.

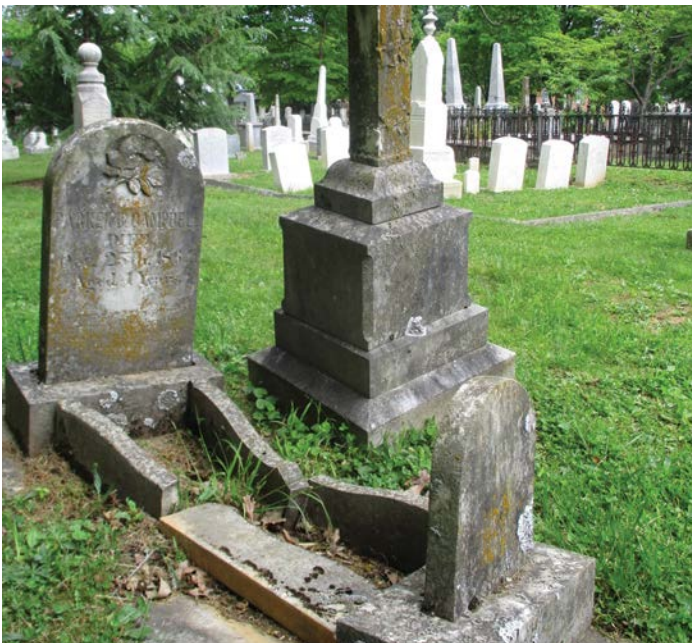
According to Hasfurthur, "The task is immense as the number of stones requiring repair is large." Some are broken and on

the ground. The supports, both stone and brick, of tabletop gravestones are in danger of collapse. Many stones are leaning significantly, with those pinned and set on bases in danger of falling and breaking.

Lexington's cemeteries represent a fascinating educational tool for identifying historic gravestone types and material. Many are upright, but some are flat either on the ground or, as is the case with tabletop stones, on legs or other supports. Obelisks, a type that has its origin in ancient Egypt, can be found throughout SJMC. Elaborate Gothic-Revival stones were popular in the late 19th and early 20th century and can be found in both cemeteries.

Each type has different repair challenges. Sinking foundations often result in the stone leaning. Over the years, rather than resetting the stones, cemetery maintenance personnel often merely propped up the stone by inserting brick between the stone and its foundation. This now needs to be remedied. Stones also have a tendency to break where they are pinned into a base if the pins are not of stainless steel.

A first step in the repair task is to try to identify descendants of those buried in graves with stones HLF has identified as priorities for repair. The cemeteries are full of families with names like Massie, Chichester, Caruthers, Leyburn, Campbell, McDowell, Hanna, Otto, and Parry in SJMC and Price, Gooch, Harper, Pettigrew, Thompson,



SJMC tombstone of Parker B. Campbell. Died at Age 4.



Obelisk stone of Catherine Parry twisted on base and in danger of falling on historic stone of Matthew Hanna (SJMC).

Jones, Greenlee, Brice, Washington, and Cleveland in Evergreen. Where major repairs are required, such as recent repairs to the gravestone of Annie Baxter, HLF would like to get the approval of descendants, if they can be found. Community members are asked to assist in this identification process.

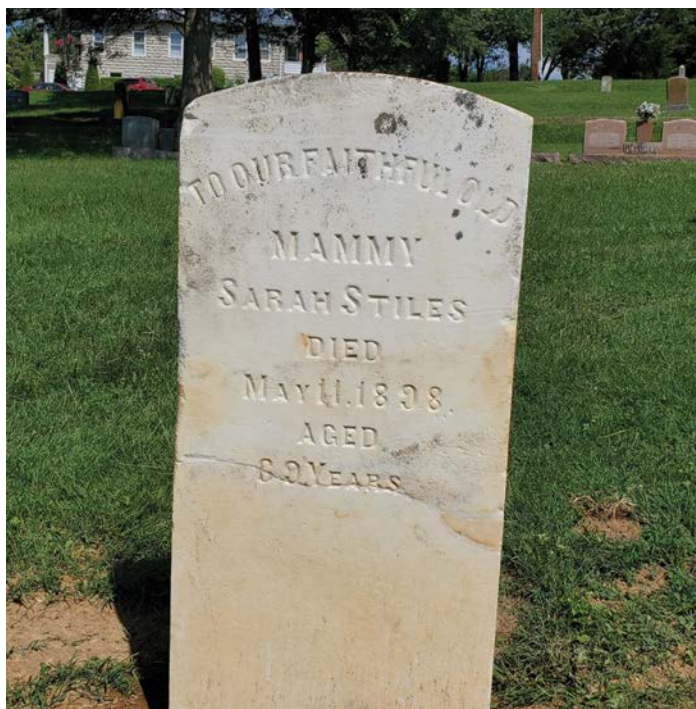
On June 24, the cemetery committee and Hamric conducted another walk-through of both cemeteries and further defined a course of action. As part of this activity, Hamric provided HLF with estimated hours of work for the priority stones. Those stones with priorities for repair were placed in a public service announcement in the July 1 issue of the *News-Gazette* with the request that any

descendants of those buried there come forward with questions or comments.

Additionally, HLF hopes to create, manufacture, and install interpretative signage at Evergreen similar to what HLF did for the former SJMC. Individuals and families buried in the former SJMC have been fairly well documented in publications and online, making interpretation much easier than at Evergreen. At the latter, HLF will need the help of members of Lexington's African American community to help identify and document those buried there. HLF board member Bob Keefe has been tasked with coordinating the interpretative work at Evergreen.



Stone dedicated "To Our Faithful Old Mammy" Sarah Stiles broken and sunken into the ground, obscuring death info (Evergreen).



Sarah Stiles gravestone repaired.



Gravestone in Evergreen Cemetery of Annie Morison Greenlee. Left: Broken at metal pin and broken base. Right: Repaired.



Skip Ravenhorst, Don Hasfurther, and Shawn Hamric at SJMC

HLF Announces Its 2020 Founders' Awards

Historic Lexington Foundation has presented two 2020 Founders' Awards for excellence in historic preservation. The awards go to Arthur Bartenstein and Richard "Dick" Barnes. Normally the awards would have been presented at HLF's annual membership meeting. Scheduled for early April, the meeting was cancelled due to the ongoing pandemic.

A landscape architect, Arthur Bartenstein served for many years on the board of HLF. He has been instrumental in preservation and conservation efforts throughout Rockbridge County, including HLF's efforts to preserve the historic McDowell Cemetery near Fairfield.

According to Barbara Walsh, executive director of the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council (RACC), "Arthur Bartenstein is one of the rare community members who combines considerable expertise in both environmental protection and historic preservation with a passion for community service." HLF Executive Director Don Hasfurther added that, as a member of the Lexington Architectural Review Board, Bartenstein has brought to the ARB an important and sensitive understanding of Lexington's historic architecture. "His understanding of the finer

aspects of historic preservation has helped guide the ARB over the last two years."

Dick Barnes has brought a critical understanding and interpretation of the area's historic preservation activities. According to Paul Hahn, a Brownsburg community resident and long-time acquaintance of Barnes, "Dick was an early activist in the renaissance of Brownsburg village, restoring homes, including his residence, and establishing the only business in the village—Old South Antiques. He demonstrated his interest in the community by founding the Brownsburg Community Association and the Brownsburg Museum to foster the culture and preserve the history of the community." Additionally, Barnes supervised the renovations, decor, and furnishings of the Thomas U. Walter designed c. 1840 old Rockbridge County Jail when it was the headquarters of the Kappa Alpha Order.

The HLF annual meeting that had been scheduled for historic Sunnyside would have provided the opportunity to address the accomplishments of the previous year and future planned activities. Executive Director Hasfurther had intended to discuss HLF's 2019 efforts to focus attention on the importance of preserving the area's historic barns and its partnership with Virginia Humanities to undertake a project to document slave dwellings in Rockbridge County.

Additionally HLF had planned two important presentations for National Preservation Month in May of this year. "Regrettably, we have had to postpone both due to the pandemic," Hasfurther stated. The first presentation would have been given by Lucia "Cinder" Stanton, former Shannon Senior Historian at Monticello's Thomas Jefferson Foundation. Now a Lexington resident, Stanton was to have addressed her many years of work interpreting Monticello's Mulberry Row and its slave history.

The other postponed presentation would have been given by Williams College Professor Charles Dew and author of *A Bond of Iron*, a study of the relationship between master and slave at Buffalo Forge in Rockbridge County. HLF had scheduled the presentation for Falling Spring Presbyterian Church to be followed by a visit to the extant slave dwellings at Buffalo Forge. Falling Spring Presbyterian Church was chosen not only because of its proximity to Buffalo Forge, but also because the forge's owner, William Weaver, is buried there. "I was particularly saddened to have to cancel this event and hope that we can reschedule a visit by Dr. Dew," notes Hasfurther.



Arthur Bartenstein displays his Founders' Award, presented for his dedicated service to HLF.

Thanks To Our Contributors

We extend our sincere gratitude to all who sustain the work of HLF. We recognize these donors whose gifts were received from August 2019–July 2020.

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We strive for accuracy in our acknowledgments. Please share corrections with us.

Every Historic Structure Has A Story Worth Telling



*Gen. Charles Kilbourne welcomes
Gen. Omar Bradley to his home on Pendleton Place.*



*1 Pendleton Place—Lisa Tracy holds the historic marker
for the home of her grandfather Gen. Charles Kilbourne.
Gen. Kilbourne was a veteran of the Spanish–American
War, the Boxer Rebellion, and the First World War.*



Edmondson-Penick House Historic Marker—104 White Street



Troubadour Theatre Historic Marker—36 N. Main Street



Trinity Methodist Church Parsonage—106 W. Preston