

NEWS - NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

September 2013

Remarkable Rockbridge available in high-quality paperback edition

Remarkable Rockbridge is the most comprehensive history ever written of this historically and educationally significant region.

The result of eight years of research and writing by historian Charles A. Bodie, the original hardback edition was published by the Rockbridge Historical Society in 2011 and quickly sold out. The RHS board then decided to invest in a high-quality paperback edition whose lower price would make the amply illustrated book available to a wider audience.

The author is a graduate of William & Mary College who earned his Ph.D. in American history from Indiana University. His wonderful text reviews the area's early history, but its main narrative begins in the 18th century when waves of Ulster-Scot immigrants arrived from Pennsylvania. Its engaging style belies the depth of Bodie's scholarship: in the 442 pages it has 46 pages of footnotes and more than 130 illustrations, including an array of historic photographs.

In Lexington, the book is sold by RHS and local bookstores; this newsletter includes an order form. For buyers farther afield, it is also available through Amazon.

Natural Bridge is for sale!



See story, Page 2

September Dinner Program

Education and schools in southwestern Rockbridge County

The Rockbridge Historical Society will gather at the Effinger Fire Department on Monday, September 30 for dinner at 6:30 with program to follow. The dinner will be provided by the Fire Department Auxiliary and will feature the turkey and country ham for which they are justly noted. In addition to the two meats, there will be an array of vegetables and desserts from which to choose. The cost is \$13.50 per person. To make a reservation use the form in this newsletter, returning it by September 20.

Program at a Glance

Theme: *History of education in SW Rockbridge County*

Date: Monday, September 30

Location: Effinger Fire Dept.,
2824 Collierstown Road

Time: 6:30 p.m. dinner

7:30 p.m. program

Note: It is not necessary to buy dinner to attend the talk

Following dinner, Dr. Clinton Anderson will discuss the history of education, both private and public, in the southwestern part of our county. His illustrated talk will feature a number of local schools, including Hamilton's School House at Rapp's Mill, the Palmer Academy/School, the Collierstown School, and the two buildings that housed Effinger High School.

The speaker has written two books on the area's educational accomplishments, *Palmer: The First Hundred Years in the Buffalo Community* (published in 2003) and *Celebrate Effinger, 1922-2010*, which came out just this year. Copies of the latter will be available for purchase at the meeting.

Dr. Anderson grew up in the Murat community and is an alumnus of the Effinger School and Washington and Lee

See Effinger program, Page 5

Lewis and Clark marker set for dedication in Lexington October 18

Both Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were natives of Virginia. Their epic trek west as leaders of the Corps of Discovery is well chronicled and widely celebrated. Less well known is what happened in the years following their triumphant return to St. Louis. Of local interest, Clark was married to Julia Hancock of Botetourt County. He visited there and then stopped in Lexington in December 1809 en route to see Jefferson at Monticello, shortly after Lewis's unfortunate death in Tennessee.

The Lexington marker is part of an effort by the National Park Service to mark a Lewis and Clark Eastern Legacy Trail, for which a bill is now before Congress. The marker to be placed on the green by the Old Courthouse is sponsored by several local organizations, including the Rockbridge Historical Society, the Historic Lexington Foundation, the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council and the Southern Shenandoah Branch of Preservation Virginia, all in partnership with the Lewis and Clark Trust of Lexington, Kentucky.

According to Charles Bodie, a leader of the local effort, the disk to be placed here uses the same design as that along the Lewis and Clark trail west of the Mississippi River: It shows an outline of the U.S.A., the national flag, dates of the expedition (1803-06), a small inscription that says "From Sea to Shining Sea" and a border inscription that says "Lewis and Clark Trust partners with the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail."

Details for the ceremony the afternoon on Oct 18 are still being developed, so keep an eye on local news sources or check with the RHS, which will host an Open House before the dedication. There, visitors will be able to view historian Ed Dooley's images of Lexington's Main Street as of 1867, not too long after Clark's visit.



A similar marker was dedicated in Botetourt County last year.

Campaign under way to save Natural Bridge

As most local citizens are by now aware, the iconic Natural Bridge is for sale, and the owner is in a hurry. He has let it be known that if no satisfactory offer is forthcoming, the property will be auctioned off in November as multiple lots that will include the bridge itself, parcels of undeveloped land, and associated commercial properties such as the hotel.

Not only is the bridge a wonderful geological curiosity and tourist attraction, but it also has great historic significance. Thomas Jefferson owned it at one time, and George Washington surveyed it, allegedly carving his initials in the stone. And, of course, the county was named for this signal feature. The index to *Remarkable Rockbridge* shows numerous mentions of the site, beginning with Native American legends about its origin.

The Rockbridge Area Conservation Council has taken the lead in organizing a broad coalition of conservation- and history-oriented organizations seeking to preserve the landmark. The hope is to find one or more major donors to purchase the bridge itself with some acreage and convey it to a state entity or the National Park Service, while also placing conservation easements on other parcels before they are sold to others.

The RHS board has adopted a resolution to partner with RACC, the Valley Conservation Council and the consortium of local, state, and national conservation, historic, and cultural organizations "to raise enough money and political influence to support a feasibility study by the National Park Service to ascertain whether the Bridge and the undeveloped land (or conservation easements amicable to the N.P.S. on these lands) could be part of the National Park system."

The board encourages all RHS members and friends to consider this critical issue, and its importance to our RHS mission and county identity and then sign the petition at www.ipetitions.com/petition/natural-bridge-park/. More information and updates can be found on the RACC website at <http://rockbridgeconservation.org/bridge.php>.

For more information, you may also want to read and listen to the recent WVTF radio peice on the topic, which can be found at <http://wvtf.org/post/efforts-underway-preserve-natural-bridge>.

Reservations for Dinner Program September 30, 2013

Name _____

Please reserve _____ dinners @ \$13.50 each

Amount enclosed \$ _____ as (circle one) check / cash

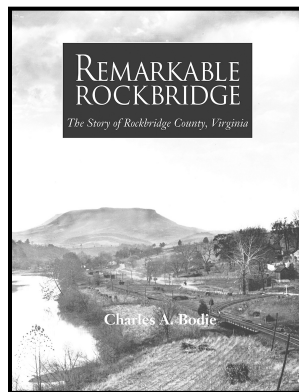
Reservations must be received by September 20 ** Names will be checked at the door

Mail reservation with check to Rockbridge Historical Society, P.O. Box 1409, Lexington VA 24450



Order Form for *Remarkable Rockbridge*

Now in paperback ----- New in August 2013 ----- Great Gift Idea



Mail this form with check to Rockbridge Historical Society, P.O. Box 1409, Lexington VA 24450
Or contact RHS, telephone 540-464-1058, e-mail rochist@hotmail.com
Books may be sent by mail, picked up at Campbell House or hand-delivered locally by arrangement

Order details:

Number of copies at \$26.25 including tax _____

Signed by author Charles Bodie? (circle one) Yes / No

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Roads and Rockbridge

Dear Readers,

In navigating between our various RHS projects and partnerships, I've recently and frequently found myself thinking about Roads. And not just because of I-81 pileups and the chasm formerly known as the historic Nelson Street Bridge.

When you pause to think about it, roads trace so many of the things we've been involved in of late at RHS. Our signature book, *Roads of Rockbridge*, remains the definitive, popular guide to the charms and quirks of our County byways. More recently, we've featured a wide variety and history of local thoroughfares: our continuing 2013 Exhibit, "Main Street Lexington 1867;" our contributions to the "Miles of Memories" project at the History Museum of Western Virginia (now a traveling exhibit with portable panels featuring historic images up and down our Interstate Corridors/ The Valley Pike/ The Great Wagon Road/The Great Indian Road); and most recently, the Lewis and Clark Eastern Legacy Trail (see Page 2) for more information on the national journey to be commemorated at the Old Courthouse green on Oct. 18, along with Clark's stop in Lexington for a bed, breakfast and -- his diary shows -- whiskey and "good living") en route to Monticello. A recent inventory of our collections and publications even unearthed boxes of a 1980s cassette recordings -- not quite yet petrified -- that maps and narrates a driving tour of Rockbridge County (please pick up your own free copy, next time you're in at CH!!). Sometimes taken for granted, sometimes bemoaned, sometimes cherished, our roads continue to define Rockbridge, and to afford portals into our long and distinctive histories.

There are good reasons for this, of course. Our county is distinguished by so many notable people, events, arts and letters, and resources. But crossroads and traverses, communication and traffic -- through roads, rivers, mountain passes, turnpikes, railroad tracks and even the highway that passes over our namesake Natural Bridge -- these were the opportune and grounding resources for early and continued growth in Rockbridge. It may be less easy to appreciate that value amid a shutdown on I-81, a slow stoplight, or a niggling pothole. But as you drive through our towns and countryside (and, we hope, on the winding drive out to the RHS program in Effinger on Sep. 30) I'd invite you to reflect on the history of how people moved here, and how we all and variously keep moving ahead. Our roads remain our historic resource, and they invite us -- as our RHS mission statement charges us to do -- to remember.

Eric Wilson, Executive Director

Lexington plans "footprints" project

The Lexington City Council has approved the development of a Rockbridge Legacy Campaign in response to a National Park Service call for historical and tourist enhancements to complement the Lewis and Clark Eastern Legacy Trail (see story on Page 2).

Under the title Walk in the Footprints of History, the plan is to embed markers in the city's sidewalks to help visitors learn more about some of the people of all kinds who left their marks in local history.

RHS will support the effort and will keep its members informed as to how they may create legacies of their own.

Now at Campbell House

Rockbridge Historical Society: Main Street Lexington, 1867: Col. Ed Dooley's computer-generated images of historic streetscapes shortly after the Civil War.

Nearby exhibits of interest

Botetourt County Historical Museum: Our Partner in the Lewis and Clark Eastern Legacy Trail Project, and with Historic Fincastle.

<http://www.botetourt.org/about/history.php>

Lynchburg's Legacy Museum of African American History: "Trouble Don't Las' Always: African American Life in Central Virginia During and After the Civil War, 1860-1890"

<http://legacymuseum.org/>

Effinger dinner

Continued from Page 1



The speaker, Dr. Clinton Anderson.

University. He earned his doctorate at Teacher's College, Columbia University, and has devoted his career to organizing and supervising adult education programs for active-duty military personnel. In 2000, Dr. Anderson was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame. Though now semi-retired, he continues to work as a consultant to colleges providing educational opportunities for members of the Marine Corps.



Effinger schoolhouse, ca. 1924. The structure is now a private house. Photo courtesy of Clinton Anderson.

Rockbridge Historical Society www.rockhist.org

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