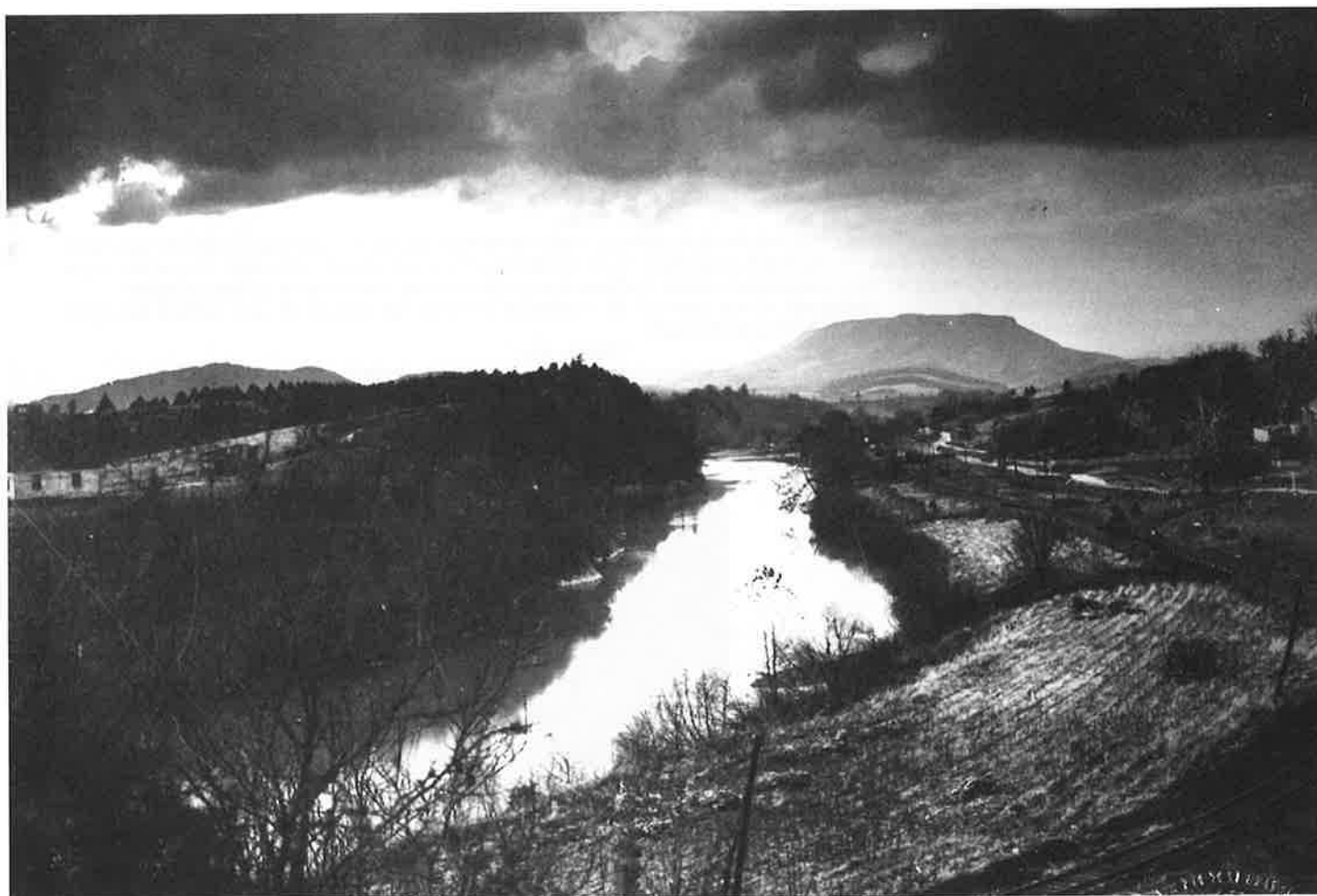


ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
HERITAGE BOOK  
1778 - 1997



*House Mountain in a Storm*

ROCKBRIDGE AREA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, 1997

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup:  
thou maintainest my lot.  
The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places;  
yea, I have a goodly heritage.  
PSALM 16:5,6.

Thanks to everyone who had a part in helping create the Rockbridge County Heritage Book. A little part or a big part we couldn't have done it without you. I hope you enjoy your book and treasure it for years to come.

Doris Johnson Phillips  
President of the Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society 1997



## DISCLAIMER

The Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society and Rockbridge Heritage Book Committee cannot be held responsible for any erroneous statements made within this work. The articles submitted were written by many individuals. Although references were requested, it was impossible to verify all facts. Information within this work should be used as clue material by genealogists.

Although flaws may exist, the overall usefulness of this work will be invaluable to many. No amount of care renders any book free from error. We hope they have been kept down to a minimum.

Thank You  
The Rockbridge County Heritage Book Committee

Contract signing. Shirley Johnson-Grose,  
Walsworth Publishing Consultant and  
Linda Carter Smith, president of the  
Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society, 1996.



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Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society  
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# INTRODUCTION

Although many good historical works exist for Rockbridge County, the need for the Rockbridge Heritage Book was obvious. Due to space limitations, most histories record only the most prominent and/or most important historical figures. The Rockbridge Heritage Book provides a medium for the "little people", the plain everyday folks who helped to make our county what it is today. This book has been written for the people, by the people. It includes the plain everyday farmer, the laborers, the factory workers, as well as the plantation owners, the prosperous merchants, and other more prominent figures. In this work, all have been treated in an equal fashion. Each household was encouraged to submit a 500 word family story. We are delighted so many of you chose to participate.

Any questions or corrections regarding individual family stories should be directed to the submitter. Our job was to collect the stories and proofread them for spelling, punctuation and grammar. We were unable to verify each fact in so large a work.

Many of the photographs within this work were located in Washington and Lee University, James Graham Leyburn Library, Special Collections. The archivist, Vaughan Stanley, and his assistant, Lisa McCown, were very helpful in locating the photos and granting permission for their use.

The business histories and advertisements, as well as the memorials and tributes which honor very special people, have helped to provide additional space for historical information and family histories. We thank all our sponsors who so generously supported our project. In addition, Andre' Studio of Lexington deserves special mention. Thanks, Mike Collingwood, for all the fine photographic reproductions you made for us. Also, thanks for the group photos and the photographic knowledge you so graciously shared. A special thanks to Blue Ridge Office Supply is also warranted. Carl Cummings gave us a fabulous deal on a photocopier while we worked on this project. Thanks Carl, sorry if we ran the mileage up too much.

For the writers and contributors, the supporters and sponsors, the editors and proofreaders, and the entire book committee, the effort at "Preserving our Heritage" was a work of love. We hope others will understand if there is a slip of the pen on occasion, as no work of this magnitude can be entirely free from error. Just know that everyone who worked on this project gave a great deal of loyalty, devotion and time into preserving the history of Rockbridge County and our nation.

Thank you,

Angela M. Ruley

Editor "In and Around Rockbridge"

Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society Newsletter



# FOREWARD

We officially started this project in December of 1996. With Christmas only a few weeks away, we didn't jump in with both feet until January 1997. The committee immediately put our heads together on how to publicize our project. We made numerous lists of subjects which needed to be included in the book.

After thousands of mailings and numerous ads in the local newspapers, we still were not satisfied. Could we go further?? Could we spread the word further? The next step was the television station and local radio. A big thank you to Angela Ruley for having the knowledge and nerve to talk on both.

We set our first deadline as 15 March 1997. I personally had nightmares of going to the postoffice and never getting any mail. Then more nightmares of postal workers telling me that my little purple bag wasn't big enough. In my dreams, they told me I would have to pull around to the back and open the trunk. I did get a call early one Saturday morning telling me not to forget to pick up the mail that day.

I started out with the "book project" on a regular desk in my office. I was very organized and had everything confined to a small corner. I was so proud. This would work out great! It would not interfere with my family and I would work a few hours a week. Was I naive or what?!

March 15 arrived!!! We set up two ping-pong tables in my living room. Fifteen people worked on various jobs all over my house. There were people in my kitchen making copies, in my dining room counting words, in my living room processing mail. Everywhere you looked, someone was hard at work. My family met many new people. I found myself, along with many other members, working forty hours a week volunteering, in addition to our regular jobs.

Walsworth Publishing Company decided since we were doing so well that we should extend the deadline to 17 May 1997. This would give us a chance to sell more ads and to pick up areas that had not yet been covered.

Over the months we have joked about the many "hats" we wear in any given day. We all have so many different jobs, we are constantly changing from one to the other.

I want to take this time to personally thank the families of all of the committee members. I know you did not volunteer for this project, but like my family, that is all you have heard for nine months. Thank You for the many hours you were so patient while we worked on the book. Thank You for not getting mad for the many meals that did not get served. Thank You for understanding why there was nothing clean to wear. Thank you for running constant errands, for answering numerous phone calls, for picking up stories and just putting up with the entire project. Thank You for being You!! Without the love and support of our families, this project would never have been completed.

This project has been quite an experience. It was much larger than we ever dreamed possible. I am glad we were able to compile all the wonderful stories for you. Within this book you will find hundreds of stories from amateur writers as well as those more prolific in writing. We all had one goal in mind, and that was to record the famous as well as the not-so-famous people in Rockbridge County. I hope you enjoy our Rockbridge County with renewed pride of its rich unique heritage.

Deborah Kay "Debbie" (Graves) Mohler  
Treasurer Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society  
Secretary/Treasurer Rockbridge County Heritage Book



# THE ROCKBRIDGE HERITAGE BOOK COMMITTEE, AT WORK.



*Choosing Pictures. Left to right: Angela M. Ruley, Bobbie Sue Henry, Debbie Mohler. In back, Linda Smith.*



*Carmen Clark, Doris J. Phillips, and Angela M. Ruley.*



*Happy Birthday! Shirley Grose.*



*What color cover would you like? Jessie Clark and Shirley Martin.*



*Hester Holland and Carol Harlow.*



*Linda Smith and Ann Runkle.*



*Checking the list. Left to right. Gwen Stuart, Carol Harlow, Alice Garret, and Mary Skutt.*



*Proofing on the go. Ruby Leighton.*



*Folding Brochures. Henry Bryant.*



*Hard at work! Martha Watkins and Elizabeth Bryant.*



*Bring us your story! Louise Reynolds and Betty Funkhouser.*



*The Desk. Louise Reynolds and Debbie Mohler, processing.*

# DEDICATION

## Group of Dedicated Individuals

In Rockbridge County, there were many people who gave above and beyond the ordinary to make the Rockbridge Heritage book successful. Several individuals stand out.

Shirley Martin, the current Vice President of the Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society and member of the Rockbridge Area Arthritis Group helped organize the Rockbridge Heritage Book in the early stages. Shirley, along with Arthritis Group members Betty Funkhouser, Jessie Clark, Martha Watkins, and Louise Reynolds comprised the original Rockbridge Heritage Book Committee. The Arthritis members made numerous phone calls urging people to attend the heritage book meetings. Rags officers attended and enthusiastically agreed to sponsor the new Rockbridge Area Heritage Book project.

Debbie Mohler, the current Secretary/Treasurer of the Rockbridge Heritage Book Committee, processed and maintained records for over 743 family stories, and over 431 topical stories. She collected and organized the topical information, as well as overseeing the many other activities which contributed to the success of the book. Debbie also kept track of book sales and advertising revenue. Debbie not only undertook many of the numerous tasks of processing the stories, but she opened up her home to the project. Debbie's living room was transformed into the Rockbridge Heritage Book Committee office. She placed a ping pong table in her living room for use as a work station. Her two sofas soon housed the many file boxes of stories. Her end tables were transformed into problem tables, and photograph collection areas. She placed charts and graphs on the walls beside her family pictures. As work on the book progressed, Debbie constantly fielded the many phone calls, made corrections and changes to stories at the submitter's request and handed each story as if it were her own. Without Debbie, this book would not have come to fruition. Her assistance was invaluable.

The wonderful collection of photographs at Washington and Lee University was offered to the group by Vaughan Stanley, the Archivist in the Special Collections. Again, Debbie Mohler came through. She put her photography skills to work, and reproduced many of the photographs within that wonderful collection. Special thanks to Vaughan Stanley and Lisa McCown for all their assistance, and for allowing the use of many photographs located in the Washington and Lee University Special Collections within this work.

Debbie's photography skills paid off in other areas too. She reproduced many of the family photographs in this book. She also shot pictures of many of the churches and landmarks throughout the county. Debbie's photography skills added much to the final product.

When it came time to publicize the book project, Debbie Mohler gathered addresses from the local library's guest book, and Angela Ruley obtained addresses of libraries and individuals interested in genealogy and Rockbridge History. These large lists of people and libraries had to be typed, and Barbara Slough took on this tremendous task. Approximately 4500 brochures were mailed. Members of the committee, folded brochures, attached address labels, and began to sort mail. Bobbie Sue Henry, and Angela Ruley, finished the sorting over the next few days and got the brochures on their destined paths.

Next, Angela sent email announcing the book to numbers of Rockbridge internet researchers. She simultaneously created a web page with information regarding the book and the Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society. An order form was created and placed on the web page. By the deadline for submission of stories, this web page had been viewed over 1,200 times. Not only did this help promote the book, but the Society's membership also increased.

Other marketing skills were required, and Angela was asked to head this up. She contacted the local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. A Press conference was in the works. Shirley Martin was contacted and agreed to call all members of the committee for attendance at the press conference. The group was interviewed for a feature story on WDBJ 7, a television station out of Roanoke, VA. Next, Angela Ruley was invited to do a radio talk show for WREL in Lexington. Angela and Doris Phillips talked for an hour about Rockbridge History and the Rockbridge Heritage Book. Word about the book spread like wildfire, but that was not enough. An article was written for the most widely distributed newspaper in the Rockbridge area, "The Weekender" and was carried on the front page. Due to Angela's marketing efforts,



Angela M. Ruley

Debbie G. Mohler

book sales soared and stories poured in faster than they could be processed. The mail mounted so quickly, that the post office called Debbie and jokingly told her to bring a truck when she picked it up. She made a cry for help. Angela offered to pitch in, but there was too much for the two of them. A workshop was set up and most of the committee members came to Debbie's house and processed stories. Once the initial deluge of stories had been processed, Debbie, Angela, Betty Funkhouser, and Louise Reynolds were able to handle the remaining stories. Debbie and Angie processed more stories than either cared to count.

Once the stories were in, they had to be edited for grammar and spelling. Ruby Leighton stepped up and took over this tremendous task. She is the only member of the committee who can claim to have read the entire book before it was finished. Ruby's wonderful sense for detail added a great deal to this book.

At first, many people did not know how to write their stories. Bobbie Sue Henry was there to give workshops on story writing. Bobbie Sue worked tirelessly, insuring the book a high profile in the Rockbridge Area.

It soon became necessary to have an alphabetical listing of the stories as they came in. Barbara Wilhelm stepped up for this task. Barbara organized numerical and categorical lists. She maintained the lists of stories and helped Debbie, as well, by auditing the Treasurer's books. It should be noted that they were never even one cent off.

As the orders began to arrive, shipping lists needed to be created. Doris J. Phillips took care of this project. As president of the group, she led meetings in an orderly fashion and designated workers and helpers where needed.

When creative writing skills were needed, Mary Skutt's services were called upon. Mary also wrote the history of Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society and stories for the local colleges. She enhanced many stories with a little final polish.

Thanks to everyone who worked on this project! Due to the extensive topical section and the family stories, advertising became necessary. Most members pounded the pavement visiting businesses throughout Rockbridge County, Lexington, and Buena Vista. Debbie, Doris, Angie, Betty, Shirley and Louise visited a tremendous number of the local merchants. Advertisers welcomed them with open arms. Most were delighted to be included in such a phenomenal work. Again, the group was successful.

Walsworth officials related that in 17 years of business, no group had ever met a deadline as dramatically as the Rockbridge group. The Rockbridge Heritage Committee should be extremely proud of our success. *Written and Submitted by: Shirley Grose.*

Special Acknowledgement goes to the following individuals:

Elizabeth (Marshall) Bryant  
Carmen E. Clark  
Betty (Coffey) Funkhouser  
Bobbie Sue (Barnette) Henry  
Hester (Woodward) Holland  
Shirley (Morris) Martin  
Debbie (Graves) Mohler

Doris (Johnson) Phillips  
Angela (Moore) Ruley  
Barbara Slough  
Linda (Carter) Smith  
Martha (Reynolds) Watkins  
Henry Bryant  
Jessie (Morris) Clark  
Alice (Hickman) Garrett  
Carol (Hite) Harlow

Ruby (Whiteside) Leighton  
Mary Jane (Emore) Mutispaugh  
Rev. Barry L. Nall  
Louise (McCullough) Reynolds  
Ann (Fix) Runkle  
Mary (Sutton) Skutt  
Gwen (Bare) Stuart  
Barbara (Hinty) Wilhelm

# DECISION MAKERS AND GOAL REACHERS.



*Making the News! Kimberly McBroom, WDBJ-7 reporter, and Debbie Mohler.*



*Moss doesn't grow on a rolling stone. Betty Funkhouser, Louise Reynolds, and Elizabeth Bryant.*



*Yes, we can do this. Shirley Grose, Debbie Mohler, and Jessie Clark.*



*Like a stone wall. Sitting: Angela M. Ruley and Debbie Mohler. Standing: Doris J. Phillips, Louise Reynolds, Betty Funkhouser, and Ruby Leighton.*



*Taking a break. Doris J. Phillips, Louise Reynolds, Angela M. Ruley, Debbie Mohler, and Betty Funkhouser.*



*Dedicated Crew! Arthritis Group. Kicks book off!*



*The book will be this big! Mary Skutt seems to be telling Linda Smith. Others pictured are: Alice Garrett, Gwen Stuart, Shirley Martin, Jessie Clark, Hester Holland, Shirley Grose, and Martha Watkins.*



*Computer diskettes and stacks of paper were a common sight in putting this book together. Foreground: Linda Smith and Angela Ruley. Others, left to right: Bobbie Sue Henry, Henry Bryant, Elizabeth Bryant, Laura Mohler, Barbara Slough, Gwen Stuart, Mary Frances Cummings and Barbara Wilhelm.*



*Taking Time To Laugh. Debbie Mohler, Barbara Wilhelm, Doris J. Phillips, and Angela Ruley.*



*Here's how you do it. Mary Frances Cummings, Betty Goolsby, and Ruby Leighton.*



*The Mail Room. Front table: Louise Reynolds, Angie Ruley, and Ruby Leighton. Back Table: Henry Bryant, Henry Hatcher, Elizabeth Bryant, Alice Garrett, and Bobbie Sue Henry.*

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Rockbridge Heritage Book Committee. Sitting: Angela M. Ruley and Debbie Mohler. Standing: Left to right. Shirley Grose, Hester Holland, Shirley Martin, Doris J. Phillips, Louise Reynolds, Betty Funkhouser, Ruby Leighton, Ann Runkle, Bobbie Sue Henry, Linda Smith, Mary Skutt, Alice Garrett, and Barbara Wilhelm. Back row: Gwen Stuart, Jessie Clark, Martha Watkins, and Carol Harlow. Not pictured: Henry and Elizabeth Bryant, Carmen Clark, Mary Jane Mutispaugh, Rev. Barry Nall, and Barbara Slough.



# ROCKBRIDGE AREA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

## FROM WHERE IT WAS TO WHERE IT IS

Sometimes it takes an outsider to stir the local people to action. I am the outsider and this is what happened. As a volunteer at the Rockbridge Regional Library, I was given the 'local history file' cabinet to clean out, reorganize, fix, label, or throw away papers. "Find out what's in there, what we have and what we don't have," Grace McCrowell, the assistant Rockbridge Regional Librarian said. She is not an outsider, so she watched and advised when I had questions.

In the beginning, I read and tossed, read and relabeled, read and alphabetized, and read some more. I even grabbed back papers that I tossed. The more I read, the more interested I became in learning more about Rockbridge County history. There was a "house-size mountain" of it to learn! (House Mountain size, of course!) Then I came to the "little green boxes" on top of the file cabinet.

In the boxes were cards with family names across the top, names like Ayers, Barger, Clark, Dudley, etc. and listed on the cards were names and addresses, often two or three, from other states, counties, etc. On the round table allotted to the local history corner of the library, is a 'Guest Book' along with "Please sign our guest book." Visitors had left names, addresses, the families they were looking for, and these names had been put onto file cards. Most were out-of-state names with comments such as, "researching Ruley, Mohler, Higgins and Moore." So. The two "little green boxes" and the guest book were related!

In the file cabinet were folders for families like Ogletree, McClung, Houston, etc. On the shelves around the table and file cabinet were books with family names on them like Hostetter, Goodbar and Paxton. There were names all over the place just waiting for connections, asking people to check through the boxes, and I called Angela Ruley.

I went through the guest book and added more names to the file cards. So then what? Did the local people know the boxes were there, that somebody from California was looking for them? In December of 1992, I listed the names of families being 'looked for' in the local paper.

Then, having a bit of outsider nerve, I set up two meetings at the library — one for an afternoon and one for an evening. I put a notice in the newspaper and waited. It seemed only logical a county so rich in family history should have an active genealogy group and I was concerned because there wasn't one.

The first meetings were held in January of 1993 and the decision from the local twenty-two attending was, "Yes! We do want to have a Rockbridge genealogy group." So we set another two meetings. In the newspaper announcements I bravely gave the group a name, the Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society, which turned into initials became the RAGS.

The first organizational RAGS meetings took place in April. A good number of people came, expressed various interests, and some never returned. But about fifteen did, again and again. With Angela Ruley as the editor, we decided a newsletter was the proper approach for reaching people. In May of 1993, we had fifty names on the newsletter list. In 1997 we have 120 members! Together with The Church of the Latter Day Saints, we have sponsored two genealogy workshops, in 1995 and 1996, at the Mormon Church in Buena Vista.

Our members who have served as president are Angela Ruley, Linda Carter Smith, Doris Phillips and myself. The secretary/treasurer is vital. We thank Debbie Mohler for the tremendous job and long hours spent in getting this book together and into print. We are four years old and getting more organized, growing stronger all the time. We meet once a month at the Rockbridge Regional Library. This outsider is very proud to have nudged the RAGS into being. *Submitted by: Mary Skutt*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

After Mary Skutt so ably got the Rockbridge Area Genealogists together for our first meeting on 11 March 1993, we began to ask what the needs of the group were. Many of those people coming to the meetings were asking "how-to" questions. The first order of business was to offer a few programs on How to Get Started, Home Sources, Charts/Forms, Tombstone Rubbings, The Scotch Irish Presbyterians From Ulster to Rockbridge and other topics. We began sharing these with the group. Tours of the Rockbridge Regional Library were given and the sources available there were included in our repertoire. We also held discussions on genealogy, Using the Census, our family lines, etc. Our first year, although we were not yet organized was quite successful.

We also discussed whether to become an organized group with dues, or to just continue to meet and exchange ideas. It was soon decided to organize and share what knowledge we were able to gain in the genealogical field with others across the country. After all, didn't everyone have an ancestor from Rockbridge? Wouldn't it be better to have dues and write a newsletter to share our information with others?

Carl Laubisch and I were appointed to write up a set of By-Laws and bring them before the group for approval. This was done and with a few minor changes, they were approved. Our little group was on the way to becoming an organization. We were all very proud to be among it's founding members.

With all that business out of the way, we held our first election. Officers for 1994 were: Angela M. Ruley, President/Newsletter Editor; Retta Horn, Vice President; and Elaine Tomlin, Secretary/Treasurer.

As I had already transcribed many of the cemeteries throughout the County, I thought it wise to turn these over to the Society for verification and future publication. Debbie Mohler was assigned to head up this task force and over the years has done a tremendous amount of work. Yet, we still need more willing volunteers to help complete this project.

During 1994, we held many programs and tours of local libraries and Archives. Of particular interest was the program given by Vaughan Stanley. We were given a tour of the Washington and Lee Special Collections and given many tips to help the genealogist in using this collection. In 1994, we also held meetings in cemeteries so we could verify and update some of the cemetery transcriptions which I had done several years earlier.

Well, 1995 rolled around and it came time to elect new officers. Mary Skutt took over as President; Linda Smith as Vice-President; Elaine Tomlin as Secretary/Treasurer; Angela M. Ruley remained as Newsletter Editor; and

Debbie Mohler remained as head of Projects.

The programs continued, but Mary came up with something new. Why not work together more closely with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Buena Vista, VA? After holding a meeting there and giving the members a tour, a workshop was soon in the works.

Rockbridge Area Genealogical Society and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints cosponsored their first annual workshop on 23 September 1994. Programs offered were: How To Get Started; Tips for Organizing Research Notes; Courthouse Records; Computer Programs; Introduction to Family History Microfilm and Microfiche Room; Intro to Family Search; Census and Soundex; Preserving Records; Writing a Life History and Keeping a Journal; and Family Organizations and Reunions. This Workshop went over well. Our keynote speaker was Richard Armstrong, author of nine books on the Civil War.

With 1996 came the election of new officers. Linda Smith was elected President; Betty Goolsby, Vice President; Debbie Mohler, Secretary/Treasurer; Carol Harlow, Corresponding Secretary; and Angela M. Ruley, Newsletter Editor.

The file cabinet which Mary Skutt had worked so hard to obtain during her term as president was finally set up in Rockbridge Regional Library. The many papers of the Society now had a new home.

The programs continued to be offered. Several members of the group attended the Virginia Genealogical Society Conference held in Roanoke, VA. They were: Linda Smith, Mary Skutt, and Angela Ruley. Having received prior approval from the group, they purchased several books at the Conference which were donated to Rockbridge Regional Library.

The highlight of the year was the second annual Workshop cosponsored by the LDS Family History Center in Buena Vista. Topics included: The Special Collection at Washington and Lee University, by Vaughn Stanley; Preston Library, Reference by Janet Holly; Rockbridge County Heritage Book by Shirley Johnson-Grose; Courthouse Records by Angela M. Ruley; Using the Census and Soundex by Dawna Sexton; and Getting Started Right in Genealogy by Angela M. Ruley. Mary Lou Sexton had the Family Search Computer program available and gave instruction on how to use the various research aids at the Center. Again, this workshop was successful and remained free to all.

In November of 1996, after several meetings had been held for discussion, it was decided to publish the Rockbridge County Heritage Book.

As 1997 began, a new election of officers was held. They are: Doris J. Phillips, President; Shirley Martin, Vice President; Debbie Mohler, Treasurer; Carol Harlow, Secretary; and Angela M. Ruley, Newsletter Editor.

1997 has been an extremely busy year for the RAGS. We've been hard at work writing family sketches, writing topical histories, selling business histories and all the many tasks which are involved in compiling the Rockbridge Heritage Book.

Among other things, a web page has been created on the Internet at <http://www.angelfire.com/va/rockbridge/index.html>. A great deal of useful information is available to the genealogist. Everyone is urged to take a look at our web pages and help us improve them to better suit the needs of the genealogist. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

# HISTORICAL TIDBITS

## BLAZING A WILDERNESS TRAIL

Rockbridge County, Virginia was formed in 1778 from Augusta and Botetourt counties. The Southern portion of Rockbridge was a part of Botetourt County for only eight years, as Botetourt was formed from Augusta County in 1770. The dividing line between Augusta and Botetourt County from 1770-1778 was the present Maury River, (then called North River). The area south of the Maury River was in Rockbridge, all areas north of the Maury River were in Augusta.

Augusta County was formed in 1745 from Orange County, which was formed in 1734 from Spotsylvania. Little should be needed in this particular area before 1734, as the first settlement in Staunton was in 1732, and 1737, for the area which is now Rockbridge.

Most of the early settlers of Rockbridge were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. There were some German, Dutch, Irish, English, and other nationalities who settled here over the years as well. The early churches were predominantly Presbyterian. Baptists, Methodists and other religions did not thrive until the mid 1800's.

As the Ulstermen came into Rockbridge, they soon began erecting their homes, planting their crops, and the many other chores which go along with running a farm, the most common profession. The early court records of Augusta, Botetourt, and Rockbridge are vital clues to the lives of our ancestors and should not be overlooked.

One can nearly be assured their Scotch-Irish ancestor came to this area from Pennsylvania. Lancaster County, PA was generally a stopover. Most of the Ulstermen who came to this area left Ireland from Londonderry, bound for Philadelphia. As William Penn's colony allowed for free religion, the Presbyterians found they could worship as they wished and generally settled there for a while before seeking out a new frontier with their countrymen. Virginia did not allow for free religion, however the Anglican Church was mostly in the tidewater region and the Presbyterians found themselves relatively unmolested on the wild frontiers of Virginia.

The Ulstermen often settled in Rockbridge for a generation or so, then the family traveled westward. Many settlers of Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Ohio came from Rockbridge County. Southwest Virginia was settled by many people who had stopped in Rockbridge.

There was some traffic over the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Tuckahoe (east of the Blue Ridge) region was settled first by people of English origin. The Scotch-Irish did not seem to have a lot in common with them and the traffic across the Blue Ridge was not common early. Over the years the people from Amherst, Nelson, Albemarle, Bedford etc. began to trickle through the mountain gaps and one soon finds Baptist Churches coming with them.

The German element seems to have drifted into the region by way of Rockingham, Shenandoah, and of course Pennsylvania. With them came the Methodist and Lutheran churches. Years of war had left ruins in the Palatine region of Germany. By 1725, many had emigrated via Rotterdam to Philadelphia. By 1731, many of those immigrants left Pennsylvania and headed to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia seeking cheap land.

As the Rockbridge area became settled, landmarks began to take names. Often a stream was named for a family who lived along it, or perhaps ran a mill along the stream. Other landmarks were named for descriptive reasons.

Broad Creek because it was wide; Battle Run for the first Indian/Settler battle in Rockbridge which occurred along its banks. The House Mountains looked like houses. Many other examples abound.

Animals probably signify some of the game found along the creeks on which the settlers hunted and lived. Elk Creek and Buffalo Creek would seem to indicate this. But Elephant Mountain most assuredly did not have elephants trampling about. Directions also held a part in naming landmarks; North Mountain, South Mountain, North Buffalo Creek, South Buffalo Creek, etc.

As the settlements began to expand, roads became necessary. The first settlers had only been able to travel by pack horse on narrow trails, in single file lines. The later settlers traveled in four-wheeled ox carts, and later in horse drawn wagons. Soon stages could travel over the roads. The canal system and bateau boats took crops to market in Richmond. Then came the trains, and travel became much easier. One can but imagine boarding a train and moving the entire family to Indiana, when only a few years previous the same trip would have required many horses and wagons, not to mention the time it would have taken.

These new transportation systems also brought jobs to the area. Laborers were engaged in building canal locks and dams, as well as railroad work. The first settlers had used road work as a sort of tax on the men over age sixteen.

As the plantations began to flourish, settlers had seen the need for schools. The Scotch-Irish were strong believers in education, as they felt people should read God's word and interpret it themselves. Teachers were sought out, quite often in the form of indentured servants. One room schools began to spring up on many plantations. Eventually, Augusta Academy, then Liberty Hall Academy were founded. These were the mothers of Washington College, which is today known as Washington and Lee University.

Soon after the settlers arrived in the Rockbridge area, it became a necessity to erect forts in many of the communities. The blockhouse forts were generally used here.

The grist mills were among the first order of business for many of the early comers, and the roads leading to them were among the most important. The road to the courthouse was usually the first to be improved. The grist mills allowed the settlers to turn their corn into corn meal, or their wheat into flour. The settlers soon had enough excess crops to sell in larger markets to pay off their farms.

A common item on a Scotch-Irishman's farm was a still, and distilleries sprang up along many of the plantations. In one account of the 1840's era, it was reported there were six distilleries in the neighborhood. Brown Betty, as the product was often called, was a common item at weddings and other social events.

The church was, however, the mainstay of the early settler's social life. Little contact was made with the neighbors, except in the church yard on Sundays. It should also be noted that all of the early churches were Presbyterian (Associate Reformed Presbyterian included). The predominant Scotch-Irish influence still carries on today.

These early settlers had a difficult life. The roads were mere trails, the courthouses were few and far between, and the land was previously untilled, rocky and hilly. One can but imagine the hardships they endured as they struggled to clear the land, raise the crops, feed and clothe the family, and strive for a better way of life.

It is very important to understand a little of the history of a people, before undertaking research on them, for without this understanding, they are merely statistics.

## THE FIRST SETTLEMENT IN ROCKBRIDGE

John Lewis and his family settled in Augusta County, in what is now known as Staunton, in 1732. For five years their settlement remained a western frontier, but more Scotch-Irish immigrants continued to seek land. Some business-minded individuals began to speculate that by obtaining Land Grants from the Colonial Government, they could begin new settlements and become wealthy in the process.

Benjamin Borden was one of these land speculators. He had requested and received a grant of about 100,000 acres along James River. In 1737, he set out to locate his lands, but soon found that without a trained surveyor he would have very much difficulty. He trekked onward in hopes of finding a surveyor upon reaching Lewis' settlement.

The McDowell family had left the port of Londonderry, Ireland in the ship "George and Ann". They arrived in Philadelphia, PA in 1729, where they stopped for a time. After a while, they headed for the wilds of Virginia, having decided John Lewis' settlement would meet their needs.

Enroute, Benjamin Borden came upon the McDowell camp. They invited him in, and conversation soon led to his large land grant and the need of a surveyor to locate it.

Without any fanfare, John McDowell informed Mr. Borden that he was trained as a surveyor. Mr. Borden had mentioned he would give a surveyor 1,000 acres of land if he could locate his land grant. Upon acknowledging McDowell's occupation, Mr. Borden asked for proof. John McDowell took his surveying equipment from his saddle packs and exhibited them. He then requested proof from Benjamin Borden regarding the land grant. Mr. Borden showed the papers which clearly stated his right to the land.

The next day the entire party continued on to John Lewis' settlement where a written agreement was drawn up. It stated John McDowell was to locate Borden's Grant and blaze a pack-horse trail through it. In return, he was to receive 1,000 acres of good land.

John McDowell chose his 1,000 acres near what is now the village of Fairfield. He then set about the task of locating the grant and blazing a trail. Land was cleared, and construction began on his house. Unlike many settlers, John McDowell took the time to peel the bark off the logs as he built his home. He then took red berries and stained the logs. His home became known far and wide as the Red House.

The McDowell party consisted of John, his father Ephraim, his brother James, his sister Mary, and her husband James Greenlee. There may have been others traveling with them, but if so, their names have not come down to the author.

James and Mary Greenlee settled near what is now known as Timber Ridge. Here they ran a Tavern until James' death in 1763.

Mary Greenlee was known far and wide as a crazy lady, or even sometimes referred to as a witch. Since the Indians regarded crazy people as untouchable, she was allowed to move easily in and out of their camps.

This proved to be a valuable asset to Mary. When Alice Lewis was captured and scalped by a band of Indians, all hope was lost by John Lewis and his wife Margaret. Mary Greenlee offered to go into the Indian camps and rescue her. Her price was a horse upon which to bring the girl back, and which she could keep on return. The Lewises were elated, and Mary was able to perform the rescue.

Contradiction occurs when one tries to

decide if Mary was actually crazy, or merely feisty. The author concurs on feisty and intelligent. At age 97, the county courts called upon Mary Greenlee to give depositions regarding land ownership. They again requested her testimony three years later. Mary amazed the Justices of the Peace with her astonishing memory, giving many details of the early settlers. Her depositions left us much history which would have otherwise been lost to time.

Mary moved near Natural Bridge to live near her son in 1780. She died on his farm at age 102. Her grave is located on his farm and marked by a larger marker.

John McDowell lived in Borden's Grant for only five years. He was killed in the first Indian/settler altercation within the present bounds of Rockbridge in 1742. Depositions given many years later by his son, Samuel McDowell, have also been preserved among the Augusta County, Virginia Court records. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley

Sources: 1. Oren F. Morton. *History of Rockbridge County, Virginia*. org. pub. 1920, reprint, Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1980, p. 20. John Lewis and his family settled near Staunton in 1732. p. 21. The McDowells came to Borden's Grant in that year. They had come from Ulster in the "George and Ann", landing in Philadelphia 4 Sept. 1729, they stopped briefly in Pennsylvania before coming to Virginia. pp. 22-23. An agreement (filed in Orange County) was signed on 9 Sept. 1737 by Benjamin Borden and John McDowell which said that McDowell was to go with his father and his brothers and make four settlements in Borden's Grant. McDowell was to blaze a good road for horses loaded with common luggage, and blaze the trees along the way, in return McDowell was to get 1,000 acres of land, the other three settlements were to receive six hundred acres of good land. 2. Robin Brownstein and Peter Guttmacher. *The Scotch-Irish Americans: The Peoples of North America*. NY: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988, pp. 57-60. 3. Richard F. Welch. "Life In Early America: The Scotch-Irish." *Early American Life*, August 1979, p. 33. The primary ports were Belfast, Derry, and Newry. 4. Park Rouse, Jr. *The Great Wagon Road From Philadelphia to the South: How Scotch-Irish and Germans Settled the Uplands*. Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1992, pp. 21-24. 5. Richard F. Welch. "Life In Early America: The Scotch-Irish," *Early American Life* August 1979, pp. 66,68. 6. Clementine Brown Railey. *The House of Ochiltree*, Sterling, KS: Bulletin Printing Company, 1916, pp. 193-195. Ms. Railey gives a sketch of Samuel Miller (1805-1891), son of Samuel and Margaret (Lackey) Miller of the Natural Bridge community, Rockbridge County, VA. Ms. Railey cites "family records of Samuel Miller's" passed down to his son, J. W. Miller, and J. W. Miller's recollections of conversations with his father as her sources. She states that in his youth Samuel Miller took a pledge of abstinence from alcohol and "stayed by it, although there were six distilleries in operation within two and one-half miles of his home." 7. Lyman Chalkley. *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia: Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, Virginia, 1745-1800*. (org. pub. 1912, reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1980). v. II, p. 76 cites Augusta County, Virginia Will Book 3, p. 210. 12 February 1763, Mary and John Greenlee on bond as administrators of James Greenlee deceased. 8. *Rockbridge County News*, "The Valley Manuscript" 26 February 1891, 5 March 1891, and 12 March 1891. It was said to have been taken from *The Land We Love* in January 1869 and was prepared by Fanny Fielding of Norfolk, VA. Ms. Fielding said it was "from a collection of archives known in our household by the above title from which I have been making extracts." Much doubt exists upon these works, and the author tends to lean toward disbelief that the entire Valley Manuscript was actually taken from Margaret (Lynn) Lewis' family papers. Much of it is believable, however if examined fact by fact much of it may be disproved. The author has never seen any actual documents from the manuscript, only typescript. 9. Tompkins, Edmund Pendleton. *Rockbridge County, Virginia: An Informal History* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1952), pp. 25-36 provides extracts from Mary Greenlee's Court depositions which are filed in Augusta County, Virginia. John Lewis Peyton's *History of Augusta County, Virginia* (Staunton, VA: Samuel Yost & Son, 1882) fully transcribes her depositions beginning on p. 69.

## MARY GREENLEE

Mary Greenlee was the first woman settler in what is now known as Rockbridge County, Virginia. She was born in Ireland in 1707, and grew up there. In 1729, Mary along with her husband James Greenlee, her father Ephriam McDowell, and her brothers, John and James McDowell, crossed the Atlantic Ocean and came to America. They settled near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for several years. Soon they heard of a Scotch-Irish settlement headed by John Lewis, and decided to move to the wilds of Virginia.

In 1737, the McDowell and Greenlee families, and perhaps a few others, made the long packhorse trip to Virginia. During their long journey, they met up with a man named Benjamin Borden. Mr. Borden had a large amount of land just south of Lewis' settlement. The Greenlees and McDowells soon decided to settle in Borden's Grant.

Mary Greenlee was a feisty lady and some people thought she was a witch. The Indians thought she was crazy. They believed bad things would happen to them if they harmed a crazy person and Mary was allowed to freely roam in and out of their camps.

Mary probably was not crazy, but was actually very smart, although somewhat eccentric. She probably understood some of the Indians' superstitions and used them to her advantage. By letting them think she was crazy, she was not in any danger from them.



Mary Greenlee Monument erected by APVA Sept. 1944

In Mary Greenlee's time, people believed witches were about in great force. They believed these witches signed contracts with the devil in their own blood. They also believed witches had great powers which were used for evil doings. Once at a quilting party, Mary urged one of the guests to eat more saying, "The mare that does double work should be best fed." This comment was taken by the other ladies to mean that Mary was a witch. The lady she urged to eat was turned into a horse at night and ridden on Mary's haunts.

Some of the stock of Mr. Craig of Triple Forks mysteriously disappeared. As Mary Greenlee was believed to be a witch, she was blamed for the loss. Other such accusations apparently abounded regarding Mary Greenlee; however, no evidence has been found which

indicates she was ever tried as a witch. Once, when Alice Lewis, a young daughter of John and Margaret (Lynn) Lewis, was captured by the natives, Mary went into the Indian camps and rescued her.

In her later years, Mary was visited by Justices of the Peace. There were many disputes about land ownership and Mary had been in Rockbridge with the first group of Settlers. On 10 November 1806, at the age of 99, Mary told the Justices of the Peace just who had owned certain tracts of land in Borden's Grant in the 1730's and 1740's. This deposition was given in the case of Joseph Burden, ptf, vs. Alex. Culton and others, deftd. This not only helped to settle disputes, but left a good record of some of the earliest settlers of Rockbridge.

In this deposition, Mary stated she and her husband James Greenlee settled in Borden's Grant in the fall of 1737. She stated that she, her husband, father and brothers, were intending to settle in Beverly Manor, but met up with Benjamin Borden while enroute and decided to move onto his lands. She also stated her brother James had raised a crop of corn in Beverly Manor the year before they settled in Borden's Grant. Mary said John Lewis was related to her father.

Mary left to historians the story of the Millhollen girl who was a servant of Joseph Bell. Ms. Millhollen dressed herself in men's clothes, built five or six small cabins, and reserved the cabin rights in the name of Millhollen, using various first names for each cabin right. Any cabins erected entitled the builder to 100 acres of land, and the right to purchase a larger quantity at fifty shillings per one hundred acres.

Mary's deposition named many of the early settlers. Among other things, she noted Alex Miller was the first blacksmith to locate in Borden's Grant. John Hays built the first mill in Borden's Grant, very soon after the area was settled. She named many of the settlers and how they came to acquire title to their lands.

When Mary first came to Borden's Grant, she and her husband built their first cabin near a spring very close to present-day Fairfield. They sold this after a while and bought land from her brother James McDowell. On this land, Mary and James Greenlee ran a Tavern near Timber Ridge. James died about 1763, and Mary ran the Tavern for another 17 years.

In 1780, Mary moved to near Natural Bridge to live with her son. She helped him run a ferry across the James River. Mary lived near Natural Bridge until her death in 1809, at age 102. She was buried on her son's farm, now (1994) owned by Sallie (Locher) Letcher.

Mary Greenlee has often been called "The Mother of Rockbridge County." She is an important personality to the local history of Rockbridge. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley  
Sources: Morton, Oren F. *History of Rockbridge County, Virginia*. (org. pub. 1912, reprint, Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1980). Peyton, J. Lewis. *History of Augusta County, Virginia* org. Pub. 1882, reprint Harrisonburg, VA: C. J. Carrier Co., 1972. *Rockbridge County News*. "The Valley Manuscript." 12 March 1891. Tompkins, Pendleton Edmund. *Rockbridge County, Virginia. An Informal History* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1952) pp. 26-36, gives extracts of Mary Greenlee's depositions. They are published in John Lewis Peyton's *History of Augusta*, and are on file in the Augusta courthouse in Staunton, Virginia. Chalkley, Lyman. *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia: Extracts of Augusta Court Records, 1745-1800*. (org. Pub. 1920, reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1980). vol. III, p. 76, cites Augusta County Will Book 3, p. 210, John and Mary Greenlee appointed administrators of James Greenlee deceased.

# ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Rockbridge County Courthouse is the fourth courthouse built since the County was formed in 1778 and the third built on the lot at the corner of Main and Washington Streets. The Victorian structure (recognized as Grecian when it was built) is made of pressed red brick and is trimmed with Kentucky blue stone. Prominent exterior features include the four corner pediments, extensive dental molding, the engaged columns above the main entrance and the criers balconies over the front and side entrances. The most striking interior feature is the mosaic tile floor in the lobby by John A. Champe.

The first sessions of Court held after the County was formed in 1778 were held in Samuel Wallace's house on his farm just south of the current city limits. The Court soon ordered the construction of an inexpensive log structure which was built on the southwest corner of Nelson and Randolph Streets. The building was subsequently sold at auction in 1790. On April 7, 1779 the Court ordered the construction of a brick Courthouse, but did not begin on that building until 1786 and it was completed in 1788. That building, the first built on the site of the current Courthouse, was destroyed in the "Great Fire" on April 11, 1796.

Construction of a brick structure with a wooden cupola and an adjoining clerk's office was started immediately after the fire and completed in 1797. By the 1890's this building, and the surrounding grounds, had fallen into such a state of disrepair that it drew severe criticism from the local newspaper which described it as "a disgrace". On November 14, 1891 the Board of Supervisors requested area representatives to the General Assembly to present legislation authorizing a referendum for the County to issue \$60,000 in bonds "for the purpose of erecting a new Court House and Clerk's Office". The referendum election was set for February 11, 1892; however, on January 9, 1892 the Supervisors requested the Court to rescind the referendum Order because it was an "inappropriate time" for them to act on this matter.

The building continued to disintegrate. On May 9, 1892 a petition was presented to the Board to "prohibit ball playing and any other nuisances in the Court House yard" and the Sheriff was directed to enforce the newly enacted ordinance. The County continued to

pay increasing sums for maintenance (carpet cleaning, chimney repair, floor and roof repairs, etc.) and the local newspaper even stated that the wooden cupola had become "crank sided". On March 6, 1894 several merchants from the Town of Lexington complained local farmers were using the Courtyard as a site for "the exhibitions of machinery, implements or articles". The merchants stated they were "injured very materially" because the local residents were allowed to use the Courtyard without having to purchase business licenses or pay rent. The Board directed the Sheriff to prohibit the use of the Courtyard in this manner.

Finally, on September 7, 1895, the Board of Supervisors "recognizing the legal obligation resting on them to provide a Fire Proof Clerk's Office for the preservation of the records therein", by a 5-1 vote, adopted a resolution to take the necessary steps to prepare a referendum for issuing \$30,000 in bonds for the construction of a new Court House and Clerk's Office, half the amount proposed in 1891. Six months later, citing that it was "the sense of the Board that the building of a new Court House and Clerk's Office is necessary for public uses as well as for the proper preservation of the records of the County", the Board adopted a substitute resolution on a 6-0 vote to issue bonds in an amount "not exceeding \$20,000" for construction.

On April 6, 1896, a committee composed of Board Chairman John P. Welsh, Judge W. P. Houston, Commonwealth's Attorney Col. Robert Catlett and Circuit Court Clerk A. T. Shields was appointed to investigate the options available for housing a temporary court and clerk's office during construction of the new building. The Committee returned at the May meeting with recommendations for using "the lower room of the new building of C. R. Deaver on Washington Street as the County Court clerk's office" at a monthly rent of \$11.50 and the "lower room of the building of Dr. John T. Wilson on Washington Street" as the Circuit Court clerk's office at a monthly rent of \$13.50. The Committee also recommended that "the house on the corner of Washington and Randolph Streets, the property of W. C. Irvine, be used as a Court room at the rate of \$10.00 per month and that the council chamber room of the Town of Lexington on the corner of Washington and Randolph Streets

diagonally opposite the room to be used as a Court room be used as a room for Jurors". Col. Catlett was directed to prepare the agreements with the parties renting those rooms.

On May 2, 1896, a Committee composed of Judge W. P. Houston, Capt. J. C. Boude (retired circuit court clerk), Col. Robert Catlett, Capt. J. P. Moore (clerk of County Court), M. W. Paxton (attorney) and A. T. Shields was appointed to "make examination of all plans submitted" for construction of the new building. The Committee presented plans drafted by W. G. McDowell and Kenneth McDonald and endorsed the McDowell plan by a 4-2 vote. The Board, however, indicated its desire to adopt a "plan embodying features of both" proposals and asked Mr. McDowell to consult with Mr. McDonald to see if it was feasible to submit a consolidated plan at their next meeting.



Rockbridge County Jail in Lexington, VA

That consolidated plan, reducing the size of the building and incorporating some changes of rooms in the circuit court clerk's office, was submitted on May 13, 1896. Another committee was appointed to advertise for proposals and bids to tear down the present building and to excavate and lay the stonework for the new building. The Board also voted that the new building would be heated by a "hot air" heating system. The Board hired Capt. W. A. McClelland as a night watchman, at a rate of \$25 per month, to watch the temporary clerk's office and records.

On June 4 the modified construction plan submitted by W. G. McDowell was accepted by the Board. County clerk R. R. Witt was appointed to replace Capt. J. C. Boude, who had recently died, on a committee to look and take care of the remaining trees in the Courtyard. Contracts of specific construction were considered and it was determined that F. S. Wills & Company would be hired to do the stonework, if that contract was awarded separately. If a contract was to be awarded solely for excavation work, it would be awarded to J. H. Ettinger.

On June 25, 1896 the sealed bids and proposals for the erection of the Court House and Clerk's Office were opened. Bids for the complete project were received from various contractors. The Board accepted the low bid of \$16,900.22 submitted by Taylor Tolley and Charles Crawford of Lexington. Supervisors J. P. Welsh, W. G. Houston, and F. F. Harris and Judge W. P. Houston and clerk R. R. Witt were appointed to the "Court House Building Committee" to "have general supervision of the erection" of the Court House and Clerk's Office and W. G. McDowell was appointed "Superintendent of Construction" at a rate of \$100 per month. May 5, 1897 was set as the completion date for the new building.

From this point on, construction of the "New Court House" would monopolize the agenda at Board of Supervisors meetings. As with most construction projects, unforeseen problems immediately arose. The Board was inclined to appoint separate committees to deal with the various details of construction, relocation of offices, etc. and at least thirteen separate committees



Rockbridge County Courthouse with plank for crossing side ditch.



Rockbridge County Courthouse, 1940.

were appointed by the Board to handle matters related to the construction of the new courthouse over the eleven months it took to complete the building. The cost of the project was of primary concern to the Board and they went to extreme lengths to hold down any and all costs related to the construction of the building.

At their Annual Meeting on July 27, 1896, the Board of Supervisors directed that a "neat but plain corner stone be placed in the New Court House Building" and referred its design and inscriptions to the "building Committee".

On September 29, 1896, Rockbridge County experienced widespread flooding that caused extensive damage to roads and bridges throughout the area. Courthouse construction issues were no longer of utmost importance and the Supervisors suddenly found themselves faced with another major project which would have an enormous financial impact on the County. Special meetings were held on October 7, October 27, December 7, and December 23, 1896 to handle flood-related matters. While construction of the Court House continued, the construction of new bridges and roads throughout the county took precedence over all other matters during the next few months. The only substantial courthouse-related item to come before the Board during these months was when Mr. McDowell appeared at the December 1896 meeting to ask for the purchase of a car load of soft coal to heat the new building during the winter, "assigning as a reason for such that the work would be better and the County could receive the building earlier from the contractors, thereby saving rent." His request was approved.

In February 1897 the "Building Committee" was authorized to receive bids for furnishing the vaults and offices in the new Court House. They returned at the March meeting with bids. The Board accepted a bid of \$1,558.00 from Office Specialty Company of Rochester, New York for roller shelves, compress file cupboards and a table for each of the vaults. Bids for courtroom furnishings were received. All were rejected by the Board and Mr. McDowell, Col. Catlett and Judge Houston were appointed to a committee to purchase that furniture "at a price not exceeding \$800".

On April 16, 1897, Mr. Tolley and Mr. Crawford asked that the completion date be extended to May 25, 1897 "on account of unavailable days such as nature provides over which they

have no control". Their request was granted.

Flood repairs continued for months and the cost of these repairs continued to mount. On April 22nd the Board acknowledged that, due to "large expenditures rendered necessary by unforeseen causes", the County surplus funds previously set aside to be applied to construction costs had been depleted and it would be necessary to raise the entire \$20,000 from the sale of bonds. They adopted a resolution to issue an additional \$4,000 in bonds and directed the Treasurer to transfer the surplus held in the "Court House Fund" back to the general fund "on account of an unforeseen cause, namely the flood of September 29, 1896, which did great damage to the roads and bridges of the County."

The new building now completed, dedication services were scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 2, 1897. Greenlee Letcher was appointed chairman of the committee in charge of the ceremonies. Speeches were made by representatives of the six magisterial districts and the City of Buena Vista. The prayer was offered by Rev. J. T. Wightman and music was provided by the Lee-Jackson Band. Confederate Memorial Day was scheduled for 5:00 p.m. that afternoon at the Stonewall Jackson Cemetery, with a decoration of soldier's graves to take place at that time.

The Board met on June 1, and Mr. McDowell presented the Report of the Architect that the Court House had been built according to the Board's specifications. He praised Mr. Tolley and Mr. Crawford for the accuracy of their estimate "which gave you the cheapest building with which I was ever connected." He further complimented the Withrow Lumber Company for the quality of their products and spoke highly of the appearance of the furniture and equipment, without mentioning the appearance of the building.

In addition to providing a meeting place for the Board of Supervisor's meetings, the Court House, and particularly the Courtroom, provided a meeting place for various county and civic functions during the succeeding years, including a place for the Lexington Presbyterian Church to hold services on Sunday mornings while additions and repairs were being made to the church. The offices initially housed in the Courthouse gradually outgrew their assigned spaces and, in 1964, circuit court clerk Harry B. Wright petitioned the Board to build a two-story

addition, with basement, on the rear of the Courthouse. That item was debated for some time and in 1965 the County purchased the Hugh A. White building, located immediately behind the Courthouse, for \$10,000 and moved the County administrative offices into that three-story building. The Sheriff's Office eventually moved out of the Courthouse and into the building housing the jail in Courthouse Square. The Lexington police department moved out of the basement and into City Hall after the town was chartered as a city in 1966.

Absent minor repairs, no significant structural changes were made to the Courthouse until the mid-1950's when Judge Moffett and the local bar petitioned the Board to renovate the courtroom. In addition to adding rest rooms to the jury room, a new judge's bench, jury box, witness stand, clerk's desk, and railing to separate the audience section of the courtroom from the trial participants, the group also requested the installation of central air conditioning for the courtroom, judge's chamber and witness rooms on the second floor. W. P. "Pat" Coleman was appointed spokesman for the bar committee and presented these proposals to the Board. Presentation of the proposal proceeded smoothly until the request for air conditioning was mentioned. The renovation project was tabled and continued at a later date.

On November 25, 1957, the Board accepted the low bid of \$17,845.00 presented by W. W. Coffey & Son for the renovation work and the project was completed in April 1958. The balcony, which had previously and unofficially been reserved as a seating area for "colored" spectators, was now closed to the public and all spectators would, from that day on, be obliged to sit together in the audience section on the courtroom floor.

By 1960, the Courthouse had become overcrowded. Circuit Court clerk Harry B. Wright, who also served as clerk to the Board of Supervisors, frequently asked the Board to either build an addition to the Courthouse or to find suitable housing behind the many offices occupying the building. In August 1964 Hugh White's office building behind the Courthouse was offered for sale and Mr. Wright petitioned the Board to purchase that building. The Board passed a resolution on August 28, 1964 to purchase the White building, for \$10,000.00, and the adjacent Ainsworth building as quarters for several of the offices located in the Courthouse. On April 1, 1965 the Buena Vista/Rockbridge County Bar Association presented a resolution to the Board urging them not to move the County Court and the Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court to the White building, stating that such a move "would render less efficient the operation of such Courts and would not provide suitable quarters for such Court". Shortly thereafter, those Courts and their clerk's office were moved to the White building.

Within the next ten years an exterior fire escape was built on the rear of the Courthouse and the records vault was expanded by incorporating the office in the southeast corner of the building. The county offices housed in the White building and the Courthouse again became overcrowded and the County again began to search for additional office space.

In 1993 the old Leggett building on Main Street was purchased and renovated by the County to house administrative offices and the offices of the Treasurer and Commissioner of Revenue. Upon moving into that building, the main floor of the Courthouse became solely occupied by the circuit court clerk's office and records vault. Pursuant to mandates issued by the Americans With Disabilities Act, the room renovated in 1969 for additional vault space was again renovated to allow the installation of an elevator and two handicapped accessible rest rooms. A wheelchair ramp was added to the rear of the building leading into this room. Submitted by: Bruce Patterson, Clerk of Circuit Court, Rockbridge County, VA.

# MEMBERS OF THE ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Name — District Dates Served.

Abraham, John W. — Walkers Creek 1870-1871; 1874-1879. Adams, Hugh — Kerrs Creek 1920-1923. Agner, Samuel S. "Perry" — Buffalo 1895-1897; 1881-1891. Alexander, R. Tate — South River 1949-1951. Ayers, George A. — Buffalo 1901-1911. Barclay, Alexander T. — Buffalo-Lexington 1870-71; 1879-83; 1887-89. Bare, C.C. — Walkers Creek 1924-1931. Bear, David F., Jr. — South River 1972-1979. Beard, Hugh S. — Walkers Creek 1885-1897. Berkstresser, Robert J. — South River 1992- . Brady, Daniel C.E. — Natural Bridge 1872-1878. Brady, Daniel E. — Natural Bridge 1948-1955. Brooks, Jonathan — Walkers Creek 1871-1874. Brown, Adam McChesney — Walkers Creek 1883-1885. Brown, George A. — South River 1897-1899. Buchanan, Eugene H. — Walkers Creek 1920-1923. Buchanan, Robert Hanna — Walkers Creek 1897-1902. Campbell, Charles F. — Natural Bridge 1956-1971. Carter, H.D., Jr. — Walkers Creek 1972-1975. Chapman, N.D. — Central 1956-1963. Chittum, Herbert B. — Kerrs Creek-Buffalo 1952-1970. Coleman, Dr. Howe Reese, Sr. — Buffalo 1932-1941. Davis, F. Cleveland — Lexington 1926-1927. Delaney, W. E. — Natural Bridge 1944-1945. Dixon, Thomas S. — Kerrs Creek 1972-1979. Donald, William A. — Natural Bridge 1870-1871. Edwards, William — Walkers Creek 1980-1987. Fitzgerald, Jefferies T. — South River 1952-1957. Fulwider, Finley E. — South River 1924-1925. Gibson, James S. — Walkers Creek 1879-1883. Gibson, John Alexander — South River 1872-1885. Greever, J. O. — Kerrs Creek 1916-1919. Hamilton, J. S. — Buffalo 1916-

1919. Harper, Calvin Moore — Kerrs Creek 1870-1871; 1875-1879. Harper, James Henry Hays — Kerrs Creek 1897-1901. Harris, Blackford — South River 1889-1891. Harris, F. F. — Natural Bridge 1895-1897. Hart, David Henry — Kerrs Creek 1893-1897. Hartis, Alice R. — Buffalo 1992- . Herring, J. S. A. — Natural Bridge 1913-1915. Hickman, Lewis — Kerrs Creek 1885-1887. Hotinger, Rice — Kerrs Creek 1908-1915; 1934-1947. Houston, W. G. — Walkers Creek 1891-1897. Hull, E.M. — Walkers Creek 1944-1963. Irvine, Robert A. — Lexington 1920-1924. Jennings, William — Natural Bridge 1897-1899. Jordan, Charles F. — South River 1885-1887. Kinnear, J. J. L. — South River 1899-1922. Knick, William C. — Buffalo 1920-1923. Koogler, Lyle V. — South River 1964-1971. Leech, Charles B., III — Buffalo 1968-1971. Leech, William Bolivar Finley — Buffalo 1870-1871; 1872-1881. Lindsay, Horatio Thompson — Kerrs Creek 1887-1889. Locher, Baldwin G. — Natural Bridge 1940-1943. Loughhead, David — Natural Bridge 1972-1975. Mackey, Joseph F. — South River 1957-1963. Mathews, W. G. — Natural Bridge 1901-1902. McClure, R. C. — Natural Bridge 1870. McCray, D. Graham — Walkers Creek 1964-1971. McCurdy, A. A. — Kerrs Creek 1872-1873; 1874-1875. McKee, John T. — Natural Bridge 1878-1885. McNutt, William M. — Natural Bridge 1908-1913. Moore, J. Julius — Natural Bridge 1870-1871. Moore, Kenneth McClung "Slim", Sr. — Buffalo 1972-1992. Moore, Robert G. — Central 1964-1967. Moore, William S. — Central 1932-1955. Morrison, J. Hull — Buffalo 1931-1931. Morrison, Kenneth Lamar — Kerrs Creek 1924-1934.

Neale, Harold E. "Chuck" — South River 1988-1991. Nicely, Benjamin W., Sr. — Walkers Creek 1992- . Patterson, Rufus Lenoir — Walkers Creek 1902-1915. Pettigrew, George W. — Lexington 1874-1878. Powers, Oliver B. — Kerrs Creek 1873-1874; 1881-1885. Rees, Nathaniel B. — Natural Bridge 1887-1893. Rees, Thomas S. — Natural Bridge 1901-1907. Reynolds, Maynard R. — Natural Bridge 1976- . Ross, J. D. H. — Lexington 1871; 1883-1885. Sauder, Nanalou — Kerrs Creek 1980-1983. Saville, Robert Lucian — Buffalo 1908-1915; 1924-1931. Shelton, Hubert P. — South River 1926-1949. Shewey, C. M. — Kerrs Creek 1901-1907. Slusser, Harry C., Jr. — Kerrs Creek 1970-1971. Slusser, Harry C., Sr. — Walkers Creek 1932-1943. Snider, Daniel R. — Kerrs Creek 1984-1995. Stark, W. E. L. — Natural Bridge 1907-1907. Stoner, J. Hugh — Natural Bridge 1936-1939. Stoner, Robert W. — Natural Bridge 1945-1947. Swink, John Milton — Buffalo 1941-1951. Tardy, W. Jennings — Natural Bridge 1934-1935. Teaford, Jacob P. S. — Kerrs Creek 1891-1893. Tribbett, William A. — Buffalo 1891-1895. Trimble, Charles C. — South River 1980-1991. Tutwiler, E. S. — Lexington 1873-1874. Ward, Davis L. — Walkers Creek 1916-1919. Welsh, John P. — Lexington 1899-1901; 1916-1919. White, William G. — Walkers Creek 1870- . Whitesell, John M. — Walkers Creek 1976-1979. Whitmore, John H. — South River-Lexington 1887-1889; 1901-1916. Whitmore, W. Wilson — Natural Bridge 1920-1934. Wilkinson, John Alfred — Buffalo 1897-1901. Wilson, Samuel L. — Buffalo 1871- . Wilson, W. Alexander — Kerrs Creek 1964-1967. Wilson, William A. — Kerrs Creek 1879-1881.

## CONFLICTS WITH THE NATIVES

### DISPELLING A MYTH

Contrary to popular belief, Rockbridge County was not formed to save the life of Captain James Hall, and others for the killing of Cornstalk. Cornstalk's death occurred 11 November 1777. The act authorizing the formation of Rockbridge was passed in October 1777. The two had nothing to do with each other. Cornstalk's death had absolutely nothing to do with the formation of Rockbridge.

The first Rockbridge Order Book shows that in April 1778, Court was held for examination of Captain James Hall on suspicion of felony, concerning the murder of the "Cornstalk" Indian, his son Ellinipsico, Redhawk, and another Indian chief. James Hall appeared, but no witnesses for the Commonwealth appeared. James Hall was placed on trial and acquitted. Hugh Galbraith, Malcolm McCown, and William Rowan were each tried on the same charges and acquitted. These were the first trials held in Rockbridge County, but not the first Court. The first Court held in Rockbridge was on April 7th. Captain James Hall's trial began on April 18th, and he was acquitted on April 28th of the same year. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*  
Sources: Rockbridge County, Virginia, Clerk of Circuit Court Office, Order Book 1.

### THE SHAWNEE

The Shawnee were intelligent. It was an ordinary occurrence for a member of a Shawnee tribe to be able to converse in five or six languages, including English and French. The Shawnee were generous livers, and their

women were superior housekeepers. Shawnee boasted that they could cause the white people ten times as much loss as they received.

The most eminent war leader of the Shawnee nation was Cornstalk. It is not likely he led the raid on Kerrs Creek in 1759, although the warriors may have been of his tribe. Cornstalk was the leader of the Kerrs Creek raid in 1763, as well as the raids on the Greenbrier settlements, Jackson River, and the Cowpasture settlements. In those raids Cornstalk's warriors received very little damage to themselves, but created great havoc upon the settlers. In the battle of Point Pleasant, the Shawnee were the backbone of the Indian Army, and Cornstalk was the Commander-in-Chief. After the battle, Cornstalk's Army effected an unmolested retreat across the Ohio River. His warriors had inflicted a much heavier loss than they had taken, but his men were discouraged and gave up the campaign.

Cornstalk had not been in favor of the War, but was overruled by his tribe. During the short peace that followed the Battle of Point Pleasant, he returned, from time to time, horses and cattle which had been lost or stolen to Fort Randolph at Point Pleasant. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

### CORNSTALK'S DEATH

In 1777, the Shawnee were again restless. They had been worked upon by British emissaries and white renegades. Cornstalk, along with Red Hawk, a Delaware Chief, and another

Indian visited Fort Randolph under what was virtually a flag of truce. He warned Captain Arbuckle, the commandant, of the feeling of the tribesmen. Cornstalk's mission was to avert open hostilities. According to the Indian standard, Cornstalk was an honorable foe, and he knew he ran a risk in putting himself in the power of the whites. Capt. Arbuckle thought it best to detain the Indians as hostages in hopes of preventing the Indian nation from joining the British.

On November 9, 1777, while Cornstalk was drawing a map on the floor of the blockhouse, to explain the geography of the country beyond the Scioto and on to the Mississippi, his son Ellinipsico hallooed from the other bank of the Ohio and was taken across. Ellinipsico had come to the fort to check on the well being of his father. They embraced upon meeting.

The following day, two men of Captain William McKee's Company, a Gilmore and a Hamilton, went over the Kanawha to hunt for deer or turkeys. Upon returning toward camp, Gilmore was killed by some lurking Indian along the river bank, and his body was carried back. The spectacle made his comrades wild with rage. They raised a cry, shouting "Let us kill the Indians in the fort," and without taking a second thought, they rushed the door of the blockhouse. Capt. Hall was the leader. The Militia men refused to listen to Captain Arbuckle, and threatened his life. "Cornstalk encouraged his son not to be afraid, for the Great man above had sent him, there to be killed and die with him."

A woman in the fort, the wife of an Indian interpreter, had been a prisoner among the Indians and felt much affection for their well being. When she heard the uproar outside the fort,

she ran to the cabin and warned Cornstalk and the others that the men were coming to kill them because Gilmore had been killed by an Indian across the river. Ellinispico said that he knew nothing of this. Apparently one of the Indians who had accompanied him to the fort had done the shooting.

When the door was forced open, Cornstalk stood erect before his executioners and fell dead, pierced by seven or eight balls. His son and other companions were also killed. Ellinispico had been shot as he sat upon a stool, and Red Hawk had attempted to go up the chimney, when he was shot down. The other Indian did not receive an instant death but suffered some time from his wounds before he finally died. Cornstalk was about 50 years old at the time of his death. He was large in figure, commanding in presence, and very intellectual.

Cornstalk and the others were first buried by Captain Stuart and Captain Arbuckle not far from camp, (near the intersection of present Viand & Kanawha Streets, Point Pleasant, WV). In 1840, when the Viand and Kanawha Streets were opened the remains of Cornstalk and the others were moved to the courthouse enclosure. They were buried with military honors.

*Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

Sources: Virgil A. Lewis. *History of the Battle of Point Pleasant*. (org. pub. 1909, reprint, Harrisonburg, Va: C. J. Carrier, 1974), which cite's Capt. John Stuart's *Memoirs of the Indian Wars and Other Occurrences*.

## SOME REASONS FOR CAPTAIN HALL'S RAGE

The people of the Kerrs Creek community remembered the Indian raids in their valley with much horror. They remembered how homes had been burned, families partially or wholly wiped out. Women and children had been tomahawked and scalped, friends and relatives had been carried away, and some had never returned. The men who had participated in the killing of Cornstalk were from Rockbridge. Captain James Hall was related to Gilmore (Captain Hall's wife was Martha Gilmore, and the Gilmore family had suffered in the Kerrs Creek Raids). These men felt justified in killing Cornstalk because Gilmore's death brought back all of the horrors they had witnessed from the Indian raids.

There was nothing to show that Cornstalk had anything to do with the killing of Gilmore, or that any member of his tribe was involved. Had Cornstalk been a British officer, his government would have pronounced his murder as an inexcusable assassination, and would have avenged it by executing some American captive officer. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*  
Sources: Virgil A. Lewis. *History of the Battle of Point Pleasant*. (org. pub. 1909).

## FRONTIERSMAN VS. INDIAN IDEALS

To the frontiersmen of America, the Indians were not only heathens, but were deemed inferior. The comparatively humane treatment to which the frontiersman thought the French and British were entitled, he felt justified in withholding from the Indian. It was more often that the white man was responsible for the cause of border trouble than the Indian. The Indian's version is much less familiar to us than our own version.

The Indian kept his word, he respected bravery. The children spared in the raids were adopted into the tribe and loved. Women were never violated by the Indians east of the Mississippi, as rape was not the Indian way. When a child was born in captivity to a white female, the mother was looked after as though she were one of their kind. Quite frequently adult captives were

unwilling to return to their own people. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

## WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID

Patrick Henry, the Governor of Virginia, denounced the murders in vehement words. He regarded it as a blot on the fair name of Virginia, and announced that as far as he was concerned, the perpetrators should be sought out and punished. In a letter to Colonel William Fleming, dated 9 February 1778; Governor Patrick Henry stated he blushed for the occasion of this War with the Shawanese.

"I doubt not but you detest the vile assassins who have brought it on us at this critical time when our whole Force was wanted in another quarter. But why are they not brought to Justice? Shall the precedent establish the right of involving Virginia in War whenever any one in the back Country shall please?" .... "I desire it may be remembered, that if the frontier people will not submit to the Laws, but thus set them at Defiance, they will not be considered as entitled to the protection of the Government, and were it not for the miserable condition of many with you, I should demand the offenders previous to every other step. For where is this wretched Business to end? .... If the Shawanese deserved death, because their countrymen committed hostilities, a Jury from the Vicinage will say so and acquit the accused who must be judged by his neighbors feeling the same resentments and passions with themselves. But they are traitors I suspect and agents for the enemy, who have taken this method to find employment for the brave back Woodsmen at home, and prevent joining Genl. Washington to strike a decisive stroke for Independency at this critical time." ....

"In the Confidence that What I now press, I mean the bringing of the Murdered to Justice, will be done, government will loose no time in lending its best Aids to protect your Country." ....

In a letter dated 14 March 1778 from Col. William Preston and Col. William Fleming to Governor Patrick Henry, the following was said:

... "We fortunately had an opportunity of taking Capt. Arbuckle & Col. Skillern's Depositions relative to the Murder of the Indians at F. Randolph which we transmitted to your Excellency by Mr. Barnet. As it appears by these Depositions the Aggressors live in Augusta, Rockbridge, and Greenbrier Counties, we imagine you will send Orders to the Commanding Officers of these Counties concerning them. As we think it would be necessary to have a printed copy of your Proclamation for Apprehending the Guilty and bringing them to Justice, that it may be transmitted with any letter we send by the Grenadier Squaw to the Shawness Nation, it may tend to convince them the murder is had in abhorrence by the Government and give authenticity to our letter." ....

Years later, Colonel Roosevelt (later President) called the killing of Cornstalk "one of the darkest stains on the checkered pages of frontier history." *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*  
Sources: Kegley, F. B. *Kegley's Virginia Frontier: The Beginning of the Southwest: The Roanoke of Colonial Days, 1749-1783*. (org. pub. 1938, reprint Roanoke, VA: Southwest Virginia Historical Society). Lewis, Virgil A. *History of the Battle of Point Pleasant: Fought Between White Men and Indians at the Mouth of the Great Kanawha River* (Now Point Pleasant, West Virginia) Monday, October 10th, 1774. The Chief Event of Lord Dunmore's War. (org. pub. 1909, reprint, Harrisonburg, VA: C. J. Carrier, 1974.), cites Roosevelt's *Winning of the West*, V. 1, p. 24.

## THE INDIAN REVENGE

In an attempt to avenge the death of Cornstalk, the Shawnees besieged Fort Randolph in the spring of 1778. An Indian woman known as the Grenadier Squaw, and who was said to have been a sister of Cornstalk, had come to the fort with horses and cattle. She had gone out of the fort and overheard the natives' plans. She told these plans to Captain McKee, then commandant. Captain McKee offered a furlough to any two men who would make speed to the Greenbrier to warn the people of the settlement of the Indians' plans to attack.

John Insminger and John Logan undertook the errand, but after starting out, they found they could not get past the Indians and returned the same evening. John Pryor and Phillip Hammond then agreed to go. The Grenadier Squaw painted and disguised the men to look like Indians. The two messengers travelled day and night and reached Donally's fort only a few hours ahead of the Shawnees. Though a severe battle took place, the foe was repulsed and the settlement saved. In the attack on Donally's Fort, John Pritchett, James Burns, Alexander Ochiltree, and James Graham were the only whites killed. The Indians suffered a greater loss. Seventeen were counted lying dead on the ground and others had been carried off. There had only been twenty-one men at Donally's fort, but Col. Stewart and Col. Lewis' troops arrived as reinforcements, just before the end of the battle.

The Greenbrier settlements remained unmolested until 1780, when a party of twenty-two warriors raided the country near the house of Lawrence Drennon, above the Little Levels. Henry Baker and Richard Hill were shot, Baker was killed, but Hill escaped and made his way to his house.

Drennon sent a messenger to the Levels for assistance, and he soon returned with twenty men. The next morning as they saw nothing of the Indians they decided to bury Baker and head for the Levels. Two Bridges brothers decided to take a short cut and save time. They were both killed by Indians who were awaiting some of the whites to come that way.

The next house attacked was that of Hugh McIver. He was killed and his wife taken prisoner. The Indians then came upon John Pryor, his wife and child. Pryor was shot through the breast, but stood still for fear of the fate of his wife and child, until one of the Indians took a hold of him. Pryor proved too strong for his opponent, even though he had been wounded, and was able to free himself. He then walked off without any attempt to stop him being made. His wife and child were taken prisoner. Pryor made it back to the settlement and related the incident. He died of his wounds that night. His wife and child were never heard from again.

This same party of Indians next went to the house occupied by Thomas Drennon and a Mr. Smith. Here they captured Mrs. Drennon, Mrs. Smith, and a child. On returning toward their homes they wounded Captain Samuel McClung, and killed an old man named Monday. About the same time William Griffith, his wife and daughter, were killed, and his son taken prisoner. These are thought to be the last Indian invasions on the Greenbrier. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*  
Sources: Hale, *TransAlleghany Pioneers*.

## FIRST NATIVE AMERICAN CLASH

The settlers and the Indians did not understand each other's customs. The Native Americans (Indians) roamed about in small bands of 15-20. They expected to be fed at each house

they came to. If they were not fed, they made themselves at home and ate and drank whatever they chose. What the settlers did not understand was had they gone to an Indian camp they would have been fed and well treated.

The Indians thought the settlers were inhospitable and were not happy about being pushed off their hunting grounds which they had used for generations.

In June 1742, the settlers in Borden's Grant petitioned the Governor saying the settlement had become very hazardous and dangerous, and the Indians were believed to be on the road to war.

## THE FIRST CLASH

The first clash with the settlers and the natives in Rockbridge occurred 18 December 1742, near the mouth of North River, (now called Maury River).

Thirty-nine Iroquois came into Borden's Grant on their way to fight the Catawbas. Captain John McDowell entertained them for a day and gave them whiskey. They then moved on to South River where they camped for about a week. They hunted game and took food from the settlers. The women were scared, some people complained the Natives had shot horses and hogs.

Colonel William Patton ordered Captain John McDowell to call out his militia company and escort the natives out of the settlement.

Captain McDowell gathered up thirty-four men and went in search of the natives. The Iroquois had moved southward. McDowell and his men caught up with them and escorted them beyond Salling's plantation, (present-day Glasgow).

As the Indians headed into the forest, one of the militia-men shot at the last native heading into the woods. A war-cry was raised and the battle was on.

Muskets, tomahawks, and knives were used. Forty-five minutes after it started, the battle was over. Eleven militiamen were killed, and among the dead was Captain John McDowell. Eight or ten Indians were also killed. The natives who escaped were followed over the mountains and as far as the Potomac River by militiamen.

Col. Patton soon heard of the battle and marched to the area with twenty-three frontiersmen. He met Capt. Buchanan 14 miles from the battle site. The next day they marched to the battle ground and removed the dead soldiers. The wounded had been taken away the previous day.

Col. Patton ordered Patrollers to all frontiers, and drafted young men from each company to be in readiness to reinforce any party in need of help. The militia Captains were ordered to guard their own precincts. Places of rendezvous were appointed in each neighborhood where the settlers could gather in case of attack. Frontier families were called in to the more settled areas.

The Governor of Pennsylvania ruled the Virginians had started this battle and the Iroquois received monetary payment from Governor Gooch of Virginia. In the Treaty of Lancaster of 1744, the Iroquois renounced their claim in Virginia.

The stream along which this battle occurred is called Battle Run. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

## THE FIRST INDIAN CLASH (PART 2)

### CAPTAIN JOHN McDOWELL'S COMPANY OF MILITIA IN 1742.

John Aleson, Hum. Beaker, David Bires, David Breenden, Gilbert Camble, James Camble, John Cares, John Cosier, Hugh Cunningham, James Cunningham, Joseph Finney, Michael Finney, John Gray, Wm. Hall, James Hardiman, Hen. Kirkham, \* Joseph Lapsley,

Long, \_\_\_ Long, Alex. McClewer, Halbert McClewer, John McClewer, Alex. McClure, Moses McClure, Frances McCowan, James McDowell, Ephriam McDowell, And. McKnab, John McKnab, Patt McKnabb, Sam McRoberts, Loromor Mason, John Matthews, Wm. Miles, John Miles, Mitch. Miller, James More, Edward Patterson, Irwin Patterson, John Peter Salley, Thomas Taylor, Charles Quail, Thos. Whiteside, Malco Whiteside, \* Rich Wood, Sam Wood, Wm. Wood, Rob. Young, Math. Young

### CAPTAIN JOHN BUCHANAN'S COMPANY OF MILITIA IN 1742.

Will Evins, Lieutenant; Josef Catton, Ensign; John Mitchell, Sergeant; \* Jab. Anderson, James Anderson, Joh Anderson, Isaac Anderson, Will Armstrong, Edw. Boyle, Will Buchanan, Charles Camble, Rob. Catton, James Cooke, Rich Courser, Charles Donocho, Ths. Duchart, Rob. Dunlap, Sam Dunlap, John Dyche, James Ecken, John Edmoston, James Eken, Nathn. Evins, Joh. Gray, Sam Gray, Jas. Greenlee, Will Hall, And. Hays, \* Cha. Hays, Rob. Huddon, Will Humphrey, Joseph Kanada, Will Lonchrage, Mat. Lyle, Will McCantes, Nathn. McClewer, Sam McClewer, \* John McCroserce, Ths. McSpedan, And. Martin, Joh. Mathews, Will Mitchel, \* Solo Moffett, Alex. Moor, And. Moor, David Moor, John Moor, Will Moor, Michael O'Docherty, John Paul, Will Quinn, Jas. Robinson, Will Sayers, John Stephenson, Jas. Sunderlin, Isaac Taylor, Alex Walker, John Walker, Joseph Walker, Sam Walker, John Philip Weaver, Thomas Williams.

An \* indicates those known to have actually been in the aforementioned battle. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

## ATTACK ON RENICK'S RUN

The French and Indian War was in progress. The settlers had spent a good deal of their time constructing forts along the frontier since Braddock's defeat. Two or three men from each fort were sent out as scouts on a daily basis. They were instructed to pay special attention to the mountain passes where the enemy was most likely to cross.

It was a hot and muggy day, on the 25th of July 1757, as a party of about sixty Shawnee headed over through Cartmill Gap and along Purgatory Creek. Being at war with the settlers, the natives attacked the home of Joseph Dennis. Joseph and his child were killed, as was Thomas Perry who was there helping with chores. Hannah, Joseph's wife, was taken captive.

The warriors went on to Robert Renick's. There they captured Mrs. Renick, her four sons, and daughter. The warriors next proceeded to Thomas Smith's, where they killed Robert Renick and Thomas Smith and took Mrs. Smith and Sally Jew captive.

George Matthews, (later Governor of Georgia), Audley Paul, and William Maxwell were on their way to Smith's house. They heard gunshots and thought a shooting match was in progress, but when they saw the bodies of Smith and Renick, they knew it was not a shooting match. They quickly turned their horses and began to gallop back the way they had come. Bullets whizzed by them, Audley Paul was slightly wounded and the top of George Matthew's club was shot off, but they were able to escape.

The natives split into two groups. One group took the captives and headed for Jackson's River and on to the Ohio River, while the other group headed for the Cedar Creek settlements.

Paul, Matthews, and Maxwell made it back to their homes and alerted all their neighbors. The settlers gathered at Audley Paul's stockade fort near Springfield.

George Matthews and twenty-one men took off after the Indians. The wounded Audley Paul and five other men stayed at the fort to guard the women and children. Matthew's group caught up with the enemy and went into battle. They chased them as far as Purgatory Creek, but darkness fell and rain began to come down, and the Indians escaped.

This group of Indians caught up with the group in charge of the captives and headed on to the Ohio River.

The following morning, nine Indians lay dead on the battleground. These were buried. Of the white losses were: Benjamin Smith, Thomas Maury, and Mr. Jew, (Sally's father). They were taken to Thomas Cross' meadow near Springfield and buried.

Mrs. Renick was released at Staunton in 1767 under Bouquet's Treaty with the Ohio Indians, which stipulated white captives were to be brought in and redeemed. Her daughter, Betsy, had died in captivity. Her son, Joshua, married an Indian woman, became a chief among the Miami, grew wealthy and remained with the Indians. He died in Detroit in 1810. The other children were returned with their mother. William later became Colonel Renick of Greenbrier. Robert also settled in Greenbrier. Thomas was not returned until 1783, and soon moved to the Scioto River, near Chillicothe, Ohio.

## HANNAH DENNIS' CAPTIVITY AND ESCAPE

Hannah Dennis, a very beautiful woman, was separated from the other captives, and taken to the Chillicothe towns where she soon learned the Shawnee language and customs. She even painted herself as the Squaws. She was very skillful in treating illnesses and was given much liberty becoming highly esteemed among the Indians.

She soon found the Indians were very superstitious so she told them she knew witchcraft. She pretended to tame horses and wild beasts by whispering in their ears. She led the Indians to believe she could read future events using fire and smoke. She would chant and use spells, pretending to speak with the dead. Using her spells and incantations, she pretended she could foretell earthquakes and calm storms. She drove away epidemics, cured diseases using her spoken words over the ill, or by using her snake root and ginseng. She soon became a prophetess among them. They honored her as a Queen. Having won this great respect she found she was given even more liberty and in her heart she knew she could escape.

In June 1763, she found her chance to escape and left the Chillicothe towns in the pretense of gathering herbs for medicines. By nightfall it was realized she had not returned. Warriors were sent after her on the following morning. She had been very careful to hide her trail. She crossed the Scioto River three times, and on the fourth crossing, having then covered forty miles, she was discovered by some warriors. The warriors shot at her from across the river but missed. In her flight she severely cut her foot on a sharp rock.

The warriors crossed the river, but she lay hidden in a fallen hollow sycamore log. They diligently searched for her, even stepping over the log where she lay hidden. As night fell they camped nearby. The following day they searched as far as the Ohio River, but never found a trace of her and returned home. They thought the spirits had lifted her away. She stayed near the hollow log for three days, nursed her wounded foot and lived on roots and berries. She then set off for home, crossing the



Ohio River at the mouth of the Great Kanawha on a driftwood log. She traveled by night for fear of discovery, and lived off roots, herbs, green grapes, wild cherries, and river mussels. She was so exhausted with fatigue and hunger that she thought she would never make it home, yet she continued to trudge along.

When she reached the Greenbrier River she expected to go no further. She was about to give up all hope of ever reaching home when she was found by Thomas Athol and three others from Clendennin's settlement, which she had unknowingly passed by. Her journey had been twenty rough days with no supplies, alone, and barefooted.

Hannah was taken back to Clendennin's and kindly fed and cared for. After resting and recovering her health to some degree she became strong enough to travel on horseback to Fort Young along Jackson's River (now Covington). From here her relatives took her home.

Shortly after she left Clendennin's, a party of about sixty warriors came upon the settlement at Muddy Creek. They pretended to be friendly and were entertained by the settlers. Suddenly, they rose up against the settlers with their tomahawks and scalped them all, except for a few women and children who were taken captive. Some believed this attack was caused because the settlers had helped Hannah Dennis to escape. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

## THE INDIAN RAID ON KERRS CREEK

The Shawnee had hunted the area which we now call Kerrs Creek for many, many years before the first white settler came to this region. Although they did not live in this area, it was one of their favorite hunting spots. As the white settlers took up lands around Kerrs Creek, the natives became enraged. Their first attack there occurred on 10 October 1759. They attacked from the west, killing twelve white settlers and taking off about thirteen captives.

Two Telford boys, walking home from school, reported having seen a naked man near the path. Neighbors gave little serious thought to this report until a few weeks later. Twenty-seven Indian warriors were counted from a bluff near the head of the creek. The war party came to the home of Charles Dougherty and killed the entire family. The wife and daughter of Jacob Cunningham were the next victims. The girl, aged ten, was scalped but made somewhat of a recovery. Four of the Gilmores and five of the ten members of Robert Hamilton's family were slain. The Indians went no further.

Charles Lewis of the Cowpasture raised three companies of militia (about 150 men). Charles Lewis led one company, John Dickenson and William Christian headed the other two. These three companies of militia went after the Indian warriors. They overtook the tribesmen near the head of Back Creek in Highland County. The Captains decided to attack at three points.

Two white scouts were sent ahead as an advance. They were ordered to shoot if the enemy realized the soldiers were nearby. The scouts came upon two braves, one leading a horse, the other holding a buck across the back of the horse. In an attempt to get the upper hand, the scouts fired and Christian's company charged with a yell. The other companies were still miles behind the advance group. The Indians escaped with very little loss. The militia companies caught up with the Shawnee at Straight Fork, four miles below the present West Virginia line, where their camp fires revealed their location.

About twenty Indians were killed. The booty they were carrying was retaken and sold for \$1200.00. Thomas Young was the only white man killed, and Captain Dickenson was wounded.

## SECOND ATTACK ON KERRS CREEK

The Pontiac War had burst out in June 1763. The Indians had carefully planned their attacks along the western frontier of Virginia. The Confederacy of tribes was making a grand effort to run the white man out of the country west of the Alleghenies. After Cornstalk, a Shawnee Chief, had ordered attacks along the Greenbrier settlements, they came along Jackson River and the Cowpasture River attacking settlements along the way. Having divided, one party headed back home with the booty they had collected, and the other party crossed Mill Mountain and headed for the Kerrs Creek Valley.

On the 17th of July 1763, a larger force of Indians arrived than had come into the valley in 1759. They were cautious as they approached, hiding themselves for a day or two at a spring near the head of Kerrs Creek. Moccasin tracks were seen in a corn field, and from a tall hill their camp was spotted.

Rumors passed through the neighborhood of the Indians presence but the settlers did not seem overly worried. The braves that had been spotted were probably scouts for the larger group. Apparently the settlers thought there were only a few Indians around. Many of the settlers used caution and fled to the blockhouse fort of Jonathan Cunningham at Big Spring.

The home of John McKee was attacked, and Mrs. McKee was killed. Their children were visiting at Timber Ridge and escaped death or capture simply because they were not at home. Many of the settlers were at Timber Ridge for religious services. At Cunningham's Blockhouse, most of the men were in a field saddling up their horses, preparing to join other friends at Timber Ridge. The Indians chose this moment to attack, cutting off the settlers from the blockhouse.

A Mrs. Dale sat atop a ridge and watched much of the attack. When she heard of the Indian presence in the neighborhood, she mounted a stallion colt that had never been ridden, but turned out to be very gentle. The enemy soon

began to gain on her so she dropped her baby into a field of rye, hoping they would pass by it. In some way she was able to escape from them, but was not able to reach the blockhouse in time. A relief party went back and found her baby in the field where she had left it, alive and well, after the attack had ended.

At the blockhouse, several of the men tried to start up the creek but were quickly shot down. The Indians attacked with great force, singling out the victims. Mrs. Dale hid herself in the thickets of brush and weeds. She watched as all who attempted to resist were killed. Cunningham himself was killed and his fort was burned to the ground. Evidently, no Indians were killed.

William Patton, who was at the Big Spring the next day helping to bury the dead, gave the number of dead at seventeen. He said the burial party was attacked as well.

Among the prisoners were: Mrs. Jenny Gilmore, her two daughters, and a son named John; James, Betsy, Margaret, and Henry Cunningham; and Archibald, Marian, and Mary Hamilton. One of the Cunningham girls was the same one who had been scalped in the first raid on Kerrs Creek. She was returned from captivity, and lived about forty more years, but the scalp wound finally turned into a cancerous infection which caused her death.

Mary Hamilton was one of those killed, and John McCown, her lover, died of a broken heart only two years later. He is buried by her side at Big Spring.

The afternoon of the massacre, the Indians returned to their camp on North Mountain. They sat around and drank the whiskey they had stolen from Cunningham's still. They became so intoxicated they could have put up little resistance. There was little to fear, as most of Rockbridge was in a panic. On the following day, two Indians went back, either to see if they were being followed, or to look for more whiskey. Mrs. Dale saw them shoot at a man as he rode up the valley. The man wheeled his horse and the Indians clapped their hands and shouted.

The Indians had most likely scouted the area well before the attack as they chose an opportune time to attack the settlers.

The treaty which ended the Pontiac War stipulated the white captives must be returned to their homes, these were delivered to Colonel Bouquet in November 1764. Some captives were not returned until much later.

Some of those killed in the 1759 raid may have been: John Gilmore, four of his family, Charles Dougherty's entire family, the wife and daughter of Jacob Cunningham, five of the ten members of Robert Hamilton's family, Isaac Cunningham, Jacob Cunningham, Thomas Gilmore and wife, Mr. Gray, James McKee, and Alexander McMurty.

Some of those killed in the 1763 raid may have included: Jane (Logan) McKee [Mrs. John], Jonathan Cunningham and his wife Mary (McKee), Mary Hamilton, a daughter of Jacob Cunningham, and William Gilmore. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

# COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIERS

The following lists of Colonial and Revolutionary soldiers were originally printed in the Rockbridge County News, date and writer unknown. They are copied from Washington and Lee University, Leyburn Library's Special Collection, Withrow Scrapbook, volume 14.

PART ONE: "Colonial Soldiers. In the year 1758 the House of Burgesses of Virginia passed an act for the payment of arrears due the soldiers in defense of the frontiers. In the schedule attached to the act a list of the creditors of the colony in Augusta County is given, which covers 22 pages of the volume of Henning's Statutes, in which this act is found. Very

many of these were Borden Settlers. I copy a list of one of the companies, as given: James McDowell, lieutenant; John Wardlaw, James Conden, sergeants; James Kenaday, William Kenaday, James Wardlaw, James Logan, Samuel Houston, David Moore, Nathaniel Evans, James McClong, John McClong, Henry McCollom, Robert Steele, John Sproul, Moses Whiteside, Johy Lyle, Jr., Robert Lusk, John Montgomery, John Hawl, John Thompson, Archibald Alexander, Patrick Lowry, John Lowry, Thomas Seirl; Charles Cellison, Thomas Paxton, James Huston."

"Captains must have been as numerous

as colonels in this day. I find named Captain Alexander Sayers, Captain John Buchanan, Captain John Dickinson, Captain Abraham Smith, Captain Francis Kirtlay, Captain Ephraim Love, Captain William Preston, Captain William Christian, Captain Samuel Norwood, Captain John Maxwell, Captain Andrew Hays, Captain James Dunlop, Captain David Hays and Captain John Smith."

"Two colonels are mentioned - Colonel David Stuart and Colonel John Buchanan; and one major, John Brown".

PART TWO: "Revolutionary Men Buried in

Rockbridge. Mrs. William Moore Peak, of Glasgow, has prepared a complete list of Revolutionary soldiers buried in this county. The names of the men and the places of burial are as follows:

"Lexington Cemetery. Andrew Alexander, William Alexander, Henry Bowyer, Colonel John Bowyer, William Bradley, Alexander Campbell, Captain Zachariah Johnson - moved to Rockbridge from Augusta 1790, Samuel McCown, Captain Andrew Moore, Captain William Moore, James Moore, Andrew Reid, William Robertson, William Wallace."

"Timber Ridge Church Yard. John Houston, Sr., John McClung, William McClung, Alexander McClure, Halbert McClure, Robert McClure,

Samuel McClure, John McClure, Captain James Trimble."

"New Providence Church Yard. Colonel Charles Berry, Captain Charles Campbell, Philip Cox, Alexander Crawford, John Frazier, James Fulton, George Houston, James Houston, Robert McKee, Thomas Martin, Captain Andrew Moore, Alexander Nelson, William Wardlow, John Wilson, Samuel Wilson".

"Falling Spring Church Yard. John Grigsby, Captain; John McClure, Robert McClure, Alexander McNutt, Sir and Colonel, William Paxton, Alexander McNutt.

"Highbridge Church Yard. Rev. Samuel Houston, David Cloyd, Captain."

"Glasgow Cemetery. Captain John Paxton, William Paxton".

"Old Graveyard Near Wesley Chapel. Major William Paxton".

"On Farm near Rockbridge Baths. John McCown."

"Hays Creek. Major John Hays."

"Washington and Lee Campus. Rev. William Graham, John Robinson".

"Old Neriah Church Near Old Buena Vista. John Hughes."

"Mt. Zion Cemetery - Montebello. George Hight."

## LIFE OF THE EARLY SETTLERS

### FORTS AND HOMES

(PART 1)

The forts played an important part in the lives of the early settlers.

#### THE STOCKADES

A stockade fort generally consisted of three parts — cabins, blockhouses, and stockades. The outside walls were ten to twelve feet high, the cabins ranged along at least one of the walls of the fort and their roofs were pitched inward to prevent the enemies from climbing onto the roof. The blockhouses were built in the corners of the fort and stuck out over the walls about two feet. The stockades were made of upright poles and were ten to twelve feet high. Port holes were left along the walls in the cabins and blockhouses so the pioneers could shoot at the enemy through them. The cabins and blockhouses were used in Rockbridge. The only known stockade fort in the county was Audley Paul's fort which was at the Botetourt County line.

The stockades were built of logs set on end in the ground, close together, to form a fence or barrier which the enemy could not scale. A heavily barred gate was located in the front of the stockade.

A huge chimney was placed at each end of a stockade, with deep fireplaces. This is where the cooking was done. Heavy iron cranes supported the kettles. The hearth stone was large enough to hold the "spiders" and "Dutch-ovens." (often called bake-ovens by the pioneers). *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

### THE BLOCKHOUSE FORTS

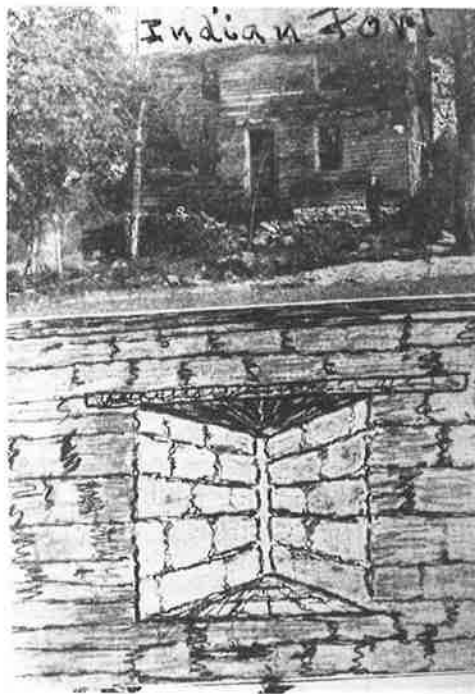
(PART 2)

Generally, a block house was erected by one family in the neighborhood. In the event of an attack, the entire neighborhood fled to the blockhouse.

Some of the early forts were log buildings two stories tall, with the upper building projecting beyond the lower to enable the defenders to shoot directly down or to pour boiling water on the attackers at the walls.

A more dependable fort was built of stone, usually partly underground, partly above, with a log cabin built on top of it as a foundation. As a last resort, the settlers could retreat to the basement and maintain rifle fire through the "loopholes" constructed in the walls.

These loopholes were very narrow slits. Viewed from the outside, they seemed barely wide enough to permit the rifle barrel which was thrust through them, but they were widely splayed on the inside, as much as eighteen inches or more, allowing the marksman a wide shooting range.



Indian Fort- 1750; on Moore Farm, 4 miles East of Lexington. WLU Special Collections, RHS Photographs, Places.

One of these forts existed on Walker's Creek. People who saw it dismantled said the walnut logs were dovetailed at the ends and laid onto squared logs, rather than notched as was customary. The dovetailing was evidently to prevent the enemies from prying loose a log. Traditions state an underground passageway led to a spring only a few yards away at the foot of the hill. Most likely the fort was either built over top the spring, or a stockade enclosed the spring and the blockhouse. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

### THE CABINS

(PART 3)

The first houses were log cabins with split clapboards and weight poles to keep them in place. They usually had dirt floors, and if wooden floors were used, they were made of split puncheons, smoothed with a broad ax. However, a few frame and stone houses were built before the Revolution.

Later, as improvements along the frontiers developed, the settlers' houses improved as well. The settlers soon began to erect homes of hewn logs with plank floors and a shingle roof. The planks were cut with a whipsaw. The timber to be sawed was squared with a broad ax, then raised with a scaffold six or seven feet high. Two strong able bodied men then took hold of the saw, one at the top of the log and the other at the other end, and began sawing.

About one hundred feet of plank was considered a good day's work. The introduction of saw mills soon took the place of the whip saw, but they were not entirely laid aside until several years after the Revolution.

The Dutchman generally erected his home in about the same manner. Their homes were usually a single story high with a large chimney and a stone cellar underneath. The chimney was in the middle of the house with a very wide fireplace in one end of the kitchen, and a store room in the other end. Their furniture consisted of a long pine table in one corner of the store room, with permanent benches on one side. The Dutchman usually built a fine barn before even beginning on his home. The barn was usually the best building on his property. The Germans kept all their animals in the barn during the winter. This caused the animals to need less food and to come through the winter in better shape.



The first settlers had gone a mile or more to get logs for their cabins with dirt floors. As time went on they improved their homes and made sturdier cabins of hewn logs.

The Indian danger, which came about in 1742, provided a strong incentive for the settlers to erect more sturdy and substantial homes. By the close of the Revolution there were a few stone and brick homes as well. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

### PIONEER LIFE

From the 1730's to the 1750's, the Scotch-Irish fled Ireland. Many of them headed for Virginia and North Carolina where they hoped to freely worship as Presbyterians. A large number of these pioneers had come into port at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Upon arriving in the wilderness outposts, they immediately began to build crude cabins, raised their large families and their small crops of corn.

As the early pioneer trudged through the wilderness, carrying his ax and gun, and driving his livestock before him, he truly felt the impact of the wilderness environment. He would only

be able to fill a few acres of land with crops. Yet he always took out more than he needed, as any extra land could be sold to latecomers at a profit. After getting his land, he started to cut trees to build his cabin, notching the ends to fit snugly together and leaving a hole in the split-board roof to let some of the smoke out. The farmers usually helped each other build their cabins, passing a cask of cider or a gallon of rum in the process.

The German settlers generally built their homes of square-hewn logs, with thatched roofs and a center chimney to conserve fuel. They built a great barn with a stone basement, broad threshing floor, and large ample lofts.

Once the frontiersman had secured his shelter, he began to clear his land. Four or five years of back breaking labor were necessary to clear the ten or fifteen acres needed to support a family. During this period the pioneer and his family lived on the grain which he bought from nearby farmers. Two good crops could pay for the farm and all the improvements.

For the first couple of seasons the new settlers had little to eat except wild meats. Their diet consisted of deer and bear and "Johnny cakes" and sometimes parched corn. Their homes were often huts or small log cabins built directly on the ground with dirt floors. Most people had very little furniture, except stools and tables made of split timbers with pegs as legs. They had to work hard all day, with only a few tools. They slept in front of an open fireplace, often on bear skins, or straw ticks, (cloth covering filled with straw). They had no schools and no churches. They were the ones who established these in their own communities.

The early settlers deprived themselves of many comforts to settle their communities and provide for a better way of life for their descendants. Most of these early settlers rest in unmarked graves, some in the Churchyards which they helped to establish, others on their home farms. These early communities were very close-knit. People would get together and have log rollings, brush-burnings, house raisings, barn raisings and such. When the settlers found the need to build forts and blockhouses, one farm in the neighborhood was generally chosen as the site for all of the neighbors to gather in case of an Indian attack, rather than each family having to build a fort around each home.

The western counties were so large that local government broke down. Inadequate defense was provided, and the county courts were so far away that people could not seek the protection of the law. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

## EARLY LIFE

When the early settlers first arrived here they only plowed a few acres of land each year. The only item usually sold from their farms at first was grain for flour. These early pioneers only grew enough supplies to feed their families at first. Indian corn was eaten at most meals.

Most of the settlers could not afford to buy imported cloth, so the women wove linen and linsey-woolsey for the families clothing. Most farms raised a patch of flax from which linen was woven. Farmers also raised a crop of hemp as a money crop.

Settlers often planted orchards with young apple and peach trees which they had carefully brought with them from Pennsylvania.

Since wagons were not common until after the Revolution, most farm tools were few and simple. Wagons were needed to carry farm tools from Pennsylvania. Before wagons were able to get through the trails, the only farm tools owned were either carried on packhorses or made by the local blacksmith. Small brush harrows and plows with wooden mouldboard were the usual farm tools.

Good grass was easily found. Most farms

were well stocked with horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs.

Today there are not any wolves in Rockbridge, but when the first settlers came here, there were lots of wolves. Calves and sheep had to be put in pens at night to protect them from bears, wolves, and cougars.

The Indians had never seen crows, blackbirds, or bees until after the white men came to the area. The Indians called the bees, "the white men's flies."

Buffalo and elk were here when the first settlers came but soon disappeared. The cougars and wolves stayed a while, but eventually disappeared.

The settlers did not have dishes like we use today. Their tableware consisted of a few pewter dishes, plates, and spoons, but mostly wooden bowls, trenchers and noggins. They often used gourds and hard shelled squashes as tableware.

"Hog and hominy" were main dishes. Johnny cakes and corn pone were the only forms of bread for breakfast and lunch. At dinner, milk and mush was the usual meal. The settlers often ate their mush with sweetened water, molasses, bear oil, or the gravy of fried meat.

Settlers soon plowed ground for a vegetable garden. They raised corn, pumpkins, squashes, beans, and potatoes. For dinner they might cook some of their vegetables with pork, deer, or bear meat. They often had log rollings, house raisings, or harvest day social gatherings. At these events pot pie was the standard dish. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

## ROCKBRIDGE WHEN FIRST SETTLED

The early settlers found the Rockbridge area covered with brush and grasses. Forest growth was mostly in the mountains as the Indians burned the meadows so the Buffalo would have good grass to eat. The settler sometimes had to go a mile or more to find logs for his cabin. Occasionally, the settlers passed over the nice meadows and took the mountain lands so they would have enough logs for their cabins.

The tracts in Borden's Grant were usually about three hundred acres and were considered plantations rather than farms. All the work had to be done by the people and horses. There were no tractors and other machinery in those days. Tenants and indentured servants often lived and worked on these plantations. Some people had slaves, but in this area it was uncommon for anyone to have more than five or six slaves on a plantation.

The rough cabins often had dirt floors. Sometimes the bark hunting lodges left behind by the Indians served as homes to the early settlers until they could build a log cabin.

One of the most important things in a neighborhood was the grist mill where people took their corn to be ground for meal. The merchant mills ground grains into flour. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

## EARLY WEDDINGS

The early settlers generally celebrated a wedding with the entire neighborhood. The whole community was eager for a social gathering which did not include a great deal of physical labor for the men. On the morning of the wedding, the groom and his attendants gathered at his father's house. They then headed to the bride's house where they would soon gather for a large lunch.

There were no stores, tailors, or dressmakers for about a hundred miles. Everyone came on horseback or on foot. Many of the horses

were unshod because there usually wasn't a blacksmith in the community. The settlers sometimes rode bareback as there generally were no saddlers living in the community. The men wore shoe packs or moccasins, leggings and hunting shirts made of homespun cloth. All their clothing was made at home. The women dressed in linsey petticoats and woolen bed-gowns. They wore homemade shoes and stockings, carried handkerchiefs and wore buckskin gloves. Old family heirlooms of buckles, buttons and ruffles or rings were cherished decorations as these items were not available locally.

The horses were outfitted with saddles when available, old bridles or halters, and pack saddles. A bag or blanket was often thrown over the horses's back. A strip of leather or a string often served as a saddle girth to hold the saddle or pack on a horse's back.

The wedding party marched in double-file except where the trail was too narrow for two horses to ride abreast. The trails were also hard to travel on, as neighbors cut trees across the path and tied them together with grapevines as a joke. Sometimes neighbors waited in ambush along the trail and fired off their muskets as the wedding party passed. A great commotion was caused by this as smoke from the guns covered the area, horses jumped, danced, and pranced. Girls screamed and their dates tried to calm their horses so they would not be thrown.

Often, before the wedding party reached the bride's house, they held a ceremony called "running for the bottle." Two young men raced over obstacles of brush, logs, and deep hollows on horseback in a race to reach the bottle of "brown betty." The race was started off with a yell. The young men raced over logs, through brush, thorns, and bushes, and across hollows. The first person to reach the bride's door was given the prize. The prize was passed to the groom and his attendants, and on down the line.

The marriage ceremony then took place, immediately followed by a feast. The tables were spread with beef, pork, turkey, chicken, duck, and other fowl, and sometimes venison and bear were roasted or boiled with lots of vegetables and potatoes. The tables were usually a large slab of wood hewn with an ax, supported by four sticks set in auger-holes. Some old pewter plates and dishes were used, the rest were wooden bowls or trenchers. Most settlers owned no silverware. They used a few pewter spoons and the rest of the utensils were made of horn. For cutlery, the men usually pulled out their hunting knives which they carried on their belts.

After the feast, the dancing started and lasted all night. The settlers danced reels, jigs, and square dances. During the jigs, there was a system called "cutting out." When either partner became tired of dancing, another person would step into their place without stopping the dancing. During the wee hours of the night, if anyone tried to sneak off to sleep, he was hunted down, dragged out before the neighbors and paraded about. The fiddler was then ordered to play "Hang Out Till Morning."

Around nine or ten o'clock, a group of young women stole away the bride and put her to bed. They decorated the ladder leading to the loft of the cabin with hunting shirts, petticoats, and other clothing. The young men soon realized the bride was gone and stole off the groom. He was placed in bed next to his bride.

The dance continued. As few seats were available, every young man not dancing was obligated to offer his lap as a seat to the young women who usually accepted. Late in the night, the wedding party would send refreshments of "Black Betty" and food to the young couple.

After the wedding, festivities ended and the guests headed home. Another race for the bottle was run. Sometimes the feasting and

dancing lasted several days. All of the guests were very tired and needed several days rest before they were energetic enough for their regular occupations. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley  
Sources: Doddridge, Joseph. The Settlement And Indian Wars of the Western Parts Of Virginia And Pennsylvania. 1763-1783. org. pub. 1824, reprint, Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 1988, pp. 91-93. Tompkins, Edmund Pendleton, M.D. Rockbridge, County, Virginia: An Informal History. Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1952, pp. 161-164.

## THE NEWLYWEDS

Shortly after a wedding, a site was chosen for the young couple to build a cabin, usually on the land of one of the parents. A group of neighborhood men gathered to chop down trees and cut them to the proper lengths. These men were called "choppers". A man with a team of horses would haul logs to the building site and sort them by size along the proper sides of the cabin site. A carpenter searched the woods for the proper tree from which to make the clapboards for the roof. He sought a straight grained tree, three or four feet in diameter. Upon locating the tree, he cut it down and split boards, four feet long and as wide as the timber would allow. Another group of men was busy getting puncheons for the cabin floor. This was done by felling trees, about eighteen inches in diameter, and hewing them with a broad ax. The materials for the cabin were prepared on the first day and often the foundation was laid in the evening. The second day was the time for building the cabin.

Early the next morning, the neighbors gathered for the house raising. Four men were selected as corner men. It was their job to notch and place the logs. The rest of the men handed over the logs. Others were busy gathering the boards and puncheons for the floor and roof. By the time the cabin was a few rounds high, the sleepers and the floor began to be laid.

The doorway was made by sawing or cutting the logs to make an opening about three feet wide. This opening was strengthened by upright pieces of timber about three inches thick. Holes were bored to pin the boards to the logs. A

wider opening was made at the end for the chimney. The roof was made by making the logs shorter until a single log formed the comb of the roof. The clapboards were laid on these logs, lapping each row over the next.

Quite often, the roof and floor were finished on the same day as the raising. A third day was usually spent by a few carpenters, leveling off the floor, making a door of clapboards, and a table. The table was made of split slab and supported by four round legs set in auger holes. Some three-legged stools were made in the same way. Pins were stuck in the loop at the back of the cabin to support clapboards which served as shelves. A forked limb was placed in a hole in the floor and the upper end fastened to a joist in the ceiling, this served as a bedstead. A pole was placed in the fork with one end through a crack between the logs in the wall. Another pole was placed through the fork and in another crack in the wall. Boards were put on these poles, making the bottom of the bed. Sometimes other poles were pinned to the fork to add support to the front and foot of the bed. The walls supported the back and head of the bed.

A few pegs were placed around the walls of the cabin for the young couple to display their coats, hunting shirts, and other clothing. Deer horns were attached to a joist in the ceiling to hold the rifle and shot pouch.

As the carpenter completed the inside work, masons were at work outside. The masons made billets from the timber for chinking up the cracks between the logs of the cabin and chimney. Mortar was made for daubing up the cracks. A few stones formed the back and jamps of the log chimney.

Upon completion of the cabin raising, the house warming ceremony began. A whole night's dancing was the celebration. The young couple was not allowed to move in until this celebration had taken place. Once the night-long dancing party had occurred, the couple moved into their new home. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley  
Source: Doddridge, Joseph. The Settlement and Indian Wars Of The Western Parts Of Virginia And Pennsylvania. 1763-1783. org. pub. 1824, reprint, Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 1988, pp. 106-108.

## THE EARLY SETTLERS

Many of the early settlers rode across the Atlantic Ocean in ships from Ireland. Others came from England, Germany, France, and Africa, but most of the earliest settlers in Rockbridge County were Scotch-Irish.

The Scotch-Irish had originally lived in Scotland but moved to Ireland. They were not treated well in Ireland and were not allowed to worship as Presbyterians. Many of them gathered up what little they owned and bought ship passage to America where they hoped to be allowed to worship freely. Those who could not afford to pay the price of the ship passage offered to sell themselves into servitude from three to seven years to whoever would pay their fare.

Many of the settlers soon heard of land in Virginia and decided to head for this new frontier. They began to prepare for their journey by gathering up food and supplies, buying packhorses, and making packs and panniers (baskets), to carry their belongings into the wilderness.

These rugged pioneers struggled across mountains, rivers, and streams in search of a new land where they could worship freely and live in peace.

After traveling the rough trails, mostly on foot, these pioneers reached their destination. Upon arrival, they built temporary shelters until more permanent homes could be erected. They soon began clearing land so they could plant crops for food. Game was plentiful and hunting helped to keep the family fed.

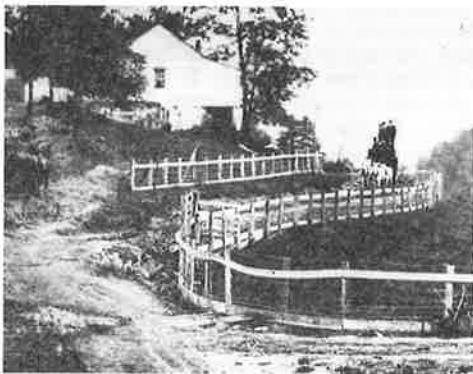
The settlers worked from dawn to dusk building shelters, clearing land, planting crops, hunting game, spinning, weaving, cooking, sewing, and many other chores which were necessary for existence.

They built churches and schools. Eventually the roads were widened enough for wagons and stages. These early settlers had to work very hard just to keep their families fed. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley

## EARLY MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

### EARLY HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION

The early settlers had to blaze their own roads. They usually followed Indian trails or buffalo paths. These roads were soon made wide enough for carts and wagons.



Road work at Natural Bridge. This became the first paved road in the county.

The pioneers who did not live along these roads had to use pack horses to carry their goods to a place on the wagon road where they could hire a wagoner to transport their produce to market in another area.

Imagine what it must have been like to walk all the way from Pennsylvania to the Rockbridge area. The adults would have led the pack animals, the smaller children would have ridden in baskets (called panniers) on the sides of the pack animals, and the larger children would have walked. Everyone camped at night and slept under the stars. Food was carried on the pack horses or cattle, and livestock was driven ahead by the father and older boys. When the family ran low on food, the father hunted game using his musket.

### ROADS AND TRAILS BEFORE 1800

When the first settlers came to this area in 1737, and for many years to come, they came on horseback or on foot, leading pack horses strapped with loads. Cattle were also used to carry packs over Indian and Buffalo trails. The pack trains traveled along these trails in single file lines. Road making usually meant cutting brush and removing logs from the path. As more settlers came, the roads were widened enough to allow for a wagon road. Wagon travel was not common before 1790, as the roads were bad and most people did not even own wagons or carts.

These early roads were usually Indian trails and generally followed the valleys and crossed

the ridges. Sometimes, they were wide enough for a wagon. When the settlers came to a stream, they usually crossed at the mouth where the sandbars made it shallow enough to ford. The buffalo had left paths that were used by the Indians and the white settlers.

The pioneer's belief was a straight line was the shortest distance between two points. They usually went directly over a ridge, rather than wind through a hollow and have to contend with cutting away brush, laurel thickets, and going around rock ledges.

The more important roads had to be made wide enough for wagons. Colonial law required that signs be placed in the fork of the roads for the traveler's information.

Roads were needed along each river because the early pioneers often settled along the rivers where the soil was rich. The rivers also served as transportation. The valleys had forts for protection, and the roads leading to the gristmills were important routes. Soon other roads began to run over mountains, or when possible around them, to reach the neighboring valleys. The most important roads led to the courthouses.

By 1780, the trail through the valley had become a more permanent road and was traveled by ox-carts and four-wheeled wagons, carrying women, children, and household items. The horses which pulled these wagons wore rope harnesses, rope traces, and straw collars. The drivers guided the teams with rope lines.



*Stonewall St. in Lexington after the turn of the century.*

When the early settlers came to a large and treacherous hill, it was sometimes necessary to take the wheels off the wagon and carry it to the top, piece by piece. Travel was very slow. It sometimes took three months to go from Harrisonburg, Virginia to Salisbury, North Carolina.

Soon wagons were able to travel as far southwest as Knoxville, Tennessee, and as far northeast as Baltimore, Maryland. These wagons carried products from the fields and forests, and exchanged supplies with the larger markets. The stage-drivers often sounded long horns, and the teamsters sometimes put bells on their horses' harnesses. The drovers shouted at bleating flocks and lowing herds. The covered wagons crept by in a steady stream, and horses loaded with heavy pack saddles were common sights.

In the late 1790's, travelers on horseback into the western areas of Virginia often carried pistols or swords. They carried a large blanket folded under the saddle to serve as a saddle blanket and as a cover at night. Houses were

scattered along the way from Lexington, Virginia to Lexington, Kentucky. It was still too dangerous for anyone to travel alone. Usually, five or six people traveled together. The first settlers had traveled in groups of forty or fifty.

## TRAVEL — 1800-1860

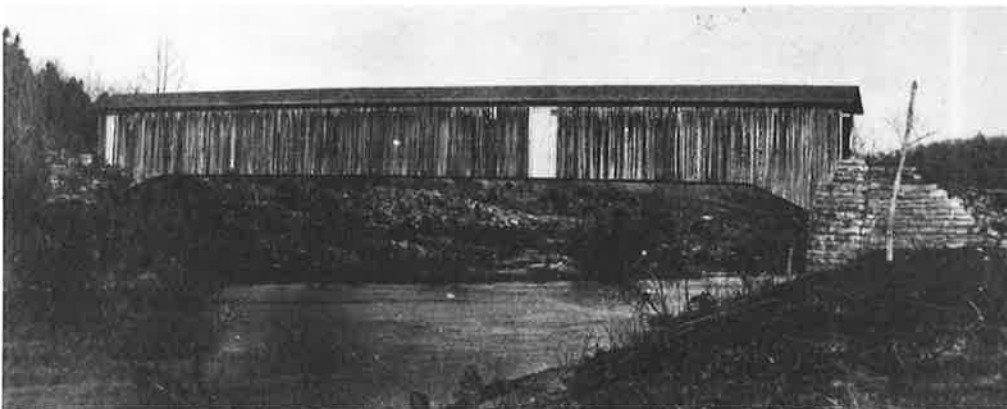
From about 1800 to 1820, high-wheeled canvas commercial wagons came into fashion. These were usually pulled by four horses, each carrying bells, except the left hand wheel horse on which the driver rode.

The Great National Road opened in 1825, leading from Cumberland, Maryland to Wheeling (now West Virginia), on the Ohio River. Freight wagons carrying from eight to ten tons each, pulled by six to twelve horses, passed over this highway each day.

By 1825, stages ran through the Valley of



*Lexington Train Station with automobiles and horse drawn vehicles.*



*Lime Kiln Bridge - North River (now Maury River).*

Virginia from Harpers Ferry by way of Winchester, Strasburg, Woodstock, New Market, Harrisonburg, and Staunton to Natural Bridge and possibly beyond.

About 1830, state roads were established and stage coach travel increased. Stages were pulled by a team of four to six horses and were driven at a full trot. Each coach carried from eight to ten passengers, the light baggage rode on top, and the heavier trunks were strapped to the boot on the rear of the stage.

The roads were worked by compulsory labor. Men had to work at keeping the roads in good repair as a sort of tax. These men were called tithables. In 1843, a Road Surveyor was paid \$1.00 a day, a workman was paid \$0.50 a day, a man with a plow, two horses and a driver was paid \$1.50 a day.

By 1840, the Valley Road from Winchester to Harrisonburg or Staunton had been macadamized (covered with rock). It was a turnpike (toll road). The stream of settlers continued but their appearance changed. Most of the herds and flocks avoided the sharp stones on the turnpike by traveling in the middle of the road or using the back roads. Packhorses and covered wagons were not seen as often. The number of bell teams increased and their equipment improved. The stages provided swifter transportation and carried more distinguished passengers. Many people were now traveling for pleasure. In the stage coach days many people from Kentucky and other states traveled through the Valley of Virginia. Statesmen from Washington often passed through. Many immigrants traveled up the Valley to the Cumberland Gap and Kentucky before and during the Revolution. A trace (early road) was started up through the Kanawha about this time.

By 1836, a railroad had been completed as far as Winchester. Many people traveled with freight wagons and belled horses from the end of the line into Southwest Virginia, Greenbrier, Bath County, and other areas.

From 1856-1861, the railroads came further into the Shenandoah Valley. Much of the wagon travel disappeared. The Goshen Gap and Cumberland Gap still carried a large number of wagon and stage traffic for many years after the Civil War. The carriage had come into vogue in the 1830's, and in the early 1840's there were many pleasure carriages.

The settlers did most of their hauling during the winter months when the horses were not needed on the farms. The famous Conestoga wagons were often used to haul freight from the Valley to Philadelphia, Baltimore, or Pittsburgh. Four, six, and eight horse teams were common. Many of the horses wore bells fitted over them to create an arch over the collar. The large wheel horse carried the bass bells and the others carried bells which produced different notes selected to harmonize or chime. These wagons were masterpieces of workmanship. The wheels were painted red and the beds were painted blue. The wagon business caused taverns to spring up along the trails. The teamsters thought the railroads and canals were unwelcome improvements.

With each improvement of the road system, another mode of travel was put out of business. The turnpikes made the packhorses useless, the stagecoach and the Conestoga wagons soon took their place. When the first roads over the mountains were opened, the packhorse men and the horse breeders were very upset. They knew their business would soon be ruined. However, one wagon could carry as much salt, bar iron, and brandy from Philadelphia or Baltimore as an entire caravan of packhorses.

Many of the first wagons were made entirely of wood. The wheels were made by sawing trunks of huge gum, hickory, or white oaks. The frame was made of white oak, the axletrees and singletrees were made of hickory. Gum

trees were used for the hubs, and poplar for the boards. The body of the wagons was about twenty-four feet long with a sag in the middle from end to end and from side to side, so if the load shifted it settled in the middle. The bows over which the homespun covers were drawn were eleven feet from the ground. Iron reinforcements were used and were often shaped in designs of tulips, hearts, snakes, or knot ends. A tool box was carried on the back of the wagon, and a water bucket hung from the rear axle.

Owning a wagon was wonderful for a farmer. He could take a trip and while doing so earn \$20.00. The only expenses would be the toll on the Bath County road, amounting to about \$2.40 round trip. In those days, there were no bridges across the creeks and rivers, the mountains were steep, and all of these obstacles had to be crossed. The teamster was required to have a canvas cover over his wagon or the merchants would not hire him. The wagoners slept underneath their wagons to keep from being trampled by the horses during the night.

*Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

Sources: Transportation articles: Bosworth, Dr. A.S. *A History of Randolph County (West Virginia)*. np. nd. Chapter VII, pp. 102-105. Morton, Oren F. *Annals of Bath County, Virginia*. Staunton, VA: McClure 1917. Chapter VII, pp. 56-61. Morton, Oren F. *History of Rockbridge County, Virginia*. Staunton, VA: Regional Publishing Company, 1980. Chapter XX. Wayland, John W., Ph.D. *A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia*. np. nd. Chapter XXXI, pp. 663-690. Wright, John Ernest, and Doris S. Corbett. *Pioneer Life in Western Pennsylvania*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1968. pp. 175-199.

## RIVER TRANSPORTATION

About 1816, navigation along the James River was opened from Richmond to Balcony Falls. By 1827, the river was being navigated as far as Buchanan. Bateau boats were used to move produce from this area to the tidewater area. The boats were narrow, about ninety feet long, and were moved along by men using poles. A canvas cover was placed in the center of the boat. Three men pushed the boats along with poles, hauling seventy-five barrels or seven to ten hogsheads of tobacco. A wagon could only carry about thirteen barrels of flour. These boats often carried five to eight tons of pig-iron. Balcony Falls was a rough spot on the river and was very dangerous.



Canal-Reid's Dam

The canal system was built in sections from Glasgow to Lexington on the Maury River. It arrived in Lexington in 1852. As each section opened, a warehouse was built. These warehouses held the freight until the canal boats came along to carry them on down the river. A canal boat could stop anywhere to take on or put off freight.

By 1860, packet boats arrived in Lexington, carrying passengers three times a week. The packet boat was pulled along by three horses or mules. The packet boats carried passengers and the freight boats carried freight.

The packets traveled about four miles an hour, much faster than the freight boats. The canals were put out of business in 1880 when

the railroad came to Rockbridge. *Submitted by:*

*Angela M. Ruley*

Sources: Morton, Oren F. *History of Rockbridge County, Virginia*. Staunton, VA; Regional Publishing Company, 1980. Chapter XX. Trout, W.E., III. *The Maury River Atlas: Historic Sites On The North River Navigation*. Lexington, VA: The Rockbridge County Canals Preservation Fund, 1991. pp. 22-24.

## NORTH RIVER NAVIGATION

The Maury River used to be called North River. North River Navigation was the main branch line of the James River and Kanawha Canal. From 1860 into the 1880's this branch of the canal made Lexington an important port for freight boats and passenger packets, until the railroads made canal transportation obsolete.



Ferry at Greenlee on James River.

The North River Navigation was a series of dams with locks and canals and cost about a half-million dollars to build. Horses and mules pulled packet (passenger) and freight boats along the twenty miles of towpath, through the ten miles of canals and ten miles of slack-water behind the dams. Towpaths were along the river banks and along the sides of the canals. The canal boats were attached by ropes to a team of mules or horses. A man walked behind the team to drive them, and the animals pulled

the boat along the river and canal. Sometimes the river had to be crossed and the towpath would continue on the other side. The places where the river was crossed were called tow-path crossings.

The locks served to raise or lower boats through drops, usually created by the dams. The dams were used to raise the water level. Often a ferry would be near the dams. These ferries were usually rope ferries. They would transport the mules or horses across the river if the towpath changed sides. The canal boats were most likely tied to the ferry as it went across the river.

Bridges were provided for the mules to use when crossing the river. These bridges were built wherever a road or a farmer's field had to be crossed. Aqueducts with stone abutments and a wooden trough were built under the canals to carry the system across the streams.

The canal boats were often fifteen feet wide and ninety-five feet long. They could carry a great deal of freight and many passengers. With the coming of the canal, the bateau boats were replaced by the canal boats. The bateau boats were about ninety feet long and were propelled by poles, operated by three men. The bateau boats had been used since 1816, along the river, but were rendered obsolete when the canal system came.

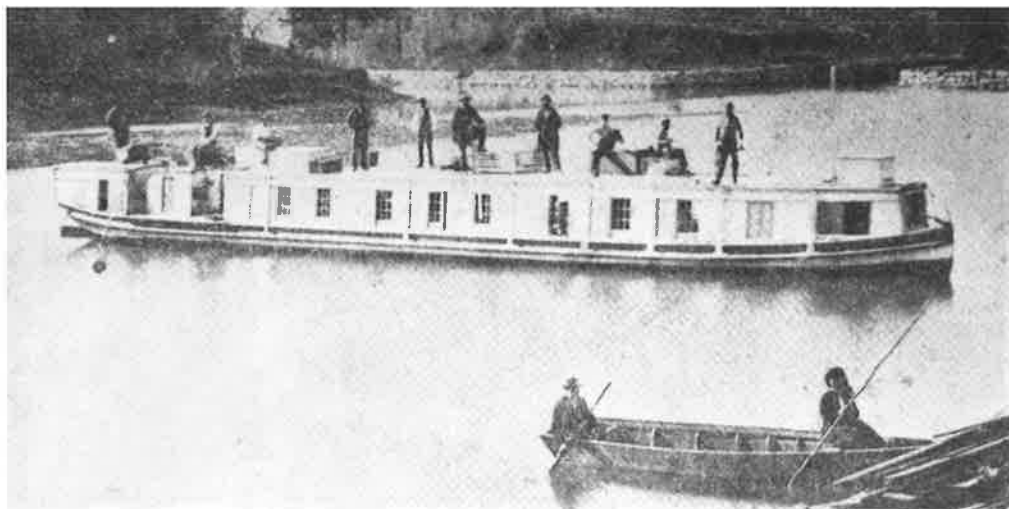
The packet boats along the canal system could travel at a speed of about four miles per hour. The three horses or mules were changed every twelve miles. The Canal Company usually kept stables every twenty-five miles along the route.

Many people were employed by the canal system. It took people to drive the mules, to open and close the locks, and each boat had a pilot. The construction phase of the canal system brought many people to the area who were looking for work. Toll collectors, lock keepers, carpenters, laborers, boatmen, and administrative staff were necessary to operate the canal.

Stonemasons, carpenters, and laborers, (including slaves), had built the canal. Workers with picks, shovels, and wheelbarrows dug out the large embankments and ditches for the canals, towpaths, and dams. The hired labor men were often Irishmen, and sometimes slaves.

The canal system provided transportation for Rockbridge until 1880 when it was sold to the Richmond and Allegheny Railroad Company. The boats were still running when the first train reached Lexington in 1881. The canal was soon after abandoned. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

Sources: Morton, Oren F. *History of Rockbridge County, Virginia*. Staunton, VA: Regional Publishing Company, 1980. Chapter XX. Trout W.E., III. *The Maury River Atlas: Historic Sites On The North River Navigation*. Lexington, VA: The Rockbridge County Canals Preservation Fund, 1991. pp. 22-24.

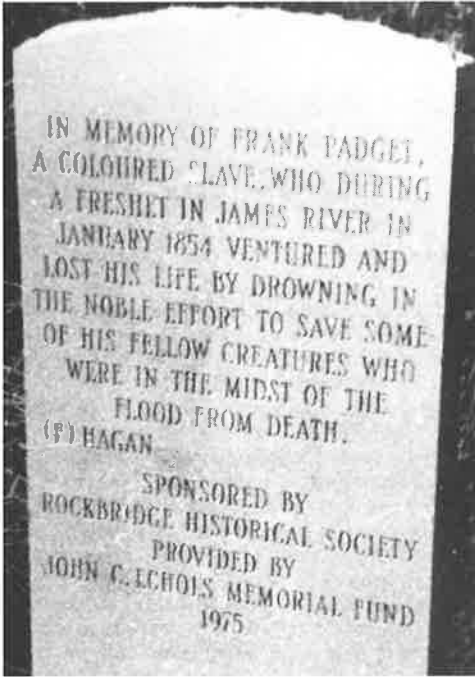


Packet Boat at East Lexington, Jordan's Point

# FRANK PADGET

In days gone by, the James River and Kanawha Canal Company carried a great deal of commercial traffic along James River. Nearly two hundred canal boats carried goods from Buchanan to Richmond. The company employed nine hundred men and used four hundred horses to move the boats along the river.

In January 1854, heavy rains fell. The river rose several feet. Although slowed somewhat, the canal traffic did not completely stop. Streams poured into the James, and the North River (now called Maury) roared with force as it dumped its waters into the James.



Frank Padget's Marker

On January 21st, Captain Wood attempted to take his boat, the Clinton, across the roiling mouth of the North River. Aboard were several white passengers and thirty-four Negro bondsmen who had been contracted out from the east. Suddenly, the tow-line snapped and the boat was swept into the tumultuous James.

The men soon found that the river was too deep and turbulent for their poles to be of any use. Captain Wood did all he could to steer the boat while the men on shore ran along the bank shouting to turn the boat's bow straight toward the falls and to ride out his chances. Captain Wood held the bow straight, but seven of his men did not see their prospects of making it

over the falls as good and jumped overboard. Four made it safely to shore. The other three were swept under the waters of the foaming river and disappeared from sight.

The Clinton passed within inches of a large boulder, a collision which would have turned the boat into splinters. Captain Wood determined it was time to abandon ship, and he and four or five others leapt from the side to a boulder in midstream. They watched as the unguided vessel was swept downstream. The Clinton was swept through Little Balcony and Great Balcony falls without mishap. She came to a sudden jolting halt at the head of Tobacco Hills and remained suspended on a jagged rock as the torrents swirled around her hull.

Onlookers along the banks shouted and tried to come up with solutions for rescuing the boatmen. A large rowboat was brought to the shoreline. But who would go? A half dozen men volunteered and among them was Frank Padget, a Negro slave.

Frank was an excellent boatman. He took charge of the rescue boat and selected two Negroes named Sam and Bob, along with William Mathews and Mr. McCollogan, white agents employed by the canal company to assist him. These five men pushed their rowboat into the raging James River and rowed for the rock.

Nothing daunted them. They hauled their boat upstream through the squalls. Reaching the rock where Captain Wood and a few other men clung, Frank maneuvered his boat and threw them a tow line. In a matter of minutes the marooned men were safely ashore.

In the meantime, the waters continued to rise. The Clinton was lifted off the snag and was sent downstream through Tobacco Hills, only to be caught in the timber of a small island. As they were being swept downstream, one of the Negro men aboard jumped off onto a rock called Velvet Rock and clung on for his life.

On shore, men asked, "Frank, aren't you mighty tired?"

"Yes", was the reply, as Frank bowed his head and rested it on his hands, "but I must get the rest of the men."

Once again, Frank launched the rowboat. It moved toward the boulder where the lone man stood. The boatmen motioned for him to jump into the rowboat as it passed. But as he jumped, the boat swerved and struck the rock. Water lashed over its side and it was crushed and wrapped around the rock. As the splinters swept by, three men from the boat climbed onto the boulder. Frank, Bob and the man they were trying to rescue were swept downstream. Bob managed to grab an oar and drifted to the opposite side of the river. Frank, who was exhausted from his rescue attempt, struggled a few moments and then went under. Both he

and the man he had attempted to save were drowned.

The following morning those aboard the Clinton were finally brought ashore.

Capt. Edward Echols was so impressed by Frank's efforts to rescue the boatmen that he had a large marble marker erected in his memory. It read: "IN MEMORY OF FRANK PADGET, a colored slave who during a freshet in James River in January 1854, ventured and lost his life by drowning in a noble effort to save some of his fellow creatures who were in the midst of the flood from death."



Edward and Susan (Burks) Echols

This marker can be seen at the lock opposite "Velvet Rock", about a mile and a half below the dam. However, it is on property owned by the CSX Railroad. A 1993 state law prohibits trespass on railroad property.

In the days of the canal and the railroad, the marker was in a high visibility spot. However, today viewing the marker is clearly trespassing. Tom Kastner is leading a campaign to have the marker moved from CSX property to near Glasgow where more people can see it. Among his plans are a Frank Padget Memorial Park, complete with a boat landing for recreational use.

Both Rockbridge County and the Town of Glasgow passed resolutions promising to share in the responsibility for the park's maintenance.

Mr. Kastner then pled the monument's case to the State Department of Historic Resources and won. The only unresolved problem is that the CSX Railroad Company has not yet agreed to move the monument. The State has asked permission and the future of the Frank Padget Park does seem eminent. Submitted by: Angela M.

## Ruley

Sources: Kastner, Tom, Telephone Interview by the author, 4 April 1995. *Roanoke Times & World News*, "A Monument to a Lost Hero". Extra, Monday, February 27, 1995, pp. 1 & 3. Tompkins, Edmond Pendleton, *Rockbridge County, Virginia: An Informal History*. Richmond, VA: Whittet and Shepperson, 1952, pp. 107-108 *Virginia Cavalcade*, "In Memory of Frank Padget". V.3, Summer 1953-Spring 1954.

# THE VALLEY RAILROAD

After the Civil War, efforts were made to have a railroad built from Harrisonburg to Salem. Rockbridge County and Lexington raised and borrowed money and in 1873 a contract was made to build a railroad.

The Valley Railroad venture came along during the Reconstruction of the south. This was General Robert E. Lee's only business venture. He was induced to participate in the venture to help Washington College and the town of Lexington.

Lexington had no railroad, and the nearest station was at Goshen on the Chesapeake and Ohio. The area around Lexington used the rivers for transporting produce and goods to markets in other areas. A railroad through this area would really have helped the people of Lexington and Rockbridge County to become more competitive in the marketplace.



(left to right) The Echols Family: Black Boatmen; Allie (11 years old); Edward Wiley (age 5, he died a few months later); Ernest (age 2 years); Edward; Fannie (age 15 years); Susan with baby Hubert; black nurse. c1866.

Col. James Randolph surveyed the route of the Valley Railroad from Harrisonburg to Salem in 1866. Just north of Harrisonburg there were two stretches of railroad that could easily be joined with the main line of the Baltimore and Ohio. At Salem, the Virginia - Tennessee, (later Norfolk and Western) could be easily reached.

Despite the fact that most people were completely broke after the Civil War, \$1,200,000 of securities were subscribed to build this railroad. In November 1866, Rockbridge County voted a subscription of \$100,000 and other subscriptions were voted by Rockbridge in 1868 and 1871. The total amount the County put into this venture was \$535,000, all just after the Civil War. The town of Lexington subscribed \$30,000. The county and town issued bonds for many years to pay these debts. Botetourt County also subscribed heavily. Augusta county refused to subscribe. This is one of the reasons why Augusta managed to get far ahead of Rockbridge and Botetourt with schools and roads in the following years.



Stone Culvert on Plank Road, remnant of Railroad.

In September 1869, Robert E. Lee went to Baltimore and presented proposals to Col. M. C. Harmon, President of the Valley Railroad Company. On 29 August 1870, Harmon resigned as President and Robert E. Lee was elected the new company president. He served in this capacity less than two months. Robert E. Lee died 12 October 1870.

The contract to build the railroad between Salem and Staunton was made in May 1873. The panic of 1873 was felt throughout the country and was an unfortunate time for attempting to build a railroad. In 1876, the railroad was temporarily suspended from Staunton to Harrisonburg and the Valley Railroad ran stage coaches on the turnpike



Train Trestle at Rails End, Lexington.

between those cities. It took ten years for the railroad to be completed from Staunton to Lexington. The first train reached Lexington in 1883. In 1884, an Engine House was put up in Lexington just across from Wood's Creek.

A Newspaper advertisement in 1885, offered trains of the B&O Railroad leaving Lexington for Lynchburg, Raphine, Greenville, Staunton, Weyer's Cave, Harrisonburg, New Market, Mt. Jackson, Woodstock, Strasburg, Winchester, Stephensons, Summit Point, Charlestown, Harper's Ferry, Hagerstown, Washington and Baltimore. Connections could be made at Harper's Ferry for all points west; at Strasburg with Manassas Branch, VA Midland R. R.; at Staunton with Chesapeake and Ohio R. R.; at Lexington with Richmond and Alleghany R. R. An express left Baltimore daily for Cincinnati, Washington, Harper's Ferry and St. Louis, with nightly expresses for St. Louis, Chicago, Cincinnati, Pittsburg and Harper's Ferry.

Right of ways were secured to Salem and road beds were built, but no tracks were laid in this section. In 1894, B&O officials again viewed the route of the Valley Railroad this time between Lexington and Roanoke. As two other railroads already had reached Roanoke, this was then being considered as a terminus for the Valley Railroad. Work continued on the section between Lexington and Salem as late as 1906. All told, \$1,250,000 was spent on the rail-

road from Staunton to Lexington, and an additional \$800,000 was spent in preparing the roadbed from Lexington to Salem. No train ever used the railroad south of Lexington.

Many cuts, abutments, fills, and culverts of the Valley Railroad can still be seen today all along the route it was to take. The railroad company secured strips of land along the intended route from the local landowners. Often the farmers and the company made special agreements in these deeds. One such deed stated: "The Company is to provide a proper wagon way across the said road and keep the same in good repair as well as all proper cattle stops." They were also to protect the "water right of the mill" belonging to the farmer. The strip of land they received was 100 feet wide, 50 feet on each side of the center line of the road. The railroad sections were numbered and each station had a number as well. The entire length of this particular 100 foot strip was 4,102 feet which equaled 9 acres, 1 rod, and 26 8/10 poles. This strip sold for \$300.00.

Although the Valley Railroad did make it to Lexington, the Shenandoah Valley Railroad bypassed Lexington and passed through the sites of Buena Vista and Glasgow, then on to Roanoke. Roanoke, then called Big Lick, grew into a large city, while Salem idled by for some time. Meanwhile, in 1881, the Richmond and Alleghany Railroad slianked up the Maury River to East Lexington. This later became the C&O Railroad.

With the competition of the railroad to Roanoke, there was no longer a need for one to Salem, thus the Valley railroad was never completed. The line from Staunton to Lexington was eventually torn down and only remnants of it can be seen today.

In 1943, Valley Railroad Company sold the section of the Valley Railroad between Staunton and Harrisonburg to the Chesapeake and Western for \$150,000. The section between Staunton and Lexington was abandoned some time before this.

As one drives along US 11, (Lee Highway) from Staunton to Roanoke, signs of the Valley Railroad can be seen much of the way. From Lexington to the Botetourt County line, the route along 610 (Plank Road) provides many views of old railroad structures.

The stonework for the Valley Railroad was sometimes contracted by local stonemasons and often done by laborers from outside the area. One should carefully survey their handiwork. The laborers on this railroad did not have the advanced technology of today. They



East Lexington, railroad trestle crossing Maury River, 1937



worked with picks, chisels, horses, and mules. One can but imagine the efforts of placing the large stones on the many culverts which remain today.

Dynamite shacks were common structures along the route. These shacks were erected to house the dynamite used for blasting stone. At least one dynamite shack remained until just a few years ago as a residence. It was consumed by fire.

There was no shortage of stone for the many culverts and fills. Rockbridge has an abundance of limestone. The workers often quarried stone near the work site and old quarries are often seen near the stone remnants.

Fills are also a common site along the route of the railroad. Large hills of slate and pebbles stand as evidence of where the railroad was to cross a hill or gully. Often these are located near a culvert which allowed a stream to

remain undisturbed as the proposed railroad crossed over it. Cuts are also visible along the route, although most of these are difficult to see from the highway. As a child, the author played in these cuts and pretended they were box canyons.

Part of the upper end of Plank Road, past Jimmy Shaner's "Miranda," toward the Boteourt County line, runs on the roadbed of the Valley Railroad. Evidently after the roadbed was made, it was smoother than the old Plank Road and was taken into use by the county. As one rides along this section of Plank Road, it becomes evident just which sections of road were the railroad bed.

Explore the Valley Railroad. However, if you must enter private land, please obtain permission from the landowner. Many of the railroad remnants can be viewed from the highway. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley

Sources: Bland, Larry, Ed., Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Lexington, VA: Rockbridge Historical Society, 1989, Vol. X. "Bringing the Railroad to Lexington, 1866-1883" by Matthew W. Paxton, Jr. "Deed of Sale from James H. Miller, Mary L. Miller his wife, and Martha E. Miller of Rockbridge County, VA to the Valley Railroad Company," dated 13 December 1873, Rockbridge County, VA Deed Book NN, pp. 458-459. Lexington Gazette and Citizen, 5 May 1876, "Old Times Come Again", Morton, Oren F. History of Rockbridge County, Virginia. Staunton, VA: Regional Publishing Company, 1980. Chapter XX. Rockbridge County News, 28 November 1884, "New Engine House". Rockbridge County News, 2 April 1886, Advertisements of Railroad and Stage Connections. Rockbridge County News, 14 June 1894, "Extension of the Valley Railroad". Rockbridge County News, "History of Valley Railroad Given by Dr. Wilson," 14 January 1943, p. 6, c. 5-7. "Deed of Sale from James H. Miller, Mary L. Miller his wife, and Martha E. Miller of Rockbridge County, VA to the Valley Railroad Company," dated 13 December 1873, Rockbridge County, VA Deed Book NN, pp. 458-459.

## ROCKBRIDGE IN 1850

### TRANSPORTATION IN 1850

Transportation was a major concern in the lives of Rockbridge citizens. As early as 1820 there was a stage coming to Lexington three times a week, but outside travel was usually restricted to those of prominence.

The primary responsibility of road construction was a large problem for the county to endure. In 1850, for example, a dam was raised and the water rose so high that it flooded a nearby road. The county was forced by its citizens to immediately address the problem.<sup>1</sup>



Horse and Buggy

Proposals were being made for an extension of the railroad which went from Staunton to Covington. The citizens of Rockbridge believed that a railroad would help their growing county.<sup>2</sup>

An improved means of transportation was necessary for the continued growth of agriculture and industry in Rockbridge. A canal system was considered by many to be the solution to this problem. The James River and Kanawha canal had reached Balcony Falls, and as it reached Glasgow, a group of men formed the North River Navigation Company.<sup>3</sup>

On 2 February 1850 the General Assembly passed an act which gave \$100,000.00 to the North River Navigation Company. Residents of the county voted on this and it passed by a vote of 417 to 199. Later that year, R. E. Rhodes was made the chief engineer and the surveying work was completed by Major J. Williamson. Although further construction was on its way, it did not actually begin until 1851. Many citizens of Rockbridge were anxiously awaiting the growth of the canal.<sup>4</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore Sources: John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, in the Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860. (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987) Catharine M. Gilliam, "Jordan's Point — Lexington, Virginia A Site History" Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Volume IX, 1980-1989, (1982), 116.

### WASHINGTON COLLEGE AND V.M.I. in 1850

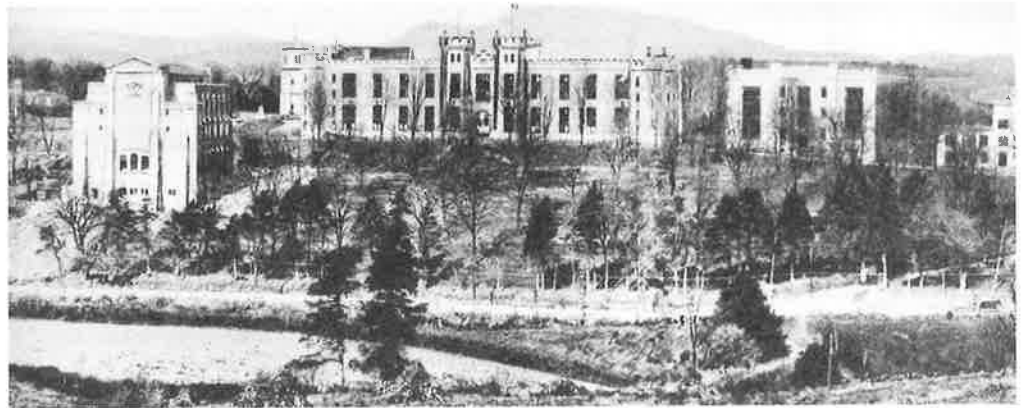
There were two colleges in Rockbridge in 1850, Washington College and the Virginia Military Institute. Rockbridge County was very fortunate indeed to have such valued institutes of higher learning as these. Both of these schools were exclusive to males and had very strict curriculums. Between the two there were sixteen teachers and 186 students.<sup>1</sup>

Washington College was much smaller than VMI in 1850. The president of the college was Dr. George Junkin, a Presbyterian clergyman. Washington College had long strived to gain the status of its neighbor VMI, and was well on

its way toward achieving that goal. Lexington Law School (later to become a part of Washington College) was only one year old. All classes were taught by Judge John G. Brokenbrough. Five men graduated in 1850.<sup>2</sup>

The Virginia Military Institute was but eleven years old in 1850. Although very young, it had gained much esteem. The cadet corps was present at the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington Monument and on their return from Washington served as bodyguards for President Taylor. That year was indeed a busy one for the cadets. On 4 July 1850, a cornerstone was laid for a new building to house the growing number of cadets.<sup>3</sup>

The superintendent of VMI in 1850 was General Francis H. Smith. He was instrumental in getting money for new barracks. On 8 March 1850, the State of Virginia appropriated the sum of \$46,000.00 to be paid in three annual



Virginia Military Institute



Washington College

payments, for the construction of new barracks.<sup>4</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore  
Sources: John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In The Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987), 133. James W. McClung, Historical Significance of Rockbridge Virginia, (Staunton, Va.: McClure Company, Inc., 1939), 203. Oren F. Morton, A History of Rockbridge County Virginia, (Staunton, VA.: The McClure Publishing Co., Inc., 1920), 203.

## EDUCATION IN 1850

A public school system was not supported by state taxation until 1870 in Virginia. State law, however, mandated in 1846 that each county be divided into school districts. Rockbridge was divided into 16 districts with a commissioner for each one. The commissioners elected John M. Wilson as superintendent. In 1850 these commissioners reported that there were sixty-two common schools in Rockbridge. Common schools were intended to be for indigent children and were funded by a special tax from the State, offered only basic education, and were taught on an average of four and a half months out of a year. Most of the school houses were only one or two rooms.<sup>1</sup> Of these schools, there were eighteen public schools, twenty-one public school teachers, and 430 public school pupils. The total number of students attending school in 1850 was 800 males and 679 females, which was a large portion of those who were of the right age to be in school.<sup>2</sup>



Hamilton School House, 1931

Money was given by the state literary fund to the state's several counties based on the percentage of free white inhabitants of the county. This money was intended to help poor families pay tuition. Every poor child in Rockbridge did not attend school, but this fund sent many who would have had no way of attaining an education. The total funds allocated for education in 1850 was \$6,681 from the State and other sources. Education was attained in field schools and generally did not go beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic.<sup>3</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore

Sources: Oren F. Morton, A History of Rockbridge County Virginia, (Staunton, VA.: The McClure Publishing Co., Inc., 1920), 562. John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In The Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987), 124-126.

## THE FREE BLACKS IN 1850

Not all blacks in Rockbridge were slaves. There were 364 free blacks in Rockbridge in 1850. Of these, many were emancipated or born into a small and growing free black community. The free Negro population of late antebellum Rockbridge County was beginning to come under scrutiny because of a white fear of insurrections. Therefore, the free blacks in 1850 faced constant and severe prejudice.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the people who were listed as mulatto in the Federal Census, were not of African ancestry. In fact they had Native American



Natural Bridge Stables

blood running through their veins and were treated with the same discrimination as the black population. Many who received this race mark were boatmen. Boatmen pulled the batteaux along the James River and Kanawha Canal using long poles. This was a dangerous and low paying job that some of the members who formed the lowest strata of antebellum society were forced to do.<sup>2</sup>

The batteaux-men were responsible for hauling freight up and down the river. The principal items carried on these boats were flour, iron, plaster, and other merchandise. The iron and flour went out to market in Lynchburg and Richmond. The plaster and merchandise came in from various stops along the way.<sup>3</sup>

Free blacks convicted of crimes were subject to much harsher treatment than whites. When a white person was arrested they were typically released on bond and ordered to appear at the next session of court. A black, however, was almost always required to remain in jail until trial.<sup>4</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore

Sources: John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In The Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987), 25-30; 110. John W. Knapp, "Trade and Transportation, The First One Hundred Years" Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Volume IX, 1980-1989, (1982), 228-229. John F. Schunk, comp., 1850 U. S. Census, Rockbridge County, VA., (Wichita, KS: S-K Publications, 1988).

## SLAVES IN 1850

Slaves were not allowed to learn how to read, partially because of a fear of slave insurrections. Slavery was a major issue in Rockbridge in 1850. Many citizens were active in the American Colonization Society. This society was not an abolitionist society as many may believe. Its primary goal was the evacuation of all African Americans, free and slave, out of the United States. Many died on their voyage to Liberia: R. W. Bailey, the agent of the society for Rockbridge reported that a few had died in 1850, but that, "we can escape death nowhere." The counties of Augusta and Rockbridge together contributed one thousand dollars from May 1849 to May 1850, and combined, sent a total of thirty-five immigrants to Liberia.

An ordinance was also passed in the town of Lexington in 1850 prohibiting slaves (whose owners lived outside of the town) from entering the town after dark and on Sundays. This law further limited the few freedoms that the slaves in Late Antebellum Rockbridge possessed.<sup>2</sup>

Submitted by: Dwight Moore  
Sources: John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In The Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987), 27-29. Lexington Gazette, May 15, 1850, 2; as cited in Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, 1850-1860, 27.

## SLAVERY IN 1850

Approximately 689 people, almost 6% of the white population, owned slaves in 1850. Of the 689 people, 1.5% of them owned more than thirty. These include: John H. Gallaher, who owned thirty-two; W. W. Davis, who owned thirty-four; John Doyle, who owned thirty-seven; John Bowyer, who also owned thirty-seven; John Glasgow, Andrew Cameron, and Samuel Reid owned forty-two each; Matthew Bryan, owned fifty-four; and William Weaver, an iron master, owned seventy-seven. One iron manufacturing business, however, owned eighty-one slaves. William Weaver, grandson of a Dunkard Minister, owned more slaves than any other individual in Rockbridge County. Over ten percent of the slaves in Rockbridge County were owned by ten individuals.<sup>1</sup>

A large number of the slaves were owned by manufacturers and iron masters, such as William Weaver, who owned seventy-seven slaves in 1850. A growing number of slaves in Rockbridge, coupled with a weakening national stability, were the causes of a fear of slave insurrections. Over the Christmas holidays of 1850, a letter was found which stated a plan for a slave insurrection. The letter allegedly said that 300 slaves were going to raid the arsenal of the Virginia Military Institute and reek havoc on the white population of Rockbridge. Although many believed the letter to be a hoax, it stirred the minds of the white population.<sup>2</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore

Sources: 1. Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, 1850-1860, 33. 2. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Shifting Attitudes Toward Slavery in Antebellum Rockbridge County" Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Volume X, 1980-1989, (1990), 333-344.

## METHODISTS IN 1850

The Methodists appear to have been large in number, but had no organized churches in Rockbridge County in 1850. A split in the Methodist Church over the issue of slavery may have been partially the cause for this. Another reason for this was many Methodist preachers were itinerants who covered large areas and served many people. Many of these Methodist ministers were referred to as "Circuit Riders", who rode across the countryside, staying with residents and holding camp meetings. Although there was no established Methodist Churches, Joseph Spriggs, a Methodist minister, married nine couples in 1850. In all, there were 120 marriages in Rockbridge during this year, of which, seventeen showed no minister's returns.<sup>1</sup>

The Methodists had been around for years in Rockbridge County, but were having a difficult time organizing. Four circuits formed in 1849:

Fairfield, Ebenezer, Lexington, and Wesley Chapel. All four of these were without organized churches until 1855.<sup>2</sup>

There were two meeting houses in the Fairfield Circuit, Whites Gap and Emory Chapel. In Ebenezer Circuit there was but one meeting house, Brownsburg. Mt. Zion, Natural Bridge, Wesley Chapel, and Elliotts Hill, were all located in the Wesley Chapel Circuit. The final circuit, the Lexington Circuit, was composed of three meeting houses: Lexington, South Buffalo, and Collierstown. Although the Methodists weren't powerful in Rockbridge, as they were elsewhere in the South, they were well on the road to becoming an influence in Rockbridge County in the early 1850's.<sup>3</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore  
 Dickinson D. Bruce, Jr., *And They All Sang Hallelujah, Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1974), 39-40; Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia 1850-1860, 147-149; Dorothe and Edwin Kirkpatrick, *Rockbridge County Marriages* The entire book was searched, by the compiler of this paper, for marriages that occurred in 1850. Albert M. Cupp, *A History of Methodism in Rockbridge County Virginia*, no pub., 11-15; 15-35

## BAPTISTS AND OTHER RELIGIONS IN 1850

Presbyterianism was by no means the only religion in Rockbridge County in 1850. Few Baptist Churches were organized at this time in Rockbridge County due to the strong influence of the Lexington Presbytery. Neriah Baptist Church, the oldest Baptist church in Rockbridge County, built in 1816, had dropped to only forty members in 1850.<sup>1</sup>



Baptist Church

Lexington Baptist Church was ministered by Cornelius Tyree, the first regular pastor of the church, and A. J. Huntington.<sup>2</sup> The membership of Lexington Baptist had escalated to 118 members by 1850. The Baptists were very happy to have been able to strategically locate a church in the heart of Rockbridge County, Lexington, the county seat.<sup>3</sup> Natural Bridge Baptist Church was presided over by the Reverend John Nash Johnston, until his death in 23 July 1850. It is unclear who took his place after his death.<sup>4</sup> Another church which appears to have been in operation was Panther Gap Baptist Church (now known as Goshen Baptist Church), but it is unclear who was the minister in 1850. The Baptist churches in Rockbridge were members of the Valley Association.<sup>5</sup>

Among other religions in 1850 in Rockbridge County were the Episcopalians, who had the Protestant Episcopal Church in Rockbridge County, whose presiding minister was Robert Nelson. Also, on a more diverse scale were the Lutherans, Catholics, and Jews. All of these however, were very small in number. Even though religious freedom was the law, many of these people had faced much prejudice.<sup>6</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore

Sources: John S. Moore, "The Baptist Struggle in Rockbridge County, 1798-1900," *Virginia Baptist Register* (Richmond, VA.) Nos. 1-5 (1962-1966). 2. James W. McClung, *Historical Significance of Rockbridge Virginia*, 45-46, 268-269. 3. John S. Moore, "The Baptist Struggle in Rockbridge County," 170-171. John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In *The Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860*," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987), 152; 168-169

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN 1850

Other Presbyterian Churches and ministers of note in Rockbridge in 1850 were: The Lexington Presbyterian Church with Reverend William S. White; Fairfield Presbyterian Church, formed in May of 1850 with Reverend James Paine; Falling Springs Presbyterian with the Reverend John Ewing; Timber Ridge Presbyterian, also called the Old Stone Church and organized from one of the oldest meeting houses in the area, Timber Grove, with George D. Armstrong; and High Bridge Presbyterian Church, named for the great high bridge, the Natural Bridge, with the Reverend Samuel D. Campbell. Ben Salem Presbyterian Church had George Junkin, as minister, although it appears that Ben Salem never had a regular pastor up to this point. Dr. George Junkin was also the President of Washington College in 1850. Two Presbyterian churches which seem to have been without ministers in 1850 were Old Oxford Presbyterian and the Lebanon Presbyterian Church.<sup>1</sup>

The conservative wing of the Presbyterians was known as the "Old Side" and the progressives were called the "New Sides" or "New Lights." Much controversy was caused by the use of hymns and the creation of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, which was formed as a branch of Presbyterianism and a solution to the split. One such church was the New Providence Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, with James Morrison as the presiding minister in 1850.<sup>2</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore  
 Sources: Howard McKnight Wilson, *The Lexington Presbytery Heritage*, (Verona, VA: McClure Printing Co., 1971), 337-339; 343-350; 353-360. John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In *The Late Antebellum*



New Monmouth Presbyterian Church with dismount platform

*Period, 1850-1860*," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987), p. 33. James W. McClung, *Historical Significance of Rockbridge Virginia*, (Staunton, Va.: McClure Company, Inc., 1939), 35-41, 43, 56-57, 98-99, 215-217, 253-254., Oren F. Morton, *A History of Rockbridge County Virginia*, (Staunton, VA.: The McClure Publishing Co., Inc., 1920), 171-172.

## BETHESDA, OXFORD AND MONMOUTH IN 1850

With a majority of the population being of Scots-Irish descent, most of the churches in Antebellum Rockbridge were Presbyterian. The Scots-Irish who originally settled the county were primarily religious dissenters who first settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and later made the trek to what is now, and was in 1850, Rockbridge County.<sup>1</sup>

Rockbridge County had many Presbyterian churches. The New Oxford Presbyterian Church, now Collierstown Presbyterian, met at the Ship Rock Meeting House in 1850. This meeting house was a large shed located next to Colliers Creek. The presiding minister was Andrew B. Davidson, who was also the minister of Bethesda Presbyterian Church. He had been the minister of Bethesda off and on since the founding of the Church in 1821. Not only did Andrew B. Davidson remain busy with his two parishes, he officiated at twenty-six weddings in 1850, more than any other minister in Rockbridge.<sup>2</sup>

The New Monmouth Presbyterian Church, which in 1850 was located on Whistle Creek on land donated by the Laird and McKee families, was another of the many Presbyterian churches in Rockbridge in 1850. The presiding minister in 1850 was the Reverend Thomas N. Paxton. Reverend Paxton was also the minister of Kerr's Creek Presbyterian during this period.<sup>3</sup>

Submitted by: Dwight Moore  
 Sources: 1. Howard McKnight Wilson, *The Lexington Presbytery Heritage*, (Verona, VA: McClure Printing Co., 1971), 15. George B. Ax, et. al., "The Collierstown Story" Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Volume X, 1980-1989, (1990), 176. Dorothe and Edwin Kirkpatrick, *Rockbridge County Marriages, 1778-1850*. The entire book was searched for marriages which occurred in 1850 by the compiler of this article. C. A. McDonald, "Condensation of the Address of Rev. C. A. McDonald" Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Volume III, (1946), 42-43. Howard McKnight Wilson, *The Lexington Presbytery Heritage*, (Verona, VA: McClure Printing Co., 1971) 15, 353-355, 357. James W. McClung, *Historical Significance of Rockbridge Virginia*, (Staunton, Va.: McClure Company, Inc., 1939), 162-164, 197. George B. Ax, et. al., "The Collierstown Story" Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Volume X, 1980-1989, (1990), 176; Dorothe and Edwin Kirkpatrick, *Rockbridge*

County Marriages, 1778-1850. The entire book was searched for marriages which occurred in 1850 by the compiler of this paper. Taylor Sanders II, "Zealous For The House of God": New Monmouth Presbyterian Church, Its First Two Centuries" Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Volume X, 1980-1989, (1990), 276.

## ASPECTS OF SOCIETY IN 1850

Cooking Stoves were beginning to come into use in 1850, but they were not widely used. It is very odd that a society of people, who believed they were quite modern, would be weary of such a modern tool. A possible explanation for this could be the rampant fires that had plagued Rockbridge throughout the years. This "unauthorized" and fearful use of fire in the home must have certainly been on the minds of many.



Longwood Post Office, Sitting: Mildred (Heck) Mohler. Standing: Sallie and Dora Mohler.

Politics were also on the mind of many people of the era. There were two newspapers, the Lexington Gazette, a democratic paper and the Valley Star, a Whig paper. William Kinney was the legislator for the area and Andrew Patterson the delegate. Samuel McD. Reid was the County and City Clerk of court. James C. C. Moore was the surveyor. John Ruff was the sheriff and there were four justices, Robert B. Anderson, Hugh Barclay, William M. McCutcheon, and Thomas S. Paxton.<sup>1</sup>

Fifteen post offices were in operation in 1850. The post offices often made contracts with citizens to take mail from the post office to the more rural areas of the county. Mail was generally delivered to people's homes; however, unclaimed mail piled up in the post office. In July of 1850, 120 letters were unclaimed at the Lexington post office. After the mail began to become too much to handle, the post office would post advertisements so that the people of the county would come and claim their mail.<sup>2</sup>

Submitted by: Dwight Moore

Sources: John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In The Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987), p. 105-106. Oren F. Morton, A History of Rockbridge County Virginia, (Staunton, VA.: The McClure Publishing Co., Inc., 1920), 108, 559-560, 564-565.

## OCCUPATION/ TEMPERANCE in 1850

There were many occupations in Rockbridge County in 1850, too many to go into detail about; however, a sample of the three largest numerically other than agriculture should suffice. In 1850 there were 55 laborers. These laborers worked in the various foundries, taverns, and as farm hands. There were 101 blacksmiths in 1850. Blacksmiths were needed to make the various tools necessary for a growing county. There were 111 carpenters in 1850, who were

also necessary for the growth of the county. These three examples should help to show that Rockbridge County was in a building mode.<sup>1</sup>

In 1850, there were many efforts to curb the drinking habits of the citizens of Rockbridge. Many temperance societies were formed. One society, the Natural Bridge Division of the Sons of Temperance, had sixty contributing members in 1850. These societies, much like fraternal orders, had a constitution, rituals, signs, and passwords. Such societies were very attractive to much of the population.<sup>2</sup>

Many people were strong followers of the temperance movement. Many felt that drinking was sacrilegious and would cause one to die an early death. On 4 August 1853, for example, William Ackerly died at the age of forty-nine. His cause of death, according to his death certificate was "intemperance."<sup>3</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore

Sources: Angela M. Ruley, comp., Rockbridge County Virginia, Death Register 1853-1870, Death Certificates, 1912-1917, (Athens, GA: Iberian Publishing Co., 1991), 3. John F. Schunk, comp., 1850 U. S. Census, Rockbridge County, Va., (Wichita, KS: S-K Publications, 1988). Oren F. Morton, A History of Rockbridge County Virginia, (Staunton, VA.: The McClure Publishing Co., Inc., 1920), 182. John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In The Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987), p. 159

## MEDICINE IN 1850

Primitive views of health care can be found when we examine the amount of doctors in the area and the training which they had received. There were very few doctors in the Rockbridge area and although some were classified as surgeons, most of them weren't as skilled as we would like our doctors to be today. There was however, a dentist in the area, Dr. G. Davison, who advertised that he would repair teeth and use gold fillings. The ads also stated that he would extract teeth and fangs carefully, with the most improved instruments, so as not to bruise or lacerate the gums. Dr. Davison also provided false teeth.<sup>1</sup>

Although there were thirteen people in the 1850 Federal Census over the age of ninety, medicine wasn't easily accessible to all members of the community and the average life expectancy was only forty-five. Fifteen percent of all deaths in 1850 were of unknown causes, indicating that, a doctor was not often available to determine the cause of death. Two women died while giving birth, also indicating that doctors were probably not easily accessible. Most children were delivered by mid-wives until the early 1900's. African Americans received even less care. Typhoid fever killed only five percent of whites who contracted it, while it killed thirty percent of African Americans who contracted the terrible sickness.<sup>2</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore

Sources: John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In The Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987), p. 12, 16, 18, 20, 53-55.

## RECREATION IN 1850

Having a surplus income, many residents as well as outsiders, were able to take vacations. The Natural Bridge was of great interest and, even in 1850, brought people from all over the Commonwealth and even other states to view its natural beauty. The hotel, which was easily within walking distance of the Natural Bridge, was owned in 1850 by John M. Garrett.<sup>1</sup>

Another area of interest was a resort named Rockbridge Alum Springs, owned by William H. Douthat in 1850. People came from all over the county seeking cures for ailments in the alum water of the springs. The main attraction of this resort were the four springs of alum water. There were four different grades, ranging from



Rockbridge Alum Springs - advertisement

weak to strong. The proprietors of Rockbridge Alum Springs were busy throughout the decade adding cabins with porches, bowling, and billiards. Patrons of the Alum Springs came from all over Virginia and many other states. It remained full throughout most of the summer.<sup>2</sup>

Submitted by: Dwight Moore

Sources: James W. McClung, Historical Significance of Rockbridge Virginia, (Staunton, Va.: McClure Company, Inc., 1939), 72-74, 189-190. E. P. Tompkins and J. Lee Davis, The Natural Bridge and its Historical Surroundings, (Natural Bridge, VA: Natural Bridge of Va., Inc., 1939), 105-107. Rockbridge Deed Book Z, 314.

## IRON INDUSTRY IN 1850

William Weaver, at the age of sixty-nine, and his wife Eliza aged sixty-five, had made their mark on Rockbridge County. In 1850, he listed his occupation as farmer / manufacturer. He had some of the best farm land in the county and his real estate was valued at \$70,000.00. William Weaver also distinguished himself as the largest wheat producer in Rockbridge County in 1850.<sup>1</sup>



Buena Vista Furnace

The iron industry was coming under much competition from Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> There were seven furnaces on the North River (not called the Maury River until later) which produced 7,000 tons of iron a year. The cost was \$2.00 a ton to haul iron from Lexington to Balcony Falls,

and \$5.50 to send it from there to Richmond. William Weaver not only had to deal with foreign competition, but competition from within the county as well. One of his major competitors, Matthew Bryan, owned fifty-four slaves and employed thirty-four people in his iron manufacturing business.<sup>3</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore  
Sources: John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In The Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987) Charles B. Dew, *Bond of Iron, Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge*, (New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994), 3-5, 148. Oren F. Morton, *A History of Rockbridge County Virginia*, (Staunton, VA.: The McClure Publishing Co., Inc., 1920), 170.

## IMMIGRATION IN 1850

The population of Rockbridge County in 1850 was becoming more and more diverse. Of the 11,484 people who composed the white population, 601 were born somewhere other than Virginia. Two hundred and eighty of these were born in other states, with Pennsylvania leading with 111, followed by Maryland with 64. The next states with two-digit figures were New Jersey, Kentucky, New York, and Ohio. All other states showed less than ten per state.

Of the 11,484 residents of Rockbridge in 1850, 321 were born in countries other than the United States, with Ireland leading with 218, followed by Germany with 51. The only other countries with two-digit figures were England and Scotland. All other countries showed less than ten per country.

Rockbridge County had 4.2 percent of its population coming from outside America, with Lexington showing 18.14 percent coming from outside America.

Of the immigrants from other states, some were northern industrialists, such as William Weaver. He was born in Pennsylvania, married a New Jersey born wife, and migrated to Rockbridge in 1823 after purchasing Buffalo Forge, an iron mill. In 1850, armed with seventy-seven slaves, William Weaver had become one of the wealthiest men in the country. Submitted by:

Dwight Moore  
Sources: Charles B. Dew, *Bond of Iron, Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge*, (New York, London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994), 3-5 Schunk, 1850 U. S. Census, Rockbridge County, VA

## DIRECTION OF COUNTY, 1850

Crime wasn't rampant in Rockbridge County in 1850, but there were many problems and



Oxen pulling sled

people were arrested on several occasions. A majority of white citizens who were arrested were released on bond and required to appear at the next session of court. Of those who were eventually sentenced to the state penitentiary, most were kept in the county jail, until such a time that the county sheriff was able to transport them.<sup>1</sup>

The people of Rockbridge County had more money in their pockets than in previous years, due to increased production in agriculture, new and better modes of transportation, and a competitive iron industry. The primary driving force of the economy was agriculture. The people had more opportunities because education was becoming more and more attainable. The presence of a strong Presbyterian influence helped to increase the literacy rate and made education more accessible. Immigration was high in the city and low in the county.

Citizens of the county were apt to be curious of the new immigrants on their trips to Lexington. There were many different religions developing, new ethnic groups entering the county and education was on the road to improvement. There was a growing animosity toward the role of slavery in their lives and the country was becoming less stable. Racism and religious prejudices were rampant. However, many of the citizens of Rockbridge believed that their

county was the "banner county for the rest of the State."<sup>2</sup> Submitted by: Dwight Moore  
Sources: John Brooks Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia, In The Late Antebellum Period, 1850-1860," (Masters Thesis, University of Richmond, 1987), p. 110. Lexington Gazette, Feb. 2, 1850, 2: as cited in Flippen, "Rockbridge County, Virginia 1850-1860, 110.

## FARMING AND INDUSTRY IN 1850

Most slaves were used for the primary industry of late antebellum Rockbridge County, agriculture. A total of 1,515 people in Rockbridge County listed farming as their occupation in the 1850 Federal Census.<sup>1</sup> However, farmers weren't farming merely for subsistence and households weren't entirely self sufficient. In 1850 the county yielded twice as much wheat as it needed and twenty-three bushels of corn per capita. Many families had a surplus and were able to sell some of their goods to the outlying community, indicating that farmers didn't rely totally on what they raised, but were also beginning to raise cash crops.<sup>2</sup>

The value of home manufactures was \$22,018.00. Over 30,000 pounds of wool clip was produced in 1850. Farmers, while producing a surplus, still managed to endeavor in many things other than growing crops. There were 676 farms with 158,584 unimproved acres and 104,608 improved acres in 1850.<sup>3</sup>

Over 104,000 acres were classified as farmland and the total cash value of these farms was \$3,207,030.00. These farms required much machinery that helped cut down on unnecessary labor. The total value of this machinery was \$93,346.00. Production was very high, as the table below indicates.<sup>4</sup>

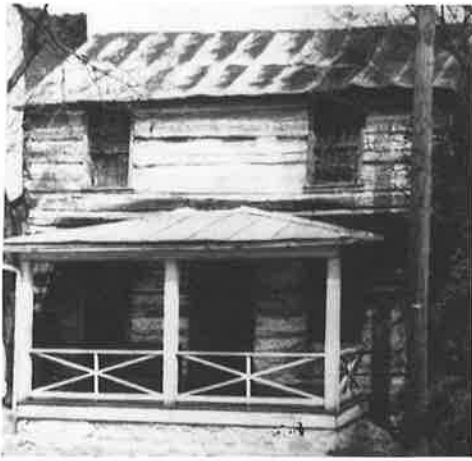
Production of Farms in Rockbridge County, Virginia in 1850: Wheat 198,553 bushels, Rye 10,107 bushels, Corn 372,705 bushels, Barley 2,345 bushels, Buckwheat 2,109 bushels, White Potatoes 980 bushels, Flax fiber 8,925 pounds, Flaxseed 657 bushels, Hay 7,626 tons, Tobacco 78,928 pounds, Butter 178,384 pounds, Cheese 17,051 pounds, Maple sugar 1,728 pounds, Honey and wax 6,298 pounds.

Submitted by: Dwight Moore  
Source: Morton, *A History of Rockbridge County Virginia*, 562. John F. Schunk, comp., 1850 U. S. Census, Rockbridge County, Va., (Wichita, KS: S-K Publications, 1988), p. 358. Oren F. Morton, *A History of Rockbridge County Virginia*, (Staunton, VA.: The McClure Publishing Co., Inc., 1920), 168-169, 562.



Servants load Grocery Cart in Lexington

# PRICES OF 1887



Old Store, Fairfield, Virginia

Take a look at these prices! Don't you wish you could buy these items today at these prices!

1 pound coffee, .25¢; 2 pounds sugar, .25¢; 1 1/2 dozen eggs, .15¢; 1/2 gallon molasses, .23¢; 1 pound tobacco .50¢; soda, .05¢; salt, .05¢; candy, .05¢; 3 plugs tobacco, .30¢; pepper, .06¢; 2 lb meat, .33¢; baking powder, .10¢; cinnamon, .10¢; 1 lb cheese, .20¢; 1 can peaches, .20¢; 2 cans tomatoes, .25¢; 2 lbs lard, .34¢; 1 lb crackers, .12¢; 1 chicken, .15¢; 2 lb rice, .18¢; nutmeg, .02¢; 1 pair shoes, \$1.40; 1 pair boots, \$2.50; overalls, \$1.25; shirt, .50¢; hairpins, .05¢; shoe laces, .03¢; 1 pair hose, .13¢; 2 pair ladies shoes, \$4.50; 2 pair socks, .25¢; pencils,

.03¢; pins, .03¢; ink, .05¢ white wash brush, .45¢; 2 lamp chimneys, .12¢; blueing, .05¢; cake soap, .05¢; 1/2 gallon oil, .89¢; axe, \$1.60; axe and handle, .85¢; matches, .05¢; a gallon oil, .18¢; lantern (large), .90¢; curry comb, .25¢; 1 lb nails, .05¢; 1 knife, .20¢; broom, .25¢; bucket, .12¢; 2-5 yards flannel, \$1.50; 2 yards cotton, .24¢; gingham, .30¢; 3 yards calico, .15¢; 5 yards cotton, .45¢; thread, .05¢; buttons, .10¢; knitting needles, .04¢; 1 ball knitting, .10¢; turpentine, .05¢; camphor, .05¢. Submitted by: Debbie Mohler

Source: Untitled store ledger from Fairfield area of Rockbridge County, VA. Dated 1887. The name of the store or the owner was not included in the ledger.

## LEXINGTON GAZETTE

In 1936, B. F. Harlow related in the Lexington Gazette, that the Lexington Gazette is the oldest weekly newspaper in the United States south of the Mason Dixon Line. Of course, this means the News Gazette of today holds the same status. Mr. Harlow related "there are papers in the South which were established before the first publication of the Gazette's ancestor in 1801, but they are now dailies publishing no weekly editions or have suspended publication at various times for periods of a year or more. So far as can be discovered the Gazette has never suspended publication, although at times, especially during the War Between the States it had difficulty in issuing for various reasons, mechanical, financial, or temperamental. During the War a scarcity of paper caused it to provide makeshifts for newspaper, several times being printed on wall paper for lack of any other material. It has often appeared in abridged form but has always appeared as a legal newspaper continuous publication. Old time newspaper men will remember that it was a custom for papers to skip Christmas week issue — the reasons to be surmised." Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley

### PAST EDITORS

Mr. Harlow gave his readers a bit of character regarding past editors. "The career of the Gazette has evidently been a stormy one. Its editors have usually been men of strong convictions, accustomed to expressing their opinions fearlessly, and naturally incurring the opposition and anger of those men and interests rightly or wrongly criticized. The writer can remember when an attempt to "whip the editor" was a favorite indoor or outdoor sport. Nowadays physical encounters are rare, but opposition finds its outlet just the same in more refined forms." This holds true today. I've not heard of any physical encounters to whip the editor of late, although I feel sure most editors receive irate phone calls at times. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley

### GAZETTE

Although the Gazette has overcome many obstacles and changes over the years, absorbing competitors and being absorbed by them,

since 1835 when Cornelius C. Baldwin changed his "Rockbridge Union" to the "Lexington Gazette" the word Gazette has appeared in the name of the paper.

In 1936 when Mr. Harlow wrote his very knowledgeable article on the History of the Gazette, he stated that "bound files of the Gazette extend back to 1835 only but there is direct evidence that its predecessor was the Rockbridge Union, and well established and credible tradition that the Union was the successor of the Intelligencer and the Intelligencer of the Rockbridge Repository, which was first published in April 1801. In the Congressional Library at Washington is an original copy of Vol. 1, No. 2 of the Rockbridge Repository bearing date of April, 1801, a photostatic copy of which was reviewed in this paper several years ago. It was published by James McMullin at the subscription price of two dollars per year. One at least of the present subscribers of the Gazette (1936) can lay claim to having the Gazette in her family since its foundation — Miss Nannie W. Jordan, still young in mind and spirit despite her years, says that she has read the Gazette since childhood and that it is a tradition in her family that her grandfather was one of the original subscribers to the Rockbridge Repository." Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley

### CHANGES

Mr. Baldwin changed the name to the Lexington Gazette in 1835. "It has appeared under the name of the Gazette and Banner, the Virginia Gazette, and the Lexington Gazette and Commercial Advertiser. Until after 1873 its editors were O. P. Baldwin, C. C. Baldwin, James Patton, Alphonso Smith, David P. Curry, James K. Edmondson, John L. Campbell, W. W. Scott, Josiah McNutt, Samuel H. Letcher, John J. Laferty, and A. T. Barclay."

Morton's History of Rockbridge County says: "The Gazette appeared quite regularly throughout the war period, even though it reduced its pages from four to two. It was more fortunate than some other journals of the South, for it was often compulsory to resort to even wall paper, in order to come out at all."

After the Civil War ended and Reconstruction

began, in 1870, Elihu H. Barclay founded The Rockbridge Citizen. "In 1873 The Citizen and Gazette were consolidated under the name of the Gazette and Citizen," Barclay and company were the publishers. Elihu H. Barclay served as editor. "Upon Mr. Barclay's death near the beginning of the present century The Gazette which had dropped the Citizen part of its name, was acquired by William R. Kennedy and Scott Moore. After a few years, Mr. Moore retired and Mr. Kennedy edited and published the paper until his death in December, 1924, when it was purchased by B. F. Harlow, with Col. C. N. Feamster, as editor. After a year's faithful and fruitful service, Col. Feamster retired. Being succeeded soon afterward by Col. Walter S. Forrester who gave Lexington and Rockbridge County an example of really creative Journalism for which the Gazette and the people should be grateful." Col. Forrester retired in 1927, after which The Gazette was managed and edited by B. F. Harlow, who in 1936 leased it to Mr. McSpadden with Lewis Jones as edited. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley

### THE GAZETTE SINCE 1969

Many changes have since occurred and the last merger was in 1969 when the Lexington Gazette and Rockbridge County News merged to form the News Gazette, which we all enjoy reading today. And of course the Weekender has been developed to enhance our weekend reading.

Virginia Military Institute's Preston Library has many back issues of the Gazette and its predecessors on microfilm as does Washington and Lee University Library. The Archives of both Colleges have extant copies of these newspapers. Bound volumes of many of the papers after 1900 can be found at the Rockbridge Regional Library as well. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley

Source: Lexington Gazette, 11 September 1936, pp. 12-13. B. F. Harlow.

# FLOOD OF 1950

On Sunday, September 10, 1950, Hurricane Agnes sent down 5.17 inches of rain over a 48 hour period. This was reported as the worst flood in sixty years.

## Loss of Life

Mrs. Lillie Jane (Linkswiler) Myers, age 65, had gone to the chicken house to bail out water when she was swept away. She was drowned. Her body was recovered six miles downstream and later taken to New Monmouth Presbyterian Church Cemetery for burial. Mrs. Myers had lived at Denmark.

Henry Smith was lost in the torrents. He was last seen near his home across Buffalo Creek from Camp Kiwanis. Two of his companions remained safely in a tree, but Mr. Smith tried to wade or swim to higher ground when he was washed away and drowned in the raging waters.

## Narrow Escapes

William Mea age 32, a Bristol truck driver narrowly escaped with his life. While trying to cross the bridge over Buffalo Creek on Route 11, his tractor trailer was swept away by a wall of water. He managed to grab a tree, climb to the top and desperately cling on for 5 hours until help arrived and rescued him.

On Broad Creek the home of Finley McDaniel was picked up and washed downstream. It crashed on the cliffs and broke into pieces. Luckily, the family had gotten out only minutes before. Edward McDaniel, a nephew of Finley, was staying with the family. He had been out that night and somehow managed to make his way home. Upon arrival at home, he realized the water was about to take the house. He ran in and awakened the family. They all made it out and up to a safe hill where they sat watching as the raging waters took their home and its contents downstream. The barn and outbuildings were also destroyed.

Along Buffalo Creek the family of Lawrence Snider left their home when 18 inches of water came into the first floor. His house was washed off the foundation and the contents destroyed. Many other residents took flight in the same manner.

Homer Plogger and his family lay asleep in the second story of their home near Kers Creek. John M. Sisley, a neighbor went to attempt a rescue. As he worked to try and get the family awake, waters rose from his ankles to his neck. The house lifted from its foundation and moved fifty feet downstream with its eight occupants. The Plogger family now awake, moved up to the attic. They were rescued when the waters subsided. The family had been asleep as the waters rose. Mr. Plogger had awakened and realized the family needed to get out, but before they could get dressed the house lifted from its foundation and began to move downstream.

## Property Damage

Property losses were estimated at about \$2 million. A filling station and store at Whistle Creek, owned by H. E. Vanderveer and operated by Raymond O. Nicely, was completely demolished. All that remained were the gas pumps.

Bridges were washed out across the county. Near Lexington, a section of the C&O railroad was washed out on the Maury River and a railroad bridge across the river was damaged. Utilities were also knocked out. Residents were without power and communications.

At Natural Bridge Station several cars were washed away and buildings destroyed.

A floating outhouse tore out the corner of Edward Hostetter's Whistle Creek home. Several of his outbuildings were washed away and his household goods were destroyed along with some livestock loss.

The family of Carl H. "Doc" Collett woke to find two feet of water in their home. Within ten

minutes the water inside the house had risen to five feet. The family was trapped in the second story of their home. The front porch, part of the side porch, two new Oldsmobiles and everything in the downstairs except the dining room were swept away.

Burks Donald of the Broad Creek community lost a large home, two outbuildings were completely destroyed and two others damaged. All of his grain, household goods and about 150 chickens were washed away.

Hubert Wallace of Broad Creek had his house flooded, but it remained intact. The contents were damaged and much was destroyed.

Bernard Jarvis of Plank Road lost his home and contents, as well as grain and an automobile.

Ralph Zollman of Buffalo Creek suffered major damage to his home, as did Tucker Zollman.

Camp Cawthorn on Buffalo Creek lost its guest lodge and the bridge. Several of the cabins were moved off their foundations, and one had been moved onto the athletic field. The swimming pool was also destroyed. This particular camp was only two years old.

Girl Scout Camp Kiwanis on Buffalo Creek was washed away. The seven cabins, large recreation hall and several other buildings were destroyed by the waters of the rampaging Buffalo. A lone basketball goal remained standing.

At Colliertown an old store building across from the Presbyterian Church, belonging to Ralph Hall, washed downstream several hundred yards and completely blocked the road. A grainary at Alfred McCorkle's also washed onto the highway and clogged the roadway.

The flour mill at Buffalo Forge was washed away, as Wade H. Alford sheltered his family and that of his brother. A. M. Alford, against the flood waters. The roller mill, the Bunker Hill Mill, and the Mill dam were completely destroyed as was the two story stone house where the family lived. Along with the property went \$25,000 worth of recently purchased grain.

At Possum Hollow, the home of George Kirkpatrick was crushed against a bridge. There was no sign of their \$500.00 piano.

The Union Church at Gilmore Mill was washed downstream by Cedar Creek and destroyed. A steel bridge was also destroyed by Cedar Creek.

Cedar Creek raged. Extensive damage was reported underneath the Natural Bridge, and water damage to the highway and parking lot was reported. The seating portion underneath the Bridge was destroyed or washed away. Water mains underneath the parking lot were broken and water raged across the parking lot, destroying cars. Huge boulders were rolled about by the otherwise calm Cedar Creek and caused much of the damage. These boulders pushed down a retaining wall. The swimming pool was half filled with water and debris.

Jennings Tardy left his home along Buffalo Creek just below Murat during the night. As waters entered his home, he realized his family must escape. Although the waters left a deposit of mud, his home remained standing. The land between his house and the creek was taken by the raging Buffalo, leaving a straight drop from his house to the creek below. His car which had been in his now demolished garage was washed a mile downstream.

Farmers faced loss of topsoil, especially in recently plowed fields, fences were washed out, buildings destroyed, and farm equipment demolished by the flood. Much of the feed and hay laid back for the winter was destroyed or waterlogged.

At Fancy Hill, Isaac H. Woodson, a local mail carrier reported that his car was taken out of his garage by the raging waters of a spring branch and completely destroyed. The 1949 Dodge

was later found several hundred yards downstream, a total wreck.

Other families returned home to find their homes had been completely demolished when they were lifted off their foundations and washed downstream, crashing against bridges, rocks and other obstructions. Still others found a great deal of damage to the homes left standing.

Property Damage was extensive, the Rockbridge County News of September 14, 1950 ran a list of those who had suffered losses on p. 10. Among the lists are livestock losses, automobile losses, property damage, loss of contents in homes, and more.

## Localized Flooding

### Reached Record Highs

Mrs. Gilmore Morris at Colliertown reported that a springhouse which had last washed away 65 or 70 years ago, according to her mother, had been destroyed.

Tucker Zollman on Buffalo Creek reported the water was six feet higher than the flood of 1870. His grandfather Adam Zollman had made a mark on the frame house indicating the level of the 1870 flood, the new water mark was six feet above the old one.

D. E. Brady of Buffalo Forge reported that in 1870 a whiskey barrel had been deposited underneath a porch, this flood had been completely over the porch.

### Waiting on the Rivers to Crest

Although the creeks were higher and the rise of the waters much more swift than ever remembered, the Maury River did not get as high as it had on March 7, 1936.

Residents of Buena Vista tried as best they could to prepare for the inevitable deluge. Sandbags were placed north of the Blue Ridge Tannery and a bulldozer was on standby in case the water broke through.

Glasgow residents watched the lowlands fill with water as the James and Maury Rivers converged into a giant lake. Although James Lees was braced for the worst, waters did not damage the rug mill but they came quite close to the boiler plant.

### Floods Then As Now

Flooding in Rockbridge is nothing new. In May 1771, a huge flood occurred. The early settlers suffered great losses. The next flood of record occurred 13 July 1842 when the Irish Creek Foundry was destroyed. There were likely several flash floods between 1771 and 1842. On 2 December 1847, a flood occurred on Maury River destroying crops, livestock, fences and much property. Damage was also reported to the canal locks and dams.

On 9 October 1870, another flood occurred on Maury River. Bridges, sawmills, grain mills, crops, warehouses, boats, and boathouses were among the many items destroyed. The covered bridge at East Lexington was destroyed as were large portions of the canal, dams, and towpaths.

Three days after the flood, Robert E. Lee died. The undertaker had stored all his coffins in a warehouse along the river and they had all washed away. Two young men searched the swollen river in a small boat seeking a lost coffin. They were swept downstream, but managed to grab onto a willow tree. When they looked up in the tree, they saw a coffin hanging in the top. It was used to bury General Robert E. Lee.

Another flood occurred on May 29 and 30, 1889. Roads were washed out, mills were flooded and a great deal of damage was caused.

On January 22-23, 1935 another flood appeared. Roads were covered with water, railroad tracks were flooded, but no serious damage was reported.

On March 16-17, 1936, the worst flood since 1870 came to the area. Roads and railroad tracks were again covered. Mills were flooded. People had to be rescued from their homes in boats. Industries, businesses, and homes were again flooded. Damage was reported at over \$3 million.

Then came the flood of 1950, perhaps the worst in the county's history up until that time. Hurricane Agnes was the cause of this great storm.

Hurricane Camille visited the area on August 20-21, 1969. 4.95 inches of rain fell in Lexington on already saturated ground. Some areas reported from 6 to 10 inches of rain in less than 16 hours.

Because streams rose so fast, and at night, many people did not realize the danger. Twenty-three people were killed.

Buena Vista and Glasgow were both flooded. Goshen received heavy damage, the Lexington sewage treatment plant was submerged, and railroad trestles were knocked out.

Roads were damaged, bridges wiped out, power and water were not working in many areas. Farmers lost cattle, crops, and fences. Damages to agriculture were estimated at \$6,338,000. Other damages totaled \$30 million.

Another Hurricane named Agnes brought more floods to the area on June 21-22, 1972. 7.40 inches of rain fell. The rivers and streams gradually rose, people had enough time to escape the waters. No one lost their life.

Glasgow received the hardest blow, getting nearly as much water as they had in 1969.

On November 4-5, 1985, a flood struck the area on election day. No lives were lost, but damages were estimated at over \$100 million.

On April 21, 1992, a storm dropped four or five inches of rain in only twelve hours. Damages were estimated at \$5 million.

Many students and teachers were stranded at Effinger Elementary School, for some this was the second time, as in 1985, students were stranded at schools as well.

With this type of record, residents should now be aware of flooding dangers. Communications are much improved over those of an earlier day and residents usually get more warning of the eminence of a flood. Our small streams come up fast and are dangerous during heavy rains. Many residents have been through so many floods in recent years that they walk the floors at night whenever it rains hard. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley

Sources: The Lexington Gazette, "Flash Flood Hits County Sunday: Losses Suffered in Kerrs, Whistle, Buffalo Sections: Houses and Autos Washed Away; One Woman Drowned" Wednesday September 13, 1950, p. 1, p. 10, p. 11 Pictures accompany the article. Rockbridge County News, Rockbridge Suffers Worst Flood In History. Two Lives Are Lost, Damage Estimated At Two Million Dollars; Whistle, Kerrs, and Buffalo Creek Areas Are Hardest Hit" Thursday September 14, 1950, p. 1, p. 10. Pictures accompany this article. Van Der Leeden, Frits. Floods in Rockbridge County, Virginia; History and Susceptibility of Flooding. Lexington, VA: Rockbridge Area Conservation Council, 1992. pp. 5-11.

## COMMUNITIES, TOWNS AND CITIES

### ARNOLD'S VALLEY

Arnold's Valley, in the southeastern part of Rockbridge County, is flat farming and grazing land, thickly populated. The Blue Ridge mountains, made up of Piney Mountain, Gunter Ridge, Thunder Ridge, Cave Mountain, Pond Mountain, and Furnace Mountain surrounds it on three sides with James River on the north.

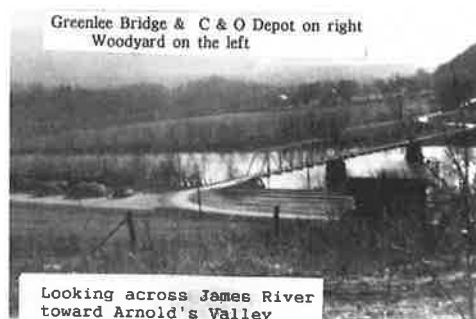
Deer, bear and 'coon hunters roam the mountains looking for game. Also ginseng and mushroom hunters are many. Wildflowers of many kinds bloom each spring. Trilliums are the most plentiful. There are two recreation areas, a detention home, four churches, and a store. This poem describes it well.

#### ARNOLD'S VALLEY

In the state of ole Virginia  
 Natural Bridge Station to be exact  
 There's a place called Arnold's Valley  
 Once you've seen it you will react,  
 It's the valley where I'm living  
 So beautiful for all to behold  
 There's many legends of years gone by  
 Of good and bad, I've been told.  
 Our neighbors are all friendly people  
 Who'd just do anything for you  
 The mountains surround us all around  
 "The Blue Ridge" that are so blue.  
 There's yet no contamination  
 Of our waters, lakes, and streams  
 Many people find their way here  
 To build the home of their dreams.  
 There are churches for the faithful  
 There's campsights for the brave  
 Denton home for the lawbreakers  
 But there are no factories nor slaves.  
 The rolling hills everywhere  
 Are beautiful when spring breaks through  
 Winds whistling through the lonesome pines  
 Seem to sing a song to you.  
 The lovely brooks are inviting  
 When the summer is dry and hot  
 The trails are enjoyed by many  
 But the rattlesnakes are not.  
 There are many exciting moments  
 As you visit our valley so fair  
 You'll enjoy the bountiful beauty  
 So let the winds blow through your hair.  
 When you're looking for peace and  
 contentment  
 Arnold's Valley is where you want to stay  
 It is the "Land of the living"  
 And also the "Home of the brave."

Written by Martha Reynolds Watkins

In 1737, Mary McDowell Greenlee, the first white woman to settle in Rockbridge County,



Greenlee Bridge and C&O Depot.

and her husband, James, built a brick home (my birthplace) on the bank of James River at the mouth of Arnold's Valley, across the river from Greenlee. They built the Greenlee Ferry shortly afterwards.

Legends say that Frank Arnold was the first white man to settle in Arnold's Valley. He brought his young bride to the mountains and built a modest log cabin. He hunted most of the time leaving his wife, Rosa, alone. Then one Christmas Day, a stranger came by carrying a jug of liquor. Arnold, wanting the liquor, offered his wife and his cabin for the liquor. The stranger accepted his offer. Arnold left and was never seen again.



Glenwood Furnace on Elk Run.

The Lime Kiln Theater in Lexington presents a play, *A Shenandoah Christmas, Christmas in Arnold's Valley*, each year about this legend. Submitted by: Martha Reynolds Watkins

### BLACKSBURG

Blacksburg, or "The Burg" as it is affectionately known, was an African-American community. The settlement is just off the current Timber Ridge Road. The road named Blacksburg Lane was the primary road into the community and included the present road extended to follow the line fence at the south end. A private lane leads to the old Andrew Johnson property and is named Rose Spring Lane for the roses that grow at the spring which has always provided water for the community. The name is said to have come from a foreman at the lumber mill at Cornwall, who on a rainy morning, turned to his wife and said, "I wonder what the people up in Blacksburg are doing this morning?"

There are no records to show exactly when the settlement began. The first listed property sale was in 1877. In 1883 Blacksburg appeared on a map of the South River District.

On August 27, 1877, my great-grandparents, Andrew Jackson Wilson and Rachel Jane Wilson, purchased approximately fifty acres of land for two hundred and fifty dollars in the village of Blacksburg. Their children, Alice Jane, Mittie Blanche, Georgianna, Andrew Jackson, Jr., and John L. received approximately ten acres each for home sites. He had two other children named Annie and Maggie.

In 1881, Andrew Jackson Wilson sold three acres to my paternal great-grandfather, Thomas I. Sanderson. The sale included water rights to a spring for family and household use and for watering livestock. This spring later served the entire community and continues flowing today.

Blacksburg was once home to twenty-five families, and contained a store and a community building for social gatherings. The school was about a mile from Blacksburg on property owned by John Goodman. It was a one room school housing seven grades. Two notable educators who taught there were C. W. Haliburton and Dorothea Williams McCutcheon. In 1946, the school was closed and the students were bused to Lexington.

In April, 1925, a more formal social organization, the Knights of Pythias, was organized. There were two divisions, one for the adults and the other for the young people. The adult women named their section, the "Rising Star", and the men named theirs, the "Henry Jackson #270". The Knights, or "K.P.s" as they were called, constructed a building for social events, such as dances, debates, and ice cream socials. One favorite debate was, "Which Will Carry You Further - Money or Manners?" The women helped each other to make lots of quilts.