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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.

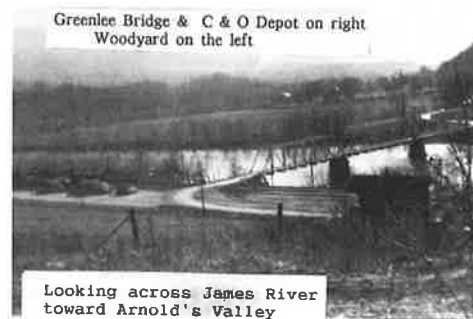
Deer, bear and 'coon hunters roam the mountains looking for game. Also ginseng and mushroom hunters are many. Wildflowers of many kinds bloom each spring. Trilliums are the most plentiful. There are two recreation areas, a detention home, four churches, and a store. This poem describes it well.

#### 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.

Mrs. Margaret Haliburton Crumbles Scott still has the quilt that was given to her when she married and moved to Blacksburg. Charles Crumbles played the guitar and sang the blues. My step-grandfather, Howard Rucker, played the harmonica and everyone enjoyed seeing him dance on his peg leg. Elizabeth McCutcheon Nash remembers sitting on the porch, when a child, and listening to yodeling coming from some neighbor across the hill.

This community organized and built the Rising Zion Baptist Church, but continued to hold prayer meetings in their homes everyday at noon and one night a week. On Sunday, many members of the congregation walked the three miles to church twice a day. The Divers lived next to the church, John Lyle's family lived at Crossroads, and George Lawson's resided in Timber Ridge.

The men of the community were day laborers and farmers. Some worked at the South River Lumber Mill. My grandfather, George McCutcheon, walked to the furnace on South River to work. When it closed, he walked the twenty miles to Goshen each day. They also served their country in war and peace.

Most of the original inhabitants of Blacksburg have died or moved away. Those of us who remain are proud to keep our heritage alive.

*Submitted by: Patricia Sanderson Eldridge*

## BROWNSBURG - ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Brownsburg was legally established in 1793 on lands that belonged to Robert Wardlaw and Samuel McChesney. It is believed that Brownsburg was named for the Rev. John Brown, the first pastor of New Providence Church. The main stage coach line from Staunton to Lexington passed through the village and it became a stop-over for passengers and a place to change horses.

Brownsburg became one of the most important trade centers for Rockbridge and surrounding counties. It was comprised of about twenty houses, three stores, two shoe factories, three wheelwrights, two blacksmith shops, a tavern, a grist mill, a mercantile flour mill, a hatter, a tan yard, a saddlery, a cabinet maker, two tailors and a carpenter. At that time Brownsburg had a population of 120 persons, three of whom were doctors.

Most of the houses in Brownsburg date from the first half of the nineteenth century, and in a few cases from the period 1870-1910.

In 1850 the Brownsburg Academy opened to provide a classical education for the young men of the area and other parts of the county.

In 1861 the "Rockbridge Guards" under the command of Captain David Durry and consisting of seventy-five men, left Brownsburg to serve under Thomas J. Jackson. The women of the village supplied handmade coats, trousers, knapsacks, haversacks, cloth caps, shirts and tents. The "Rockbridge Cavalry" was organized under the command of Captain John McNutt. Only nine men of the two companies remained to surrender at Appomattox.

In 1869 the Asbury United Methodist Church was founded. It was constructed on a half acre lot purchased from Andrew Patterson for one hundred dollars. The church is still active today.

The Wilburn Saddle Company came to Brownsburg in 1872. For many years the Wilburn saddle proved widely popular in the Valley of Virginia.

In 1921 the present stucco building was constructed next to the Brownsburg Academy to serve as a vocational and agricultural school. The Agricultural Department of the school, under the leadership of the teacher, R. P. Wall,



*Brownsburg Post Office, 1997*

organized a Brownsburg Community Agricultural Fair. After three successful years it was moved to Lexington and was known as the first Rockbridge County Agricultural Fair.

In 1972 the village was placed on the Virginia Historic Landmarks Register and on the National Historic Register as a historic district.

Today, 1997, sees a different Brownsburg. There is less activity since there are no stores and no school. However, we still have the Bank of Rockbridge, The Old South Antique Shop, a Post Office, Asbury Methodist Church, and a Centel-Sprint telephone office. It's still a delightful place to live with many retirees and interesting business and professional people as neighbors. *Submitted by: Mollie Sue Whipple and Photograph by: Debbie (Graves) Mohler*

## EARLY HISTORY OF BUENA VISTA

Buena Vista officially became a city on February 15, 1892, when the governor signed the charter. Its history as a village and then a town in Rockbridge County, however, dates from the early 1880s when two railroads, the Shenandoah Valley (later Norfolk and Western R.R.) and the Richmond and Alleghany (later the Chesapeake and Ohio R.R.) formed a junction at Green Forest, the Glasgow estate on the North (Maury) River, which had been sold to the Moomaw family in 1875.

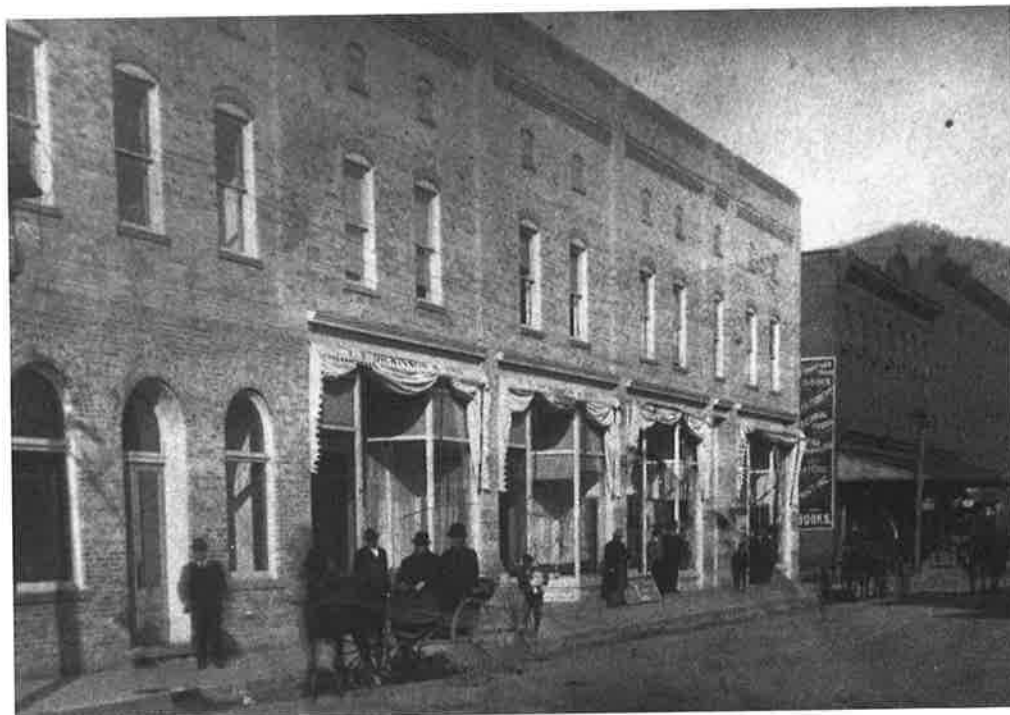
Benjamin C. Moomaw, a Dunkard preacher and the owner of Green Forest, was a man of vision who saw the potential for a great industrial city, a "little Pittsburgh of the South." He first sold several acres of his estate to Appold & Sons of Baltimore, who built the tannery in 1882 - the first industry in the new town-to-be. He then added a canning factory, a planing mill, and a pulp mill, all by 1888. He then laid out the town of Green Forest into lots, covering the territory of Factory Street, Beech Avenue, Alleghany Avenue, Canal Street, and Brook Street. Dreaming of a much larger city, however, he wrote a prospectus in late 1888 of his envisioned city and set about selling his dream to the leading citizens and business leaders of Lexington and Rockbridge County.

As a result, the Buena Vista Company was organized and in about 30 days the entire issue of stock was sold in the amount of \$400,000. The Company then set about buying three large parcels of land it needed to form its new city. By April of 1889 a total of 13,140 acres had been acquired at a total cost of \$199,500:

978 acres, Gurnee Estate (Hart's Bottom) for \$42,000  
370 acres, Moomaw Estate (Green Forest) for \$22,500  
11,800 acres, S. F. Jordan Estate (Buena Vista) for \$135,000



*Green Forest built 1800, stood where the Mormon Church now stands (1997).*



*Downtown Buena Vista in its early days.*

Even before all the land had been acquired, "boom fever" had hit the county, and in 1890 lots were selling and reselling at outrageously high prices as the "boom" shifted into high gear. The new town of Buena Vista was chartered on January 24, 1890, by the Virginia Legislature, with J. W. Blackburn as its first mayor. He was replaced on March 12 when it was discovered that he resided outside the town limits. John T. McKee became mayor.

The main attraction to the town was iron ore. By March of 1890, due mostly to the convincing salesmanship of Company President A. T. Barclay, over twenty enterprises had been secured; and six new land companies were formed, each buying up farmlands around Buena Vista and laying them out in lots.

The new town had become so successful that it decided to withdraw from the county and applied for a city charter, after a disputed census showed a required population of over 5,000 inhabitants. Although vigorously opposed by the county supervisors, city status was granted and signed by the governor on February 15, 1892. Almost immediately the iron ore began to run out and, even more damaging, the whole country went into a major recession. The "boom" came quickly to an end.

Neither recessions, depressions, or floods, however, have been able to kill the public spirit of its citizens. After 100 years, Buena Vista stands ready to face the challenges of the future. *Submitted by: Francis W. Lynn*

## BUFFALO FORGE COVERED BRIDGE

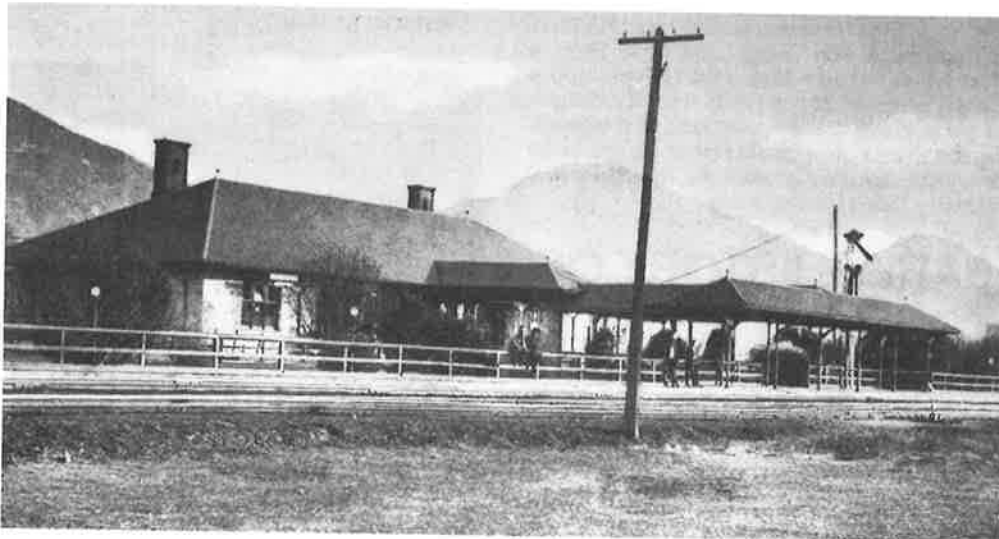


*Covered bridge at Buffalo Forge, 1931*

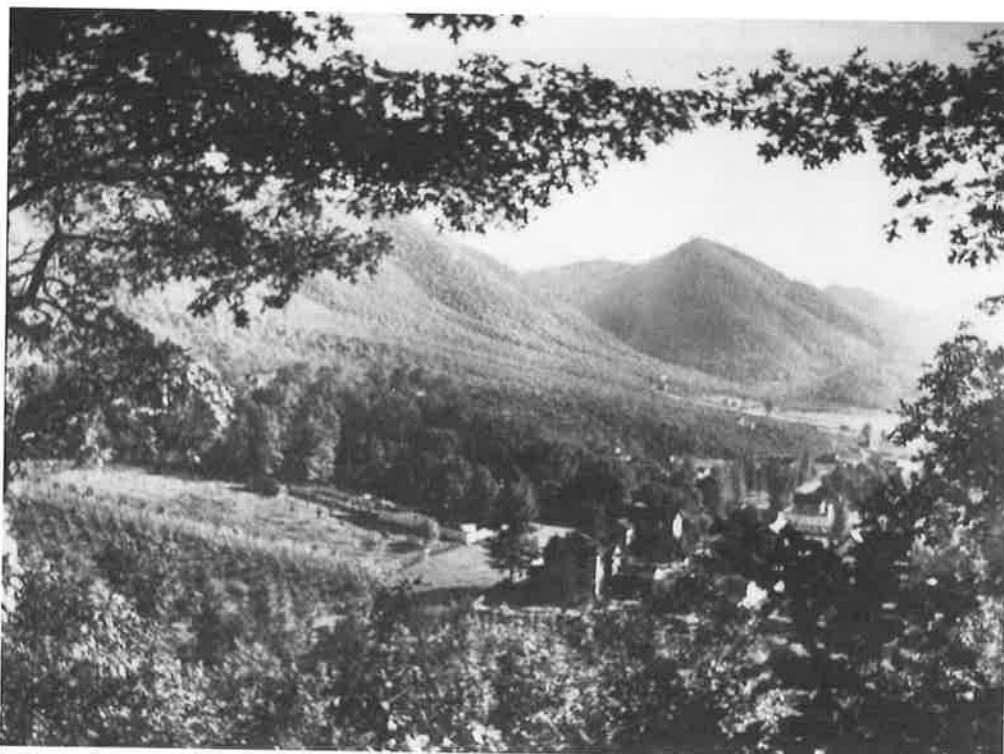
## MR. MAJOR'S LOG HOME



*William Watson Major's log home. This house burned in the 1970's. Mr. Major was a whittler.*



*N&W Depot, Buena Vista*



*A "beautiful view" near Buena Vista.*

## BUSTLEBURG

Bustleburg is a small community located in the northern part of Rockbridge County. Legend has it that in the 1880's a local lady with an extra large bustle was walking to church when she lost her bustle along the road. Thus the name Bustleburg was started and has stuck with the area ever since. Residents in the Flumen Voting Precinct cast their vote here from the early 1900's until 1966. The first house in Bustleburg was owned by Hugh Edward Bolen, a Justice of the Peace.



*Wade's Store - Bustleburg, Virginia*

Some names of the first families were: Bare, Bolen, Brooks, Firebaugh, Fix, Foster, Humphries, LoBell, Madison, McCormick, Mynes, Perry, Tolley, Toman, Wade, and Wheeler. There have been several businesses over the years in the community. They are: Mynes' Blacksmith Shop, Fix's Woodworking Shop, Allen's Animal Hide Buy & Sell, Bolen's Machine Shop (still in operation) and O. T. Wade & Son General Merchandise.

Points of interest in the community were the location of the Firebaugh Pottery, the Oak Hill School House (moved to Brownsburg School), McElwee Chapel (still having services every Sunday), Tolley's Molasses Mill (still operable), O. T. Wade & Son General Merchandise (closed in 1989), a Horse Show Ring and Bustleburg Ball Park and Community Building (still being used for softball leagues and personal family entertainment.)

Bustleburg has never been a big place but has always been well known because so many people over the years have come there to buy from the country store or to play ball or cheer for a friend. A lot of memories have been made in Bustleburg.

## WADE'S STORE

In 1929 O. T. Wade (better known by everyone as "Ot") and family who lived in Bustleburg went across the road from their home and built a building and with \$300.00 stocked it with groceries and other items necessary for daily living and named it O. T. Wade & Son General Merchandise. The story goes if you happened to be in the store when it closed for lunch you were invited to "come on over to the house and eat." This, of course, was operated during the depression when there was little money to buy groceries. Many farmers around traded eggs and chickens for their weekly groceries. The grocery store was not delivered by business trucks like today. A son, John Wade, who owned a large truck then made weekly trips to Staunton to bring back the necessary items.



Bert Fitzgerald and Herman Wade

The store was operated by various family members with O. T.'s wife Betty Catherine Zimmerman Wade being in charge until her death in 1950. Then another son, Herman Wade, having returned from military service, along with his wife, Margaret, took over the operation until his death in 1987. The store operation was then continued by Herman's daughter, Carolyn, until it closed in 1989. One more country store squeezed out by big business.



Herman Wade

There was a wooden bench to the right just inside the door that always had at least two people there in conversation. It was amazing that whether you needed groceries or nails or boots or a dress to wear you could find it at Wade's Store. Everyone around would go there to purchase necessities but probably almost as important to find out what the neighbors were doing.

O. T. Wade & Son General Merchandise was the community center of the times.

## BUSTLEBURG RECREATION CENTER

Entertainment was scarce in the little community of Bustleburg in the 1930's, so a group of local girls began playing softball on Saturday afternoons. The girls were having so much fun that the boys were envious and pestered the girls for permission to play with them. When the



Bustleburg Baseball Team - early 1950's

Left to Right: Row 1: Leon Carroll, Vernon Snyder, Elmer Lane, Howard Sandridge, Jim Ayres, Claiborn Fulwider, Harry Mohler, scorekeeper in front. Row 2: Standing, Everette Sensabaugh, Donnie Fox, Clarence Fitzwater, Raymond Jarvis, George Sandridge, Gene Sensabaugh, Carl Poole. Row 3 (bleachers): Bob Buchanan, Charlie Wade, Charlie Lam, Bill Buchanan, John Wade, Brownie Madison, Bill Toman, Lloyd Pennington, George Cline, Tom Wade, O. T. Wade. Row 4: Roscoe Tolley, Beecher Terrell, unknown, unknown, unknown, two behind post unknown, Clint Troxell, Charles Humphries, Leonard Newcomer, standing, Carl "Tuck" Snider. Row 5: Harold Sandridge, John Strickler, unknown, Frances Strickler, Betty Jean Blackwell, Rev. R. O. Lucke, Bert Fitzgerald, John Poole, Arthur Fulwider, Jake Horne, Ashby Horne, unknown.

girls refused to allow the boys to join them, O. T. Wade gave the boys permission to build a ball field for themselves on his land. Under the direction of family members, Everette Sensabaugh, Carl Poole, Roy Wade, and John Wade, other relatives and friends who owned a tractor or a good team of horses came and helped grade the field. In 1947 a baseball league of teams was started. There were teams from Bustleburg, Greenville, Fairfield, Effinger, Brownsburg, Timber Ridge, Walkers Creek, Goshen and Vesuvius. In later years the game changed to softball. Field lights were installed in 1968 which made it possible to play more games each week.

When the men began playing ball, the ladies transferred to the kitchen and began cooking. The first kitchen was in a converted chicken coop bought from the Glasgow Fire Dept. The main item on the menu was a Bustleburg hot dog. As those hot dogs became famous (they are proclaimed by many to be the best in the world) it was decided to construct a building with a larger kitchen and a room large enough for community entertainment. Thus in 1972, with monies earned from the sale of hot dogs and a lot of free labor from surrounding neighbors, the Bustleburg Community Building was erected. Labor Day was a big day at Bustleburg Ball park for many years. With homemade ice cream and cake in abundance, people came from all around for a day of eating, playing games, chasing the greased pig or just old fashioned socializing.

There has continuously been a ball league in Bustleburg in the summer since 1947. The players who used to be from the community now come from a wide surrounding area. Many kids, young and old, from near and far, have memories of their time on the ball field in Bustleburg.

## COLLIERSTOWN

Collierstown, Virginia is a quaint village lying between North Mountain, House Mountain, and Green Hill, with the Colliers Creek and Blacks Creek running through it. Colliers Creek and Collierstown received its name from a man named John Colliers who obtained, by patent, land along the creek in the early 1700.

Collierstown had a post office as early as 1800, the exact date unknown. The first postmaster was Henry McCorkle. In about 1930 Miss Nora Sandford was postmistress and Mr. William Black assistant. In 1931, Mr. David Gilmore Morris became postmaster and wife Ruth postmistress and remained until May, 1954 when the Collierstown Post Office was closed and became rural route 2, Lexington. The building that housed the office is currently standing.



Custis Clark, Ruth Morris (postmistress), Jessie Morris (1946)

When the Collierstown Post Office was in service, mail was delivered in early days by horse and buggy. Mr. Hampton Knick was carrier. He delivered mail up Big Hill Road, Honey Hollow, Patterson Hollow, Ailstock Lane, Blacks Creek, Turnpike Road and more. Residents of Green Hill Road, Sehorn Hollow, and other neighbors near the post office received their mail at the Post Office. A letter could be mailed anywhere for three cents and a postal card for one cent.

Many stores were located throughout the village. A few of the area proprietors were William Tribbett, John Tribbett, A. W. Morrison and son Charles, Mack and Dan Clemmer, and Guy Hostetter.

There are four churches located in Collierstown: Advent Union View, United Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian.

The first physician was Dr. Williamson, followed by Dr. W. H. Rogers and Guy Sandford. The last rural doctor was H. R. Coleman.

The early years of Collierstown was noted for its many saw mills, grain mills, gunsmith shops, wagon shops, blacksmith shops, distilleries and more.

Schools were of great interest and teachers were respected. One of our early school teachers, Mr. John Paine wrote a poem and was published in newspaper in 1886 about Collierstown that sums up the story in prose. To quote Mr. Paine:

Our schools this season were first rate  
and flourished, in the main  
with Jones and Nannie Armentrout  
John Kirk, George Ayres and Paine.

Then up at "unexpected" school  
Nath. Painter put them through;  
And then a school down on toad run.  
Is taught by Ad-Unroe;

This part of Rockbridge can't be beat,  
for farmers brave and true.  
They have the brain for raising grain  
as fine as ever grew.

Both Colliers Creek and Blacks Creek too,  
are both considered grand;  
Their farmers have what ev'er they wish,  
the proceeds of their land.

Just ride up Blacks Creek once and see  
How well the people live;  
They're kind and generous to a fault,  
and, to the poor they give.

There are John Goodbar, Billy Beard  
and Harvey Goodbar (Mark) Sam Leech,  
Cal. Reynolds and John Green.  
Joe Phillips and John Clark.

Besides these are other names  
will help to fill the team

Bill Clark, Ben Cummings and Geo. Ayres,  
Joe Cummings - Stewart Green.

There are a number more besides  
of whom I'd like to speak;  
And all of them good farmers too  
But not right on the creek.

Now as my letter's rather long  
I think I'd better stop,  
And next week go up Colliers Creek  
and gather up the crop.

I'll try to write you soon again  
Nor leave too wide a gap,  
And in the meantime sign myself.

John W. Eniap  
(Paine)

Submitted by: Jessie Morris Clark

## SCOTT FAMILY TRAGEDIES

Thomas Scott and his wife Sarah Handley moved to Colliers Creek from Augusta County, VA in 1791. Along with them came their daughters, Margaret and Sally, and sons Andrew, John, William "Harrison", Smith, and Thomas. Their daughter Margaret moved to Kentucky soon after her marriage to Thomas Leech in 1810, and died there in 1816. The circumstances of her death are unknown to me, but may have been in childbirth as was common in the times.

Andrew Scott, son of Thomas and Sarah, move back to Augusta County, VA after his 1791 marriage to Nancy Leech, and was killed by a runaway team before September of 1797. Nancy was left with two small sons to raise and returned to Rockbridge where she later remarried. Andrew's death was the first of many tragedies to befall the Scott family.

Others in the Scott family suffered tragic deaths as well. John Scott, son of Andrew, had a son named Andrew. This young man had reached his eighteenth birthday before tragedy befell him. He was hauling oats for his uncle Thomas. As he was throwing the oats off the wagon, he dropped his pitchfork. It fell with the handle resting on the floor and the tines in the air. As he reached to retrieve the tool, he fell and ran the tines into his intestines. He did not live through the night.

Another of Andrew's sons was named Thomas Scott. He had a son named David. This Thomas kept a disagreeable stallion in the stable. David went up into the hayloft and apparently fell into the stall with the horse and was severely kicked. His family found him crawling to the house from the stable, very badly hurt. He died very shortly and was never able to tell the family exactly what happened.

Smith Scott, son of Thomas and Sarah, was returning from a general muster of the local militia held in Lexington. As he passed the distillery at Robert Wilson's, someone rode up behind him and smacked his horse on the rump. His spirited horse took off in a full gallop. Smith pulled hard on the reins, but after a short distance, the reins broke off at the bit on both sides. Smith was thrown and his head struck a rock which crushed his skull. He was carried to a neighbor's house where he died during the night. Smith's wife, Betsy Moore, was left alone to raise their son, Andrew. She apparently did a good job as he became a physician and practiced medicine in Covington, VA.

John Scott married Esther Houston in 1795. He too liked fine spirited horses. John attended a house raising or wood chopping at the Houston's. He had been drinking a good deal during the day as was the custom for the Scotch-Irish men at such events. Finally, the time came to go home. John mounted his steed and asked his friends to hand up his axe. This was refused as he was clearly intoxicated. Again, he beckoned his mates to hand him his axe. They again refused and he replied, I'll be in "hell or home in 15 minutes." John never made it home. He was thrown from his horse and instantly killed across the road from the tanyard. His wife Esther was left to raise three daughters and a son alone.

John's son, Thomas Scott also suffered an unusual death. He was called "Tanner Tom", which apparently implies his occupation. Tanner Tom was a bachelor. He was found one day on Brattons Run, near Alum Springs, unconscious. His horse was tied to a dogwood sapling which it had nearly eaten up. He was taken to a home on Kerrs Creek where he died without ever regaining consciousness. No one ever knew what caused his death.

John's daughter Sally married William Moore. They moved to Indiana. His daughter Peggy married Addison Gilmore. In 1844, their youngest son died and Peggy went entirely deranged and died within a few weeks in the Staunton asylum.

John's daughter Ann married Jacob Ford and raised a large family. However, in the Scott tradition, Ann suffered an accidental death. In March of 1874, she fell down the stairs and broke her neck, at age 75. Her husband died the following August.

Thomas Scott, son of Thomas and Sarah, married Elizabeth Ruley. He went off to fight in the War of 1812, and was lying ill in a hospital at Greenville, SC on 14 June 1813. He died of disease, leaving Elizabeth with three small children.

William "Harrison" Scott and his wife Ann Houston lived in Augusta County, VA for a while, then moved to Rush County, IN, where he died in 1845. The circumstances of his death are unknown. He may have died of natural causes, as he was age 69. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley  
Source: *The Scott Family of Colliers Creek and Their Misfortunes*. Rockbridge County News, undated newspaper clipping given to the compiler by Carem E. Clark, Lexington, VA. Apparently written by Gardner Hutton, 1902/04.

## COLLIERSTOWN TRAGEDIES

William Harper sent his son, Wilson, to Captain James Montgomery's blacksmith shop with the front end of a wagon to have the tongue repaired. As the young man was going down a hill, the chains slipped and the wagon front dropped to the ground, making a horrible noise.

The horses began to run, and young Harper, who was riding on one of the horses, was thrown when they made a sharp turn in the road. He struck his head on a small hickory and was instantly killed.

Floods occurred then as now, however possibly not in the same frequency. On 27 June 1835, a cloud burst on North Mountain caused Colliers Creek to burst its banks. The water was said to be 10 or 12 feet high, and was taking everything in its way. George Siders, his brother Alfred, and a young woman named Betsy Green lived along the creek. As the creek rose, Albert and Betsy ran to the springhouse to get the milk and butter to higher ground. Before they could get out the door, the water carried the springhouse away with them inside. Albert caught the door and floated on it to Hull's Mill dam where he was thrown off. Miss Jane Leech and her servant, Mariah, rescued him. Betsy's body was found in a rackheap below Zollman's Mill Dam. They had three floods inside of nine days that year. Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley  
Source: *The Scott Family of Colliers Creek and Their Misfortunes*. Rockbridge County News, undated newspaper clipping given to the compiler by Carem E. Clark, Lexington, VA. Apparently written by Gardner Hutton, 1902/04.

## CLEMMER'S STORE

Clemmer's store from 1933 to 1997 was originally a merchant mill. It was built before 1840 on Colliers Creek in the southeastern section of Rockbridge County by Captain Phillip Hull for Captain James Montgomery and William Zollman. The dam that supplied the water for the mill was approximately 500 yards up creek. The water ran through a race. According to legend, at one place, the water ran through solid rock that had been opened by a slave in return for his freedom.

The mill was operated by Montgomery and Zollman. A few days before his death, Zollman deeded his interest to Montgomery's son-in-law, J. C. Hutton.



Clemmer's Store

There was a settlement near the mill. There is a building diagonally across from the mill that was a store operated by J.F. Harper and J. C. Moore. There was a blacksmith shop operated by Robert Montgomery and a free colored man, Daniel Willis, a cooper who made barrels for the mill.

In 1887 the mill was sold to William P. Painter and became known as the Painter's Mill Property. This consisted of the mill, a log house across the road, a wellhouse, which has a log in it with the inscription, "well cleaned 1849", a henhouse and a washhouse. This property was deeded to C. Melvin Painter, and remained in that family until 1933 when the heirs sold it to Malcolm Swink Clemmer for a general merchandise store. He sold horse shoes, belt lacing, pig rings, kerosene, lamps, lanterns, wash tubs, artics, gumboots, overalls, canned food, country butter, eggs, salt pork, hams, salt fish, candy, soft drinks, gas and oil.

Before electricity came to the county, Malcolm bought a generator and had the mill and house wired. The wheel that turned the machinery to grind the flour, cornmeal and feed, also

turned the generator. Clover Creamery in Roanoke, for whom Malcolm had worked, installed several freezers and supplied ice cream for the ice cream parlor and dance hall that had been added.

In 1945 when Malcolm's brother, John Daniel Clemmer, returned from his service with the Marines, he and his wife Kathryn Weeks Clemmer rented the store. By 1949 they had two sons, J. D., Jr. born 15 May 1946 and Joseph Bittle born 29 November 1948. The ice cream parlor and dance hall were converted to an apartment which Dan's family occupied.

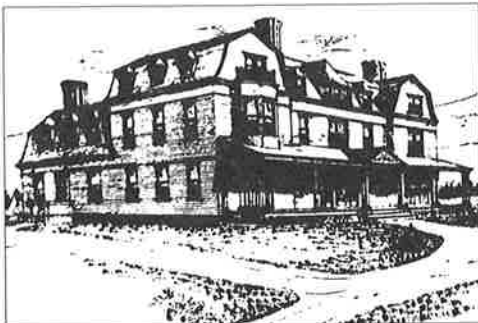
J. D. and Joe later became merchants. In 1955, Dan's uncle John Swink who had operated a store since 1918, on Buffalo Creek three miles from the Painter Mill Property, sold the store to Dan. With the help of the boys and others, Dan and Kitty operated the two stores until 1968. J. D. managed the Buffalo store until he sold it in 1985.

Dan died in 1977. With help, Kitty operated the Painter Mill store until 1978 when she turned it over to Joseph Birttle. Kitty was a government employee in Roanoke, commuting for ten years and assisting with the store until it was closed 30 June 1996. *Submitted by: Kathryn W. Clemmer*  
Source: Hutton, Garner P. *Reminiscences of Colliers Creek and its Tributaries 62 Years Ago* in *Rockbridge County News* 20 March 1902, pg. 2.

## CORNWALL HOTEL

In 1890 the village of Cornwall, Virginia in Rockbridge County was in a boom period. There were four general merchandise stores, iron mine, brick kilns, tin mine, and lumber company. There was railway transportation for local supplies of tanbark, cross ties, lumber, huckleberries and chestnuts. Speculators believed a city, including a grand hotel, would fare well as a business enterprise.

The site of the original Cornwall was the Irish Creek Farm, located about one mile north of present Cornwall. The farm was owned by Gurnee and Sheffey of New York and Lynchburg. The city-to-be was promoted by Mr. Moon for the owners. The following description of the City of Cornwall and the Cornwall Hotel is taken from the *Proceedings of the Historical Society*, Lexington, VA.



*Cornwall Hotel, circa 1892*

"On a plateau in the forks of Irish Creek and South River, overlooking the bottom lands of the two streams, they erected at that time a modern hotel, three stories high with a cupola on top. The Hotel consisted of forty-eight rooms. Water was supplied from a spring on Irish Creek by a rife ram to three wooden tanks located on the third floor. The ballroom, lobby, office, dining room and kitchen were located on the first floor. It was heated by fireplaces and stoves. It was a beautiful building with a wonderful view, the grounds were landscaped and the native trees were left for shade. The building was the same style of architecture as the Buena Vista Hotel, now Southern Seminary."

"The City was laid out in lots and streets. As none of the lots were ever sold the streets were not graded. The hotel was finished early in 1892 during the start of the great depression,

and the tin mines having to close down, it was never opened and never had a guest. It was unoccupied for several years .... Afterwards Mr. J. E. Layne occupied it as caretaker and would let the neighborhood young folks use the ballroom for their dances."

"About 1907 it was sold to T. T. Dickinson and Son of Buena Vista and dismantled, and part of the material was used to rebuild the Brick Yard at Buena Vista, which had burned a short time before."

The "Rockbridge County News" had more written about Cornwall Hotel. The stone work was completed July 1891, contracted by I. J. Staton. W. S. Stubbs had the carpentry contract, with J. W. Blankinship of Bedford in charge. J. E. Thomas of Swope, Augusta County, laid the pipe work to furnish the hotel with water. Nelson resident John L. Harris of Tye River contracted to plaster the hotel, using twenty hands. The hotel would cost \$8,000. The Cornwall Hotel was completed in February 1892, with D. H. Davis hired as watchman for \$30 a month.

One of the young persons who enjoyed dancing in the grand ballroom was Bessie (Davis) Scott. A granddaughter and her husband, Betty and Coleman Bryant, now reside atop the hill where the grand hotel once stood.

*Submitted and Prepared by: Ruby W. Leighton*  
Sources: *Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society*, Volume 5, 1954-1960, page 26. *Rockbridge County News*, July 6, 1891, August 3, 1891, August 24, 1891, September 28, 1891, February 15, 1892. Bryant, Betty, Interview March 1997.

## DECATUR

Decatur sprang up and thrived in the 1880's through the 1930's, because of the coming of the Valley Railroad. It was a railroad hamlet or village.

The first train passed through Decatur on Nov. 1, 1883 but did not stop. There was no official depot station there for almost 3 years.

Timber Ridge had a depot station, as did Fairfield, with Decatur located about half way between the two stops.

Soon the people from Cedar Grove and Flumen communities, as well as the Decatur vicinity, began to complain that the roads were too poor and the distances too great to the nearest depot station and petitioned for a depot at Decatur.

Several names were tried for the new station before settling on Decatur. The first name that was recorded was Land Bank. This name was short lived and in my opinion rightfully so. The second name was Tie Town. So named because of the large stacks of railroad ties along the new tracks. Decatur was the accepted name by Aug. 1886.

How Decatur got its name is still debatable. My grandfather, William K. Fox, Sr. told me that

it was named for a conductor on an early train that had come through Decatur. In researching early newspapers of Rockbridge County in the 1880s, I did find a Decatur Axtell, who was an employee for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (also known as the Valley Railroad). I am not suggesting that the village was named for him, but the name Decatur is certainly not one that you hear everyday.

Mrs. Anna Belle Bothwick of Fairfield, who had close ties with Decatur as I did, believes Decatur was named by John H. Geiner or her grandfather, Dr. John C. Hyde. Both men were prominent in the growth of Decatur. Mrs. Bothwick does not know how they settled on the name Decatur. Perhaps there is a bit of truth in both stories.

M. L. Bobbitt completed the depot at Decatur in April 1886, and a few days later Mr. A. S. Hyde was named the first depot agent.

The first train stopped in Decatur in Oct. 1886, some six months after the completion of the depot.

By this time Decatur had a one room school, a blacksmith shop, a storehouse with residence combined, a chapel, a post office that was called Aqua, several doctors and a depot with an agent.

John H. Greiner was a large land owner in and around Decatur. Dr. John C. Hyde was the first physician, Frank Sweet was the first blacksmith. John Miley served as cabinetmaker and undertaker. A. S. Hyde, who was appointed first depot agent, left before serving a year and was replaced by W. B. Hyde. John H. Wise opened the first mercantile business. *Submitted and Written by: Retta L. Horne*

Sources: Various Rockbridge County newspapers on microfilm; Personal knowledge; Rockbridge County Order Books; Rockbridge County Court proceedings; Rockbridge County Deed Books; *The History of Decatur* by Retta Horne

## DECATUR - AQUA

This little village has gone by two names for years. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad built a spur from Lexington to Staunton in the 1850s. It gave employment to many folks along the way. The train station here was called Decatur, but the post office was Aqua. The train station had several rooms and seats around the wall, in one room for folks who were either waiting to board the train or meeting someone. There was a large lot behind the station which was always filled with logs and railroad ties.

There were two country stores in the village, one near the train station, and the other across the track. One contained the local post office, as well as being a regular country store. You could purchase about anything in this store, from wash tubs, yard goods, some canned goods, and candy to a large round of cheese from which they would cut the amount you



*Decatur Group Picture 1899*

wanted. They also carried chewing tobacco and smoking tobacco. These came in small bags from which you had to roll your own cigarettes or smoke it in a pipe. Across the road from this store was a warehouse. Dr. D. W. Taylor ran this store and the warehouse. He bought dressed rabbits which many people trapped and sold in the winter. He also bought live chickens.



*Pulpit carved by Mr. John Miley*

There were two barns nearby, one for storing hay and the other for a locally owned team of horses. In front of one barn was a set of live-stock scales, where local people weighed the cattle they were selling.

Right next to this barn was the local school. It was two stories high at the time I remember, but started much earlier as a one room school. All seven grades were taught here. Mrs. Gerard Stuart was one of the early teachers.

Directly behind the school, across a branch which ran through the center of town, and behind the railroad station was the water tank from which the train took on water each time it came through. This was of great interest to the children. The water was piped by gravity from a local spring to the water tank.

Next to the school, and across a road from it, was the local blacksmith shop. It was owned and operated by Mr. Zack Sweet. He had a stanchion right next to the school grounds in which dangerous horses and mules were put to have shoes put on their feet. Mr. Sweet allowed the school children to watch him, as long as they didn't get too close. He made all kinds of farm equipment, and did many things for people besides shoeing their horses.

There was also an undertaker establishment in Decatur. It was on the road behind the train station, and was run by Mr. John Miley. He had a black hearse, and was available when needed. He was gifted in other ways, such as carving the pulpit for Decatur Chapel (which is now in Timber Ridge Church).

An interesting thing about this time in Decatur is that local farmers shipped their cream by railroad to the creamery in Staunton. The checks for the cream were attached to the cream can and sent back to the farmer who picked up his can and check from the depot porch at his convenience. I never remember of any one losing a check! *Submitted by: Elizabeth L. Cummins*

## EARLY YEARS OF FANCY HILL

### PART I

Fancy Hill, located south of Lexington, was settled early in the settlement of Rockbridge County. A description of the community was given in the Rockbridge County News as follows: "The Fancy Hill post office was located in the store of Paxton and Lackey, ten miles from Lexington on the road to Natural Bridge. Taking the store as a center, Fancy Hill neighborhood is within a radius of two miles. Its land is fertile and much of the land is farmed."

The section is supplied with schools, both public and private. There was a private school for girls at the residence of C. H. Paxton taught by Miss Mary V. Carter. The public school at the new school house was taught by Edward Johnson, and Miss Bettie McGuffin, who later married Mr. William L. Snider of the community. The school was well looked after by the school board.

One of the Seven Hills was near the neighborhood of Fancy Hill. The home called "Fancy Hill," the largest of the homes was owned by Thomas Welch Sr. who married Sally Grigsby, daughter of John Grigsby. During the ownership by Benjamin Welch, son of Thomas and Sally, the home was made a stagecoach stopping place and known as "Welch's Tavern". At a later date it became a 'Dormitory,' a boys preparatory school near by, conducted by David E. Laird, known as the "Fancy Hill Academy".

An advertisement for the Fancy Hill Classical School for the session of September 4, 1866, stated the design of the school was to prepare boys for entrance to any college, or for the business of life. The advertisement stated the school was situated in a community that has always been for the refinement and hightone of its society, and the boys would be subject to the best influence, both religious and social.



*Fancy Hill, VA*

In 1849, the farmers of Rockbridge County organized an agricultural society and Dr. J. J. Moorman, of Fancy Hill was made president. He went to the World's Fair in London to represent Virginia, and brought back reports on various crops to the Rockbridge Agricultural Society at their request.

A book written by Phoebe Lackey of Fancy Hill entitled *Beckoning Heights*, was about a romance in an old Virginia home.

On the road to Glasgow from Fancy Hill was a school, "Oak Forest" in the suburbs of Tinkerville, (a community named in honor of its worthy founder, Tink McCullough). Just about a mile or so on to Glasgow, was another school house called "Lindsey" school. Around 1915 a school wagon went from Fancy Hill to the Glasgow High School. *Submitted by: Betty Funkhouser*  
Sources: Rockbridge County News; Proceedings of the Historical Society

## FANCY HILL

### PART II

Fancy Hill was a community of farms, where all the farmers lent a helping hand when needed whether it was to harvest a crop, pitch hay,

help birth a calf or whatever the need. It was neighbor helping neighbor. There were times of hard work, when the fields were plowed with horses and hay put on wagons and put in the hay loft for winter use, to feed the animals. After a work week of sweat and tired feet there was time for church. It may be that one had to walk for two or three or four miles to get there or maybe if you were lucky you might ride a horse or maybe ride a horse and buggy.

Fancy Hill community had the necessities within walking distance of home. It took some time to get there, but once you were there, it was worth the trouble. The big store was the center of the community. However, in the forties everything changed, some for the better and some for the worse. One could go to the store and get penny candy or a penny pencil. Or one could take eggs or butter or vegetables or a chicken from the hen house and exchange for goods from the store. The farmers would meet there and swap stories about the farm while sitting on barrels that nails came in. There was a checker board with checkers just waiting for someone to play, and usually the owner had a dog just lying around.



*Fancy Hill Store and Post Office, early 1900s*

The post office was in this big building and everyone came to get their mail. Sometimes they would share the good news and sometime the news would not be so good.

On Sunday afternoon there would be Sunday School taught by leaders of Falling Springs Church to the kids in the neighborhood who would walk to the store.

Today at Fancy Gap there is still a community by name but the way of life has changed. There are no schools nearby, the children must travel to Natural Bridge Station to the elementary school and the high school students must travel to the consolidated high school with the students of all districts of the County. The interstate 81 has made its mark on the community, taking much of the farming land for the road. There are very few families that farm for a living. Most families find employment at nearby factories or seek jobs in the Lexington area. Most families attend a Church of their choice, some driving a great distance, but they have followed the roots of their ancestors, to worship God. It is a great place to live and still a place where neighbor helps neighbor. *Submitted by: Betty Funkhouser*

## TINY TOWN

Samuel R. (Sam) Lackey was the proprietor of the Rainbow Filling Station in the Fancy Hill community, 4 miles north of Natural Bridge. He died at age fifty-eight, in 1930, leaving a wife and two children, and seven children by a former marriage.

After the death of Sam Lackey, the filling station was rented, and later sold to Shirley Totten. In 1937 the station was sold to Mr. J. D. Harden of West Virginia. It was during this time that the building was remodeled and cabins were built to be rented to tourists and the name changed to Tiny Town. The Route #11 had been improved and Fancy Hill was fast becoming a popular place. Lees Carpet in Glasgow had recently started making carpet and local people had steady





Rainbow Service Station, later became Tiny Town, and is today (1997) Westmoreland Colony

work. Tiny Town was a good place to go out to eat. The local high school would hold the Senior Banquet there. For some it was where they ate their first hamburger and french fries, while for others it was where they had their first beer.

In the late forties and fifties Lee and Meredith Davis rented the property. They were very popular with the people of the community.



Tiny Town Tavern

During the future years many different people rented the place. In 1971 the restaurant and motel was remodeled by Max Westmoreland of Georgia. The cabins were moved and a new look given and also a new name, Westmoreland Colony. Some of the cabins were placed together to make a house for some of the local people. June Hatcher Rafferty would proudly say her home was made from Tiny Town Cabins. She can even tell the number of the cabin she lives in.

In 1975 John Chambers purchased the property from Westmoreland, and served the public with good food for many years. The family lived behind the restaurant and son Tim was very active with the Glasgow Rescue Squad and Natural Bridge High School, editing the fiftieth edition of the yearbook the "Span". Submitted by: Betty Funkhouser Sources; Rockbridge County News

## GLASGOW



Rockbridge Hotel, Glasgow, VA, 1892. This hotel was never used and was torn down in the 1950s.

## GOSHEN - I

Goshen is one of two incorporated towns in Rockbridge County. It is located in the north corner of the county on the 38° N. parallel, and on the waters of the Big Calpasture River, a tributary on the Maury, between North Mountain and Mill Mountain. Approximately 350 people

live in the town limits, and are governed by a Mayor-Town Council system. There are in the town: a post office, a town hall, a branch library, two restaurants, five churches, three grocery stores, a craft store, service stations, a bed and breakfast at the Hummingbird Inn, a garage, a fire department and a rescue squad. The old school building which closed in 1984 now contains a grocery and a general store, apartments, and a laundromat, while the baseball field is now a trailer park. Businesses include Stillwater Worsted Mill, Burke-Parsons-Bowlby Wood Preserving, and Owens-Illinois wood yard. The Goshen Lions Club has sponsored the Goshen Horse Show annually since 1946, and built the Boy Scout Cabin as a community center. The C & O railroad from Washington, D.C., to Cincinnati, OH, passes through the town, and in past years, Goshen was a main stop. Goshen is more than a town; it is an area which reaches out to Panther's Gap, Big River, Bell's Valley, Little River, Goshen Pass, and Bratton's Run.

Its history dates back to the Indian mounds found on land now a part of the Boy Scouts of America campground. The earliest European settlers were Alexander and Anne (MacFarlane) Dunlap and their four children, who first lived on Allegheny Hill, but built a brick house on Furnace Hill in 1745. James Patton and John Lewis developed the area. The first mill was built in 1745 by James Carter (Morton).

Corn was the main crop grown on the fertile bottom land. Squire Joseph Bell, Jr., was living at Cameron Hall in 1816, when he was elected a Justice of the County Court, and in 1830 when his home was a polling place. He commented that the area was like "the land of Goshen", so Pearl Teter Wood and Susie Roadcap Williams informed the writer. When the railroad first went through the town, its station and post office were named Goshen Bridge (on old postcards).



Cameron Hall

John Hindman preached on Little River in 1745. Lebanon Presbyterian Church was organized in 1784, at the Augusta County border, and the Goshen Church began as an outreach of Lebanon. Goshen Baptist Church was organized in 1820, and located on Mill Creek. The present structure on Baptist Hill was built in 1859. A baptistry was installed and six Sunday School rooms were added in the 1930s with three of them in the balcony. The Methodists built their first church on the edge of Baptist Hill overlooking the town. When it burned in 1933, they built the present structure on Alleghany Hill. Submitted by: Bobbie Sue Henry

## GOSHEN - II

Iron ore furnaces and foundries were important industries between 1750 and 1920. Some of the more notable were Mount Hope Furnace and California Furnace at California on Bratton's Run, Bath Iron Works at the north end of Goshen Pass (part of the dam can still be seen in the Maury River there), and Victoria Furnace where the towers still stand today.



Old Victoria Furnace

The last one was built by an English company in the 1870's, and named for Queen Victoria. It turned out an average of 150 tons of fine grade ore per day, according to H. P. Greaver. Margaret Jones Kerns Hull said, "When the furnace was blasting, many of the townspeople would walk down as close as they could to watch." She described it as "Eerie". The furnace blast was so bright that those sitting on their porches in town could read a newspaper by the light. The company built houses for their workers, some on Furnace Hill. On the furnace grounds was a two-story building housing the commissary and theater. The furnace operated until the end of the World War I. E. M. Hull purchased most of the property, and sold the track to C&O, the trains for scrap iron, and the land to Stillwater Worsted Mill and the Appalachian Wood Preserving plant.

Co-existing with the iron industry at Goshen were the various mineral water resorts. Alum, chalybeate, iron and sulphur waters were believed to have medicinal values and people came from many places to "take the waters". Sometimes they would spend a month at a resort. Cold Sulphur Springs and Rockbridge Alum Springs were two of the best known. People could camp at both springs and drink the water freely in the early years. Rockbridge Alum Springs, which actually has four different kinds of water, was discovered in 1790 by Alexander Campbell. The resort was developed in 1840, and fifty years later, it was one of the most popular. Recreation there included horseback riding, tennis, croquet, and billiards. Daily concerts were given in the ballroom by an orchestra. One of the most attractive features was the concrete swimming pool.



On the lawn at Rockbridge Alum

There was a beautiful pavilion housing the springs at the base of the mountain, at 1000 feet above sea level. Cold Sulphur Springs Hotel was opened to the public on June 1, 1886, according to John Thomas Allen in *Lost Landmarks of Goshen*. Today it is a campground. The Cold Sulphur Springs supplied one of the best white sulphur waters in America on draught at the Allegheny Inn in Goshen, by special arrangement, according to their brochure.

The Allegheny Inn was a beautiful story-book palace presumed to be the grandest in the United States in its day. It was designed by Stanford White at a cost of \$215,000, and called



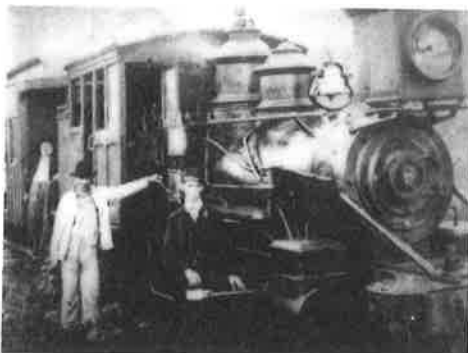
Allegheny Inn

"The Palace" when it was built in 1891. It was located on Allegheny Hill, and had the capacity for 250 guests. It was a large, thoroughly modern and up-to-date building of brick and stone, containing 114 bedrooms, 18 bathrooms, 3 dining rooms, a lobby, a large handsome ballroom, 3 parlors, a billiard room, a pool room, a bowling alley, and a writing room (according to its brochure). Room and board was \$3-5 per day, \$15-20 per week, or \$50-75 per month. At the front was a rotunda and at the sides were towering gables. A wide porch surrounded the whole building. Life was happy and relaxed at the Allegheny. A tennis court and a swimming pool provided entertainment in the late mornings. Each afternoon there was a concert by the orchestra. In the evenings after supper, the guests sat on the porch or went for walks. At dark the orchestra began to play, and the guests danced in the large ballroom at the west end, according to H. P. Greaver and Margaret Hull who as children observed these events and recounted them to the writer. Townspeople could not join in the festivities, but they enjoyed climbing up the wooden steps from town to the hotel, and standing on the porch watching the guests inside. The coming of the automobile was a primary cause for the decline of these resorts. In 1923 the "Palace" was sold to a group of doctors for a sanatorium. During renovations, it caught fire, and on Thanksgiving Day, 1923, it was burning rubble, and its once graceful furnishings were in ruins. Submitted by: *Bobbie Sue Henry*

## GOSHEN - III

A railroad was built to haul ore from the mines on Bratton's Run. The same railroad was used to carry visitors from Goshen to Rockbridge Alum Springs. At Goshen it joined with the Central Virginia Railroad (later the C & O). The English owners of Victoria Furnace owned their own engines and freight cars, and had their own engineers, according to Margaret Hull and Harry Grogg. There was a machine shop on the grounds to do the repair work. Some of the engines were named "Greenie", "Old Four", "Old Six", and "Old Ninety Eight".

G. H. Guinn built the Rockbridge Inn in 1904, near the C & O tracks where the present depot stands. There was a board walk along



"Old Ninety-Eight" Engine with Harry Grogg (second from left)

the railroad track, and in the evenings young people would dress up and stroll up and down the "Boardwalk" for entertainment. Overnight visitors from the train would stop at the Rockbridge Inn, as well as being boarded in homes near the tracks. The Inn survived the burning of Main Street in 1915 and sparks from the Allegheny Inn in 1923, only to burn about 1937, according to Willie Higgins Ward.



Rockbridge Inn, built in 1904.

"Glorious Goshen" became a boom town during the industrial growth of the 1880s and 1890s. It was chartered as a town on March 4, 1884. The boom company was the Goshen Land and Improvement Company, which was organized in 1891. They bought Cold Sulphur Springs, Victoria Furnace, and other property around town. A map of Goshen in 1890 shows the names of streets, the plats of lots (still in use), and the locations of planned businesses, including a car works, rolling mill, planing mill, iron works factory, machine company, tube works, and a bottling works. The "County Bridge" was begun in 1890 to carry the traffic from Goshen to Craigsville and Staunton. It was never completed, but is still in use today, and is an historical site. The Goshen Blade newspaper was published about this time and one preserved copy is dated June 4, 1892, according to Andrew Graham.



Goshen Land and Improvement Company - ca. 1890.

Between 1908 and 1915, as a post card shows, Main Street had the Rockbridge Inn, and a post office next door where Joe Guinn was the Postmaster. E. L. Jones owned a large three-story building, with a glass-front store on the ground floor, called the Goshen Supply Company. His family lived in the back and on the second floor. Their yard was where the fire house stands today. The third floor was rented by people coming to Goshen with plans for settling here. Mr. Whitesell, a photographer, and his family lived there. One room served as the jail and had a large metal ball-and-chain in it. Mr. Jones was a Justice of the Peace. Another room was used for the children's playroom, where Margaret J. Hull and her sisters cut paper dolls from Sears' catalogs, and doll house furnishings from wall paper books. A two-storied white building was a store and apartment. There was a large red mill owned by the Guinns, and operated by Mr. Humphreys, who used steam engine power for grinding. A stable owned by the Jones family was burned by arsonists in 1916, killing 2 horses.



Goshen from Baptist Hill - Allegheny Inn in background

The passenger depot stood across from the present "Goshen Grocery", with the water tank for trains beside the depot. The freight depot stood across one track toward town and beside the main line. Toward the east was the large two-story brick building, owned by Judge Critcher, which had a store downstairs, and an apartment upstairs. (This was the writer's first home in Rockbridge.) Next door was Sam Kier's Shoe Shop. In town was another building housing Mr. Snyder's store and the barber shop. It was in this barber shop, late one Saturday night in 1915, that a group of men met to gamble, drink, and smoke, with the result of catching the building on fire, and burning most of the buildings on Main Street. The post office, Jones' Supply Company, the Oddfellows Hall, part of the Allen House, Snyder's Store, Governor Price's house, Bell's Guest House, the doctor's office, the dentist's office, Parker's Meat Market, and Jones' warehouse were all destroyed. A train stopped and tried to pump water from the water tank, but when the Clifton Forge fire department arrived, most of Main Street was gone. The Oddfellows Lodge had held oyster suppers at Thanksgiving and town socials.

The blacksmith's shop was just to the west of the present Mill Creek Cafe. Bill and Joe Williams operated the livery stable back of the Allen House, with the lane to it off of Wood's Lane, between the Presbyterian manse and Pearl Teter Wood's house. Further down Wood's Lane was Miss Vic Decker's Millinery.



Passenger Station at Goshen

This was the Goshen of the past. Goshen of today is the thriving community first mentioned in this history. Goshen of the future will be determined by the visions of our youth, based on their rich heritage. Submitted by: *Bobbie Sue Henry*

## GOSHEN PASS

Goshen Pass was formerly known as Dunlap's Gap and then as Strickler's Pass. It extends for a distance of about five miles from Little Calfpasture to Wilson's Springs. The river is constantly flowing over or among masses of rock. The heights on either side of the Pass could reach hundreds of feet.

This uninhabited land was once a busy thoroughfare of stages, wagons, horses, and hundreds of people flocking to Rockbridge Baths,



View of Goshen Pass

Lexington, and Goshen. In Victorian days it was a custom for farming people from all parts of Rockbridge to take the last two weeks of July and the first week of August for a holiday time. Rockbridge Baths was a very popular spot to take this holiday.

Matthew Fontaine Maury, "Pathfinder of the Seas", admired Goshen Pass so much that, upon his death, he requested his body be taken through during the rhododendron season. Maury was a United States naval officer and scientist who did much to improve water travels. The North River, "Maury River", was named for him.



Matthew Fontaine Maury's Memorial

Goshen Pass is still a holiday place for hundreds of people each year. On any day you could see people swimming in the "Blue Hole", canoeing down the river, casting their fishing line for hungry trout, walking to the "Devil's Kitchen" or across a swinging bridge, and picnicking on a grassy spot. *Submitted and Written by: Debbie Mohler*

## BOY SCOUT CAMP GOSHEN



Goshen Scout Camps, Boy Scouts of America



Lake Merriweather, named after Marjorie Merriweather Post, for her interest, support, and constant inspiration to scouting.

## ROCKBRIDGE ALUM SPRINGS

From the time of the earliest settlers in this area, the spot later to be known as the Alum Springs was familiar to hunters as a deer lick. The percolation of water through a shale bank gives the springs their unusual mineral qualities.

In 1790 Alexander Campbell, county surveyor of Rockbridge, took up 2,000 acres of what was then vacant land. This tract included the Alum Spring. Campbell could not, as official surveyor, locate unclaimed land in his own name so he did so in the name of John Dunlap, the two making a brief memorandum of joint ownership. Campbell's son, James, started erecting buildings in the early 1830's to exploit a growing interest in the alum waters and bought out the Dunlap's share of the property. From the scant records of this early period it is apparent that James Campbell and his son, Alexander D. Campbell, established the basic pattern for the development of the resort. A post office was opened here in 1842 with James Campbell as the first postmaster.



Rockbridge Alum Springs

The Campbell family sold the Alum in 1850 to Christian and Company for \$100,000. Two years later they sold it to John Frazier and brother William Frazier for \$150,000. Major new construction began. Until the Civil War (when the resort was used as a hospital) Virginia's finest families and notables from all over visited this fashionable spa. In 1859 it was sold under a chancery decree to John Frazier's son, James A. Frazier, for \$236,000.

In 1872 The Jordan Alum Springs was built next door in direct competition and merged into Rockbridge Alum Springs in 1880.

The property was sold at auction in 1909 to a group of Rockbridge Investors and for about ten years the Virginia Military Institute summer school was held there. It is believed that the resort's last season was the summer of 1919.

In January 1941, the corporation was liquidated and the property was bought in by the two principal stockholders, Miss Bessie Patton and James Alexander for \$7,000. The springs property was sold to John Paul of West Virginia who, in turn, sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Harold Bailey in 1942. Mr. Bailey left the property in a trust

at his death in 1962. At Mrs. Bailey's death in 1975 the trustees elected to donate the remaining 1,118 acres and buildings to Virginia Polytechnic Institute. In 1985 the U.S. Forest Service purchased 845 acres. The remaining 273 acres were purchased by Holland's General Contractors.

The property was designated as a Virginia Historic Landmark in 1989 and placed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Rockbridge Alum Springs Association, Inc. purchased the property in 1990 and in 1991 it went back into the hands of the Holland Brothers.



Rockbridge Alum Springs Gazebo

In 1992, Young Life, an independent non-denominational Christian outreach ministry program, rescued the Springs, which is a very special and beautiful spot in the county. They have already built exact replicas of cottages that were originally on the property and are renovating both the Vale and Gothic houses. In addition to the restoration, dormitories, a dining hall and manmade lake have all been constructed. *Submitted by: Lisa McCown*  
Sources: Rockbridge Historical Society, Miscellaneous Papers, Special Collections, Leyburn Library, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia; *The Rockbridge Alum Springs*, by Matthew W. Paxton, Jr., 1963; Rockbridge Alum Springs Association Brochure, 1990; *Historic Alum Springs Full of Life Again*, News-Gazette, Lexington, Virginia, July 31, 1996.

## HOW GOSHEN WAS NAMED

Morton's *History of Rockbridge County*, printed in 1920, does not list this area as the Goshen area until sometime in the early 1800's. It was spoken of as the Valley of the Great Calf Pasture and the Little Calf Pasture River. This covered the area from the head of Bratton's Run, named for the first settlers, clear to Deerfield.

It is believed that the Valley of the Great and Little Calf Pasture Rivers was settled about the same time as the Staunton area. It can't be authenticated, but Morton indicates that it was settled before the major part of Rockbridge County.

The first resident of the area, according to Morton, was Alexander Dunlap in 1743. It was a practice in those days that one could acquire a large tract of land, then sell it off to settlers who followed. Then the one who acquired the large tract would move westward and do it all over again. This was the case with Alexander Dunlap.

Among the early family names recorded in that era were Bratton, Ramsey, Lockridge, Jameson, Patton, Davis, Graham, Hodge, Gwin, Wilson, and McCuthen. Other early names were Shaw, Roadcap, Lair, Judy, Bell, Withrow, Lyle, Youell, Walkup and Settington. My branch of the Grahams were not mentioned by Morton until a generation later; however, my great, great Grandfather was here in 1748.

As a boy when I had to spend long hours hoeing corn, I would ask my father about happenings in the past. How Goshen was named was handed down to me by word of mouth.

It is an accepted fact that Bell's Valley is older than Goshen, but there is no recording on Morton's History of when it was settled. Joseph Bell settled in what is now Bell's Valley and built the house John Davidson lives in twelve years before he built Cameron Hall. When he moved west to the bottom lands of the Great Calf Pasture, he was so impressed with the fertility of the soil he is supposed to have said that this is a land flowing with milk and honey. He called it Goshen after the fertile land in Egypt where Jacob sent his sons to buy food when Joseph was in Egypt.

The early town seemed to be more toward Panther's Gap than on the present location. This is another story handed down to me from my father. When the railroad was built here, sometime around 1845, construction was stopped at Panther's Gap for approximately a year. For what reason, I do not know.

Goshen was called Goshen Bridge at one time. Whether it was officially a name, I do not know, but the story goes that the flood of 1898 washed the bridge away and left Goshen. The name Goshen Bridge gradually died out. There have been four major floods in Goshen. One in 1898, one around 1912 or 1914, one in 1936 and one in 1939. Submitted by: Leland Guinn Bell and Written by: Joe Graham, Sr. and presented at Centennial Church Service, March 4, 1984

## LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA

Found at the south end of the Shenandoah Valley, Lexington was founded as the county seat of Rockbridge County in 1777. The name Lexington was taken from the town in Massachusetts where the American Revolution began.

Lexington and Rockbridge County were mostly settled by German and Scotch-Irish families, who had moved from Pennsylvania.

The Civil War played a big part in Lexington's history. It almost ruined the town and the people who lived here. In 1864, federal troops burned VMI. But, the war also gave Lexington some great leaders who helped the town rebuild and grow. **SEE PHOTO BELOW.** Submitted by: Kayla Foresman, 3rd Grade

### THE FIRE AND THE LOTTERY

The town of Lexington was established in 1778 to serve as the Rockbridge County seat. The chosen site was determined by being near the middle of the county, three good springs, an

abundance of trees for building and burning, and because Isaac Campbell donated ten acres, and sold an additional 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  acres to the Trustees.

James McDowell surveyed the site and laid out the streets of Main, Randolph, Jefferson, Henry, Washington, and Nelson. Half acre lots were laid off on both sides of all streets and sold at public auction. A courthouse and jail were built, and several stores, taverns, and houses soon followed. Most of the early structures were built of logs. As the American Revolution was in progress, citizens were short of cash and the town grew slowly.

By the 1790's, dozens of houses were neatly aligned along the streets of Lexington, and the place looked like a town, rather than a village.

In April of 1796 a fire broke out. Some said a resident was burning trash in the garden, others said the fire began at a stable from a servant's pipe. Others said the embers from under a wash kettle started the whole episode. However it began, the fire spread quickly. All accounts agree on a strong westerly wind.

Flames jumped from building to building, and in a few short hours the entire town was destroyed. Only a brick house, diagonally across from the courthouse, was left standing; it was damaged, but still in livable condition.

Although the courthouse burned, most of the records were saved. The people had nearly nothing left. Homes and possessions had burned. This was but one of many hurdles Lexington overcame in the following century.

The State Legislature authorized a lottery "to raise twenty-five thousand dollars with which to rebuild the town." Tickets were printed and put on sale, but the local people had no money and people outside the area didn't care; thus, ticket sales were slow.

In 1833, a Suit was filed against the Trustees of Lexington regarding the Lottery, which gives some detail of how the money was actually spent. Most of the houses were rebuilt without the lottery money.

Around 1801, some of the money was used to build a road across North and South Mountains, passing through Lexington, meeting the State road at the mouth of Dunlap's Creek and a schoolhouse in the town. Tempers ran hot. Those who had purchased Lottery tickets were not certain that all the money was being used on the road.

The Court had to intervene, and a Commissioner was appointed to oversee the fund. In 1827, a law was passed in Lexington stating that any surplus money from the lottery should be used to buy fire engines and apparatus.

A fire company had organized in 1796, with fifty residents immediately signed on. The fire company was in need of equipment.

Forty years after the Great Fire, the Commissioner made his final report, and closed the lottery books April 23, 1836.

Source: Tompkins, Edmund Pendleton, *Rockbridge County, Virginia: An Informal History*. Richmond, VA. Whittet and Shepperson, 1952. pp. 46-50.

### LEXINGTON IN THE 1830's

Getting into Lexington from the north end was not easy in the 1830's. The streets were very steep. In spring and winter the clay would become mud and nearly impassable. In foul weather, horses pulled in mud up to their knees, and sometimes up to the axles of the wagons. With mud up to the wagon axles, they could be stuck. A horse team stuck in the mud could be rescued by another team by adding two horses and a driver to the ill fated wagon. Merchants from the Valley of Virginia hauled their goods in large covered wagons to Southwest Virginia and Tennessee. People there depended on the products from the more settled regions in the east.

The huge wagons were pulled by horses, often a team of six, and sometimes bell teams. On a bell team, five of the six horses had bells tied onto their hames. These made lovely music as they moved along the streets and roads, until they met up with mud. If a bell team got their wagon stuck in the mud and had to be pulled out, their bells were given to the team which towed them from the mire.

The two drivers would crack their whips and often cursed a good deal as the horses pulled out the stalled wagon. Many of the wagons carried a bulldog along. The bulldog rode on the front gate of the wagon and barked as they came up the streets.

There were about four or five hundred residents in Lexington then, many of them being manufacturers of one type or another. At Jordan's Point, John Jordan ran a merchant and chopping mill, a sawmill, a tilt hammer, smith shop, and wagon making shop.

There were two other blacksmiths in the town, Mr. McCaleb near the corner of Jefferson and Washington Streets, and Joshua Parks who lived near where the Old Main Street Mall is now located. Mr. Parks was known as one of the best horseshoers of his day. His shop was underneath his house.

If one needed to hire a horse, David McKinley, who lived near the present Mayflower, could fix you right up. He kept many fine horses. Many of the farmers simply could not understand how he kept so many horses in such fine shape. If one cared to own a horse, "Old Man Bailey" was the man to see. He not only traded horses, but would fill in as a jockey if need be, even though he was a very large man.

For the horse, one might need a saddle or some new harness. Two places, both located on Main Street, were the places to go. James Kerr kept a saddle and harness shop before moving to Fairfield to farm, and Jacob Fuller also kept a saddle and harness shop in an old frame building. Perhaps a wagon was necessary, and in that case two choices existed. Mr. McFaddin made wagons and plows on Jefferson Street, or one could visit John Jordan at the Point.

Maybe one needed a place to keep a horse. If so, there were livery stables available. Alexander Sloan kept a stable with his hotel on Main Street near the present Robert E. Lee building. Another livery stable was available at the Burton Hotel just down the street, and another was run by Isaac Clyde on the opposite side of the street near the present Deaver's Alley. The McDowell Hotel also kept a livery.

If the horse became ill and was in need of a doctor, an old Negro man named Caesar could be found at the Burton Hotel. Caesar was a man of many peculiarities, but was "well



Lexington after Hunter's Raid c1866. VMI Ruins in background after bombardment in 1864



Main Street Lexington, 1890

mannered, full of witty sayings, and was loved and respected by all."

Joseph Huffman lived on Jefferson Street near McCaleb's smith shop. He was a butcher and a tanner. His pump, which stood in front on Washington Street, supplied much of the town's water. His children moved West. Daniel Huffman lived in a large brick house across from the present Wilson-Walker house. He operated a tanyard where the Sheridan ice plant later stood. His two sons, John and William moved West.

John Perry owned the entire corner at Main and Henry Street where the Fraternities currently stand. He ran a tanyard. An old Negro worked for him who was known as "Daddy Buck." Daddy Buck was also the sexton of the Presbyterian Church and a grave digger. He was known and loved by many.

Once the horse had been taken care of, one could purchase some new clothes. There were four tailors and two mantaumakers (dressmakers) residing in Lexington. John McClelland down near lot #1 of the original town of Lexington could make a new suit of clothes, or Hughey Laughlin, who lived on the corner near the Presbyterian Church and his two sons Samuel and James, could fix you right up.

Hughey's two daughters were dressmakers and helped to outfit the ladies of Lexington. Mrs. Huffman and her daughters also sewed and knitted for the townfolk. If it was weaving that must be done, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson of Nelson Street could get the job done.

There were eleven mercantile or dry goods stores where supplies could be purchased. James Compton ran a mercantile on Main Street. Dick Morris had a dry goods, grocery and candy store. He was a kind hearted old bachelor and rarely did a child leave his business without a stick of candy in hand. Robert White operated a store selling dry goods and groceries. He was also a magistrate and represented the area in the legislature. Matthew White was a successful merchant and farmer. William Stevens ran one of the largest dry goods, grocery, hardware and queensware establishments in town. He became quite wealthy. John S. Cummings' dry goods and grocery store did a good deal of business. Near the Burton Hotel was located John F. Caruther's dry goods, grocery, hardware and queensware store. Hugh Barclay's dry goods store was located nearby. The Dold store and the Leyburn building both contained dry goods and grocery stores. On Jefferson Street, Thomas S. Moore and Mr. McCue ran a mercantile.

One shouldn't get a new suit of clothes without a proper hat. There were hatteries in the town as well. John Ruff ran the largest "manufactory" in the Valley of Virginia. His hattery employed from eight to twelve journeyman and apprentices. It was located on Main Street, just above the current Old Main Street building. Wagon loads of his hats were sent on a yearly basis to Tennessee and West Virginia. These wagons never returned empty. They brought back "dried peaches, feathers, maple sugar, furs of all kinds, pelts, and sometimes some good old peach brandy, such as you do not see or smell now."

Sam Pettigrew ran a hattery on up Main Street, across from Alexander Sloan's Hotel. Mr. Kurts who lived on Jefferson Street worked for Sam. One must be on their toes when visiting Sam as he just might play a prank. Also on Main Street was Charles Varner, a hatter, across from the McDowell Hotel. For the ladies, Mrs. Moody could make just the right headpiece as she was a milliner.



National Hotel, Lexington, VA.

Although shoes were not always considered a must, they were quite useful. There were four shoemakers to prepare the footwear. Of these, Mr. Curry was considered the best. His shoes wore so long that one tired of them before they wore out. He and his wife later moved to Richmond where they were quite successful. Father Burgess, a Methodist and librarian for the Franklin Society, and his two sons George Wright and Morgan could also take care of one's foot covering needs.

For those in need of jewelry, Jacob Bare's brick establishment on Main Street could fit the bill. Mr. Bare was a silversmith.

Those searching for cooking pots and other such items could visit Thomas Wade's tin and coppersmith shop on Main Street. He and his family lived on the first and second stories of his home and he worked from his basement. Mr. Wade's humor helped to keep Main Street interesting, especially when combined with that of Alexander Sloan and Samuel Pettigrew. Another tin shop was located further up Main Street and was run by Cooney Henson.

Those with a sweet tooth would stop by Horace Melcher's candy factory where the County News Office building later stood. His candy factory was in his back yard. He made candy and baked cakes.

If someone needed refreshment, the cake and cider shops were available. Patsy Blunt kept a cake and cider shop on Jefferson Street in a frame house. Jennie Bailey kept a cake and cider and/or beer shop near Preston Street. Jennie married Johnny Rails and they both died in their "old log cabin in 'Possum Hollow." On Main Street, Mrs. Samuel Carter also kept a cake and cider shop.

Another form of refreshment could be found at the hotels of which there were four in Lexington. The McDowell Hotel was located up Main Street. Alexander Sloan's hotel was down Main Street near the courthouse. He was a bachelor. Mr. Sloan was another character who kept Main Street fun. It is said that once a stipend ticket was sent him by the Presbyterian Church. When the deacon came around for collection, Mr. Sloan replied that he did not attend services. The deacon noted that the church was always open and was free to everyone. Mr. Sloan settled the ticket by making out one for the preacher good for drinks at his bar. The deacon protested, but Mr. Sloan replied that his bar was "open to all who might want to imbibe."



Main Street, Lexington, Antrim and Lafferty

Then came the Burton Hotel which was operated by John S. Leech for a couple of years after the Burton family moved south. Next came Isaac Clyce's Hotel on down Main Street and across Henry Street. Isaac Clyce's was the site of all animal shows and circuses. On his lot, the first agricultural fair in Rockbridge County was held. Isaac Clyce, the hotel and livery owner, was also a carpenter.

Then as now, mail was important to the townfolk. Captain Wilson, who lived at the current Wilson-Walker house, was the postmaster. He and his wife had a fine carriage and a pair of beautiful bay horses. Their driver was Levi Todd.

When a new home was needed, a building was to be erected, or any buildings needing improvement, there were people who could take on the task. If brick was the choice material it could be obtained locally. John Todd, son of Levi Todd, was a brickmaker. Samuel Darst was also a brickmaker and a brick mason. He built many fine homes in Lexington. Mr. Moody was a carpenter. Samuel Carter was a carpenter and fence builder. If the house needed to be painted Mr. Dorsey could get the job done.

If one were in need of furnishings for the home, Lexington had it all. Matthew Kahle was a fine cabinetmaker on Main Street. Thomas Chittum was a very busy cabinetmaker. James Richwood was a cabinetmaker who lived in a two story frame house on Main Street. He had two sons, John and James. John lived in Galveston, TX in 1852. Samuel Smith was a chairmaker. Chairs made by him were said to be very strong and endured for many years.

Many auctions took place then, as now. The auctioneers available were James Metheny and "Old Man" Bailey with his resounding voice. They called many of the sales of Lexington.

Whenever a physician was needed, there were two in Lexington. Dr. Paine had a large practice and lived in a two-story frame house on Main Street. He was known for bleeding his patients and giving them pills when needed. Dr. Marshall lived near the present Wilson-Walker house and was at one time the college president.

John Curry, son of Mr. Curry the Englishman and shoemaker, became a physician and moved to Brownsburg.

After having visited the doctor, one might need an apothecary or drugstore. James Dunkun ran such an establishment on Main Street.

If one were in need of a good book, Mrs. Paine, wife of Dr. Paine ran the only bookstore in town. She had a cash only policy.

Then as now, there were a number of lawyers in the town of Lexington. William F. Taylor was Commonwealth Attorney, Charles Dorman, John Letcher, Mr. Michie of Staunton, Samuel McD. Moore, James B. Davidson, and John W. Brokenborough all made up the Lexington bar. Charles Dorman was considered one of the best orators of his day and also one of the best criminal lawyers in Lexington. David Curry also became a member of the bar. John Letcher was later a congressman and Governor of Virginia. He was known in Congress as "Honest John, or the Watch-dog of the Treasury."

Also helping to run our court were judges and clerks. The Circuit Judge was Lucas P. Thompson. Colonel Samuel McDowell Reid served many years as clerk of the court. "Colonel Reid was regarded as one of the most reliable men of the county, not only as clerk but as one of the best farmers and counselors, always ready and willing to give good advice." David Hutchinson lived on Main Street and served as assistant Clerk of Court for many years.

Charles Chaplin taught at the Academy and served for a while as Clerk of Court.

Helping to keep law breakers in order were the constables. John Fuller was a constable and also served as librarian of the Franklin Society. He was a son of Jacob Fuller the saddle and harness maker. James Metheny also served as constable. Cornelius Dorman was the jailer. He was a very stooped old man with long gray hair reaching down to his waist. He was the father of Charles Dorman and Mrs. Andrew B. Davidson.

William Letcher was a carpenter and house builder. He was the father of John Letcher, later Governor of Virginia. They were Methodists and their home served as a rest stop for the circuit riders.

The editor of the town paper was Alphonso Smith, son of Samuel the chairmaker. He volunteered in the Rockbridge Rifles and died from wounds received in battle during the Civil War. His brother Jacob Henry was a preacher.

During the 1830's, George Baxter, James Douglas, and William Cunningham served as the Presbyterian ministers. John Miller was the Methodist preacher. He lived in an old frame house with a very high porch on Main Street. He, his wife and five daughters moved from Lexington.

Education was important. Jacob Fuller, son of Jacob Fuller the saddle and harness maker, taught grammar school in town. Charles Chaplin taught at the Academy. Reuben McNutt later taught a school in the old McFaddin wagon making shop. Dr. Ruffner was president of the college. Professors Calhoun, Dabney, and Armstrong lived on the ridge which is now Jackson Avenue. The Ann Smith academy was run by the Misses Graham and later by a Mr. Bradshaw.

In a little white house on the bank at the corner of the Letcher lot, lived John Simms a Negro. He was called "Professor" by the students. John "carried all of the water for the college from Back Spring, in two buckets at a time, kept off of him by a hoop, and he made up the beds and cleaned up the rooms. He was liked and respected by everyone that knew him." He was a good Christian man.

All of these people and places helped make life livable in the Lexington of the 1830s. At least, one could have a good visit. That is, if they could get their horse and wagon up the street that came in from the North. Submitted by:

Angela M. Ruley

Source: Rockbridge County News. "Reminiscences of Lexington 65 and 70 years Ago" by William A. Ruff. A series, running 3 April 1902- 1 May 1902.

## A MAN OF MANY TALENTS

Born April 29, 1910, Gilbert Lindsay Brown was the son of Harry McBride Brown and Florence Lindsay Brown. One of ten children, he learned early in life to keep his wits and view whatever happened with humor. His keen mind enabled him to grasp situations quickly and deliver humorous off-the-cuff responses. A first-rate prankster, he relished telling about successful antics.

As a boy, young Gil arose at dawn to deliver milk and eggs throughout town. An enterprising youngster, he found various ways to add to the family till — catching grasshoppers to sell to VMI's biology lab, plucking chickens for 2 cents apiece for the college's mess hall, and bundling sticks to sell to keydets for their bonfires. He discovered within himself an affinity for selling, later pursuing it as a career.



Gilbert Brown rings sale at his Lexington store

After marrying Kathleen Hite of Staunton in 1939, the couple settled in Lexington. It had always been Gilbert's dream to own a business, and he and Kathleen became partners in the endeavor. In 1946, they opened Maytag Sales and Service — later renamed Brown's Furniture and Appliance — at 24 North Main Street. Combining Gilbert's ambition, charisma, and innate desire to help others with Kathleen's poise, dignity, and refined taste, they together built a business and home of which they could be proud. They became parents of four children — Kenneth, Barbara, Linda, and Ronnie.

Starting in the late 1940's, Gilbert encouraged creativity among children of the community — sponsoring "Kiddies Carnival" (See "Kiddies Carnival") and also a children's float in the annual Christmas parade. Boys and girls in costume could be seen amidst the larger floats pushing, pulling, and riding their decorated toys.



Crowds await Grand Opening of Maytag Sales and Service featuring Kiddie's Carnival. (February, 1947)

The idea appealed immensely to Gilbert's own kids and they — unaware of their ineligibility to win — entered with great enthusiasm. Kenneth was the carpenter, Barbara, the artist; and pre-school Linda — with her curly, pale blond hair and big, blue eyes — was Santa. One year she waded from inside her chimney; the next, she rode in her sleigh pulled by reindeer. Both floats were mounted onto Kenneth's red wagon; and he — still a youngster himself — pulled her up Main Street. Her sack held lots of candy to toss to other little ones along the way.

Guided by strong Christian beliefs, Gilbert used his actions to teach compassion and responsibility. (See "1950's Christmas Benefit Show") He never forgot his humble beginnings and extended many kindnesses to others. One such instance happened in the early 1950's, when students from Virginia's black high school bands held a convention in Lexington. Seeing these young visitors being handed their lunches out the door instead of being seated at local restaurants, he welcomed them into his store, to sit on the brand new furniture he was marketing to relax and enjoy their food. As he told his family later, "When they had eaten, they thanked me and left. The store was spotless and small change had been left as tips on various tables, sofas, and chairs."

By the late 1950's, Gilbert's furniture business had grown to four stores in various locations. In 1959, he sold his store in Lexington, and began focusing on a real estate career. College Realty was formed; and College Park, a development of mid-priced homes, was begun. Tragically, he lost his life on his way to a construction site on April 20, 1964. His widow, with very little business experience, assumed his many responsibilities and earned respect and admiration for her strength and perseverance during this difficult time. It was not until her death on September 23, 1994, that their children really understood the impact their parents had on others' lives.

While settling the estate, many people came forth with remembrances. One of the most touching was from a forty-somethings couple, who bought a baby bed used earlier by Gilbert and Kathleen's grandchildren. When the man and his brother had been pre-school tykes, their parents had gone into the furniture store shortly before Christmas. The family's budget was limited, but the parents desperately wanted to purchase a tricycle for their children's gift from Santa. To their disappointment, even one tricycle was beyond their means. As they turned to leave, Gilbert told them Santa had left not one — but TWO — tricycles with him

for their children. With tears in his eyes, the man told Barbara and Linda this was a kindness he had never forgotten. He and his wife wanted to purchase this baby bed, so they could tell their grandchildren it had come from the home of a man whose memory was very special to them.

Thirty years after his death, Gilbert's children were uplifted to hear so many folks fondly recall — in vivid detail — the twinkle in his eye and the compassion in his heart. Submitted by: Barbara Brown Jenkins and Linda Brown Donald

#### "KIDDIE'S CARNIVAL"

In the winter of 1946, Gilbert Brown opened Maytag Sales and Service at 24 North Main Street, Lexington. His grand opening was held in February 1947 and — using his knack for advertising — he endeared himself to many with his innovative and charming marketing techniques.

An artistic and musically talented person, Gilbert encouraged creativity in children. To entice customers into his new store, he sponsored "Kiddies Carnival" — a children's talent show broadcast on WREL radio from his store on Saturday mornings. Each participating child received a Baby Ruth candy bar; and the winner — determined by an applause meter — received a pair of shoes from Oder's Shoe Store.



Kiddie's Carnival, broadcast live from Maytag Sales, 1948

Local radio personality Andy Peterson, who later moved on to become well-known on the WSLs television station in Roanoke, was emcee of the program. To the delight of the crowds gathered to watch the nervous youngsters, Peterson was a clever interviewer and asked just the right questions to elicit funny responses from pint-sized performers. Lillian Riegert, a local piano teacher, accompanied those who sang.

At Christmas time, the show was moved to the State Theatre; and each person brought a can of food for admittance. (See "1950's Christmas Benefit Show") Eventually, the show was broadcast from the radio studio upstairs and across the street from McCrum's Drug Store. Submitted by: Barbara Brown Jenkins and Linda Brown Donald,

#### "1950's CHRISTMAS BENEFIT SHOW"

During the 1950's, folks looked forward to the evening of the annual Christmas parade with enthusiasm. Few homes in Lexington had televisions, and a benefit radio program held in the showroom of Gilbert Brown's store on Main Street was an anticipated event. Gilbert sponsored the broadcast on WREL to raise monies to buy food for Rockbridge County's less fortunate.

In addition to those gathered about the store, the listening audience was encouraged to call in and request the performance of a song or recitation by someone they knew. Many folks were serious in their requests, but others viewed it as a time to have some fun with local celebrities. Requesting a performance by the mayor, Jerry Holstein, always brought lots of laughs.



Gilbert Brown, Gladys and Ben Morgan sing live on WREL from Gilbert's store on North Main.

To be granted, all requests required a monetary donation pledge. The person manning the telephone at Gilbert's store then called whomever had been requested. The Joe Lynn Trio provided instrumental accompaniment for those who needed it. People of all ages — adults, keydets, teen-agers, and children — performed. Gilbert had a rich, resonant tenor voice and especially enjoyed the times when folks requested he sing one of their favorite Christmas songs.

Canned goods previously collected at "Kiddies Carnival" — a children's talent show he also sponsored — were supplemented. Then, using his delivery trucks and employee manpower, Gilbert distributed food baskets to the needy throughout the community.

Gilbert's idea was picked up by others and is an ongoing program in Lexington. Submitted by: Barbara Brown Jenkins and Linda Brown Donald

#### THE STONEWALL JACKSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Civic associations in the early twentieth century like the Daughters of the Confederacy gave Southern women a social outlet and a means of community activism outside the domestic realm. These public-spirited women donated their time and money to beautifying cemeteries, erecting monuments, and celebrating veterans' holidays to commemorate the Confederate dead. The women of the Mary Custis Lee chapter, in Lexington, Virginia, however, discovered an even more remarkable way with which to honor their fallen hero when, in April 1901, Stonewall Jackson's widow, Anna Morrison Jackson, offered to sell the Jackson house in Lexington for use as an infirmary for old ladies. The Daughters, seeing the need for a local hospital which could treat those citizens too poor to travel long distances for adequate medical treatment, proposed that they transform the Jackson house

into Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital which not only would serve the city of Lexington and Rockbridge County, but also would treat the students at Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute. Recurring bouts with typhoid fever had renewed the community's need for a local hospital. During these frequent epidemics, the more affluent citizens of Lexington traveled as far as Richmond or Staunton to receive medical care, while ordinary families relied on local doctors who practiced emergency surgeries in their own offices or in patients' homes. As the UDC women explained in a newspaper article asking for contributions to the hospital: "while the wealthier citizens of this town and county are able to seek at a distance the medical aid, appliances, and attention which can only be found in a well appointed hospital, for most of us, the cost of travel and expensive board puts this relief out of reach" (*The Rockbridge County News* 8/16/06).



*Jackson House before restoration*

Although she regretted that she did not have the financial stability to donate her former home for such a worthy cause, Mrs. Jackson agreed to sell the property for \$2,000, and the Mary Custis Lee chapter officially announced its plans to found the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital in April 1904. Area doctors recognized the services that a local hospital would provide, and quickly endorsed the ladies' undertaking in May 1904. In July, the Confederate Veterans also praised the Mary Custis chapter's efforts, and contributions began to accumulate from supporters all over the country. The UDC raised money by hosting luncheons and teas, and by soliciting contributions from "sister" chapters and various Jackson admirers. They raised \$1,250 in Lexington alone by placing regular fundraising requests in the local papers.

The hardworking women finally acquired the deed to the Stonewall Jackson house on February 20, 1906 for \$2,000. Due to Mrs. Jackson's limited financial resources, the property was in poor condition when the Daughters purchased it, and its new owners estimated that they needed an additional \$4,000 for renovations before they could open the hospital to the public. To assist in this undertaking, the Mary Custis Lee chapter appointed a Board of Directors which included five local businessmen who counseled the women about legal ramifications, fundraising, and construction estimates. Borrowing only \$1,200, the Board completed its renovations in 1907, and the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital opened on June 1, 1907. Because the new facility still lacked a central heating plant, only two patients entered the hospital in its first year, and the staff treated only one patient in 1908. Only twenty-six patients received medical care at the hospital in the five years after it opened.

Determined to make their project a success, the Mary Custis Lee chapter continued to raise money for additional improvements. In 1911, the Board of Directors installed a central heating plant, and the local Presbyterian Home sold its properties on Washington Street and donated the proceeds to the Jackson hospital. This contribution financed a three story brick addition to the original building. In the same year, Mrs. H. St. George Tucker donated the house on the

corner of Washington and Randolph streets to be used as a nurses' home. In 1912, five years after its first opening, the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hospital boasted electric lights, hot water, both private rooms and wards, an operating room, a dining room, and office space.

The hospital continued to expand and prosper in the following four decades. During World War I, the hospital staff battled influenza epidemics with the help of volunteer nurses, and the facility underwent massive renovations in the early 1920's. In the following years, the hospital acquired its own x-ray machine and iron lung, and in 1929, William M. McElwee established a \$25,500 trust fund to be used for the construction of a laboratory in memory of his wife. The hospital admitted 1,018 patients between April of 1932 and April of 1933, and these rapidly rising numbers necessitated the four-story addition which was completed in

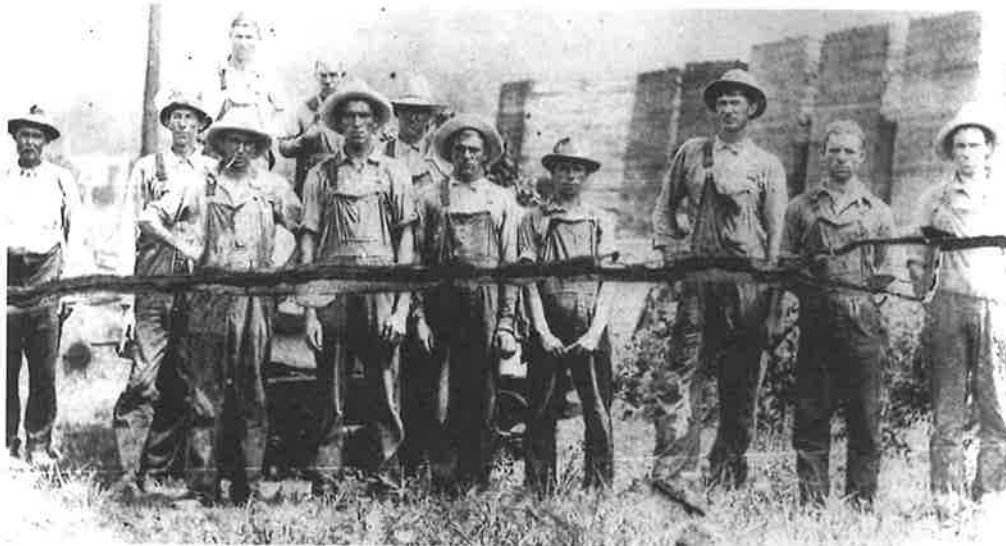
1938, as well as the purchase of the old Dold Building in 1944. By 1947, the enlarged facilities provided space for sixty patients, two operating rooms, had a delivery room, and admitted 2,644 patients during the year.

Although the Stonewall Jackson House served Rockbridge County well during its six decades as a community hospital, the local hospital commission decided to begin construction on a newer, larger facility in December 1947. The Mary Custis Lee chapter graciously agreed to donate all assets from the existing hospital, valued at over \$200,000, to the new Stonewall Jackson Hospital which opened in 1953. Although the old Jackson Memorial Hospital closed its doors in 1954, it remains a symbol of the invaluable contributions of time, money, and civic assistance that Southern women gave to their communities in the early twentieth century.

*Submitted by: Katherine E. McAlpine*

## MIDVALE SECTION CREW

Picture from Robert Morland Bird, grandson of Charles W. McCrory.



*Front, left to right: Charles W. McCrory, Foreman, Howard Harris, John Sorrels, Baxter Miller, Claudie Sorrels, Sade Dempsey, John Clements, Joe Dempsey, and Hiram Duff. Back, John Hostetter, Walter Duff, and Corbet Clements (Note Spellings are as recorded.) No date was given, however, it is believed to be early 1900s. It appears to have been taken at the lumber yard at Cornwall. In the 1930s, Cornwall was locally called Raggedy Edge.*

## MT. VIEW BASEBALL TEAM

This picture shows the first (1953-54) baseball team at the then new Mt. View Elementary School, which opened in September of 1953. The players are from various grades.

**Kneeling are:** E. Wm. Clark, Dennis Camper, Jesse Burch, George Burch, Mac Sorrells, Elmer Bowyer, Ralph Tyree, Danny Burger, Perry Clark, Dan Swink.

**Standing are:** Gomer Lawhorne, Alfred Tyree, unknown, Kenneth "Zip" Burch, Donnie Scott, Jerry Seaman, Richard Chittum, Lloyd Ruff, Fred Alderman, Mr. Bruce Thompson, Coach. *Submitted by: Ruby Leighton*

*Sources: Sylvia Camper, Sandy Camper, Ralph Tyree, Alfred Tyree, Joann Hudson, Betty Bryant*





# NATURAL BRIDGE, A MIRACLE IN STONE

The Natural Bridge of Rockbridge County, Virginia is one of many stone arches found throughout the United States, but it is unique. The stone bridges of other states lie either in remote, barren, or inaccessible regions, or their usefulness is limited to their natural beauty. Natural Bridge of Virginia is a natural beauty in stone, serves heavily traveled Route 11 as a bridge, and is located amidst other scenic and historic attractions of Rockbridge County.



*The Natural Bridge.*

The Natural Bridge itself is made of limestone, 60 to 150 feet broad, with a span of 90 feet from cliff to cliff over Cedar Creek. The arch is 48 feet thick and 215 feet high. Trees, vegetation, and some fencing cover the sides of the arch, preventing Route 11 travelers from realizing they are atop the bridge.

Over many, many years the limestone arch was cut by the mountain stream called Cedar Creek. Cedar Creek has its source in the Short Hills nearby, disappears underground, and reappears under the bridge. The creek is deceptively small, but at times of heavy rain it sends a torrent of water under the bridge. The work of nature was slow but sure in creating Natural Bridge.



*Old Natural Bridge Hotel*

Early Indians and pioneers knew about the bridge, but a road over the bridge was not built until 1753 under the direction of John Mathews. Before then, crossings were made several miles upstream at Red Mill. An English traveler named Burnaby first published word of it in 1759. No local settler patented the land surrounding Natural Bridge, probably because it was unsuitable for farm land. The original patentee of the bridge and some surrounding land was Thomas Jefferson, of Albemarle County, on

July 5, 1774. He surveyed and mapped the land and bridge. In 1802 he built a two-roomed log cabin for a caretaker, a Negro named Patrick Henry. Patrick Henry lived in one room and visitors used the other room in which to record in a book their thoughts about the bridge. The book would certainly make some interesting reading, except it was destroyed by accident in 1845. In 1833 the land left Jefferson's hands and has been in different private hands ever since. It is regrettable that the state or national government never assumed ownership of such a valuable and wonderful piece of property, so that it could have been freely open to the public.

Over the years many notables, including presidents, have visited Natural Bridge. Probably the most famous visitor was George Washington, who later became our first president. He managed to climb about 20 feet above the creek and carve his initials in the rock. His initials can still be seen today.

Better roads and accommodations and ease in traveling have brought an ever increasing number of sightseers to Natural Bridge. It remains a prime tourist attraction of Rockbridge County, bringing visitors from every state and nation.

A drawing of Natural Bridge was chosen by the County of Rockbridge to grace its seal. *Submitted by: Ruby Leighton*  
Sources: Oren F. Morton. *A History of Rockbridge County, Virginia*. Baltimore: Regional Pub. Co., 1980 (originally pub. in 1920 in Staunton, VA). Edmund Pendleton Tompkins. *Rockbridge County, Virginia*. Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1952

## NATURAL BRIDGE STATION

Natural Bridge Station is on land deeds as the west end of Glasgow laid out in lots, not acres. It became a village of its own after Glasgow's Boom in 1883, and was originally "Sherwood."

The N&W depot operated from the early 1902's until 1950's. Four passenger trains stopped each day. An elevator and stairway went from the N&W tracks down to the C&O tracks so travelers could transfer.

Across the street was a store and butcher shop, livery stable, (later a garage and taxi service.) Visitors were taken from the depot to Natural Bridge in carriages. The first macadamized road in Rockbridge County was from this depot to Natural Bridge.

There were also Anna Abbitt's "Rockledge Inn" and Earl Chiles' "Alhambra Hotel", built about 1916. Chiles-Barger's Store was on the first level. The first Bank was in part of the first floor, moved



*Natural Bridge Train Station.*

into one side of Abbitt's building, then across the road from Clark's Store, then to present location.

The Sherwood Post Office was in the Natural Bridge Limestone Company office (Clark's Store) until political change, when it was moved to Abbitt's building, then to Route 130 (Corner Grill), then to its present location.

William's Casket Company was below the hotel. At one time there were Sherwood School, Glenwood School, Episcopal Church (torn down in 1920's), Methodist Church (burned 1920, rebuilt 1922), doctor's office, Viewmont Tourist Home, high school and Pentecostal Holiness Church (now Raynal's stained Glass), which moved to Route 130.

There are still stores for groceries, furniture, lumber and stained glass. There is a bank, post office, elementary school, Corner Grill, two churches and three factories. *Submitted by: Martha Reynolds Watkins*

## EARNEST MITCHELL



*Earnest Mitchell, First Agent at Greenlee Depot*



*Train coming in to the Station.*

## PLANK ROAD

Plank Road runs parallel to Short Hill through Broad Creek Valley. In the mid-1800's, wooden planks were laid on wooden stringers along this low-lying road to provide a smooth mud-free surface for stage coaches, a practice then popular on the east coast.



Valley Railroad Culvert on Plank Road

There are still remains of stone culverts along this road, souvenirs left by the "Valley Railroad", an ill fated project that was never completed. It was to have been the first railroad in Rockbridge County. It was to connect Lexington to Staunton on the north and Salem on the south. It was planned during the Reconstruction Boom and began just before the financial crash of 1893. It cost the county a couple of million dollars, and was dismantled for scrap. The bonds that financed it were paid off and burned in a public ceremony in 1922.

On the northern end of Plank Road was a community named Summers. The little community once had a post office, store, mill, school, and smithy. Broad Creek Church, built about 1849, stands near Plank Road. The cemetery dates back to 1840. Broad Creek School stood across Plank Road from the church. The Link School is on the southern end of Plank road. It still stands as a dwelling.

Miranda, at the fork of Plank Road and Cedar Creek Road, was a stagecoach stop. Travelers stopped there to rest their horses and maybe spend the night. *Submitted by: Martha Reynolds Watkins*

### THE PLANK ROAD

Route 610 running from Lexington beyond Natural Bridge, is one of the oldest major roads in the county. Known locally as Plank Road, this winding route is located roughly along the path taken by Rockbridge's only Plank turnpike.

The road was only one lane wide (about eight feet) with clay turnouts on either side so two vehicles could pass. The roads were constructed on a pair of beams called "sleepers", roughly the same distance apart as the average wagon wheels. These sleepers were embedded in dirt to keep the road surface stable. Across the sleepers were nailed oak planks which formed the smooth surface. The planks were laid in groups which alternately projected several inches to the right or left of the road. This arrangement prevented erosion beside the wooden surface and made it easy for wagons to pull off and on the road. The top was covered with about one inch of sand or clay or sawdust to smooth the riding surface and prevent slipping. It was believed that it reduced friction.

It was believed that the reduced friction of the smooth surface would permit horses to pull heavier loads at a faster rate than was possible on other types of roads. The soft topping of the plank road would reduce slipping even in wet weather and cause less injury to the horse's legs.

The completed sections of the turnpike won high praise from users. The route from Staunton to Buchanan was never finished. The

road quickly decayed. The use of pine instead of more durable fir for sleepers hastened this process and disappeared.

Only a piece of one plank is now preserved in the Virginia Military Institute Museum, in Lexington, Virginia, but the memory survives in the local name for 610 Plank Road. *Submitted by: Henry and Elizabeth Bryant*  
Resources: Betty Mohler Miller, Roads of Rockbridge

## RAPP'S MILL CAVERN

Before or around 1900, America Rapp Reid and John Amos Taylor Reid owned the Caverns in Camp Mountain, near Popular Hollow.

A train track was laid from the Cavern all the way to Rapps Mill. Along the creek and road small cars that contained rocks, stalactites, stalagmites, etc. were pulled by horse or mules.

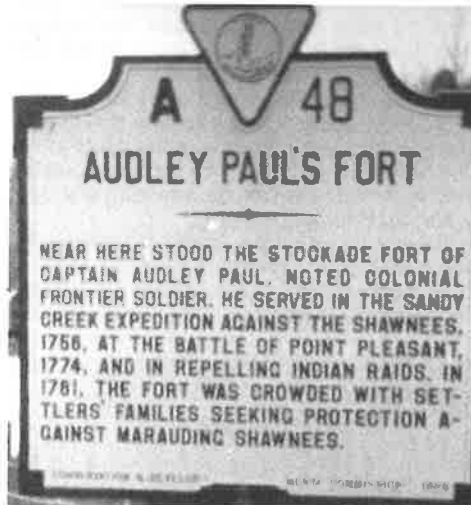
At the mill pieces of the rocks were sawed off into slabs of marble & onyx. This was done by a large fly-wheel, operated by hand, but generated by the mill turbines.

The Virginia Onyx Co. & Mr. Hersey were in charge of this operation. Marble was sold, and several marble tables were made and sold out west.

Some folks in the community have pieces from the mine. One Mr. Charles William Preston Painter lived in Popular Hollow at the time, and requested when deceased, his grave in Rapp's Mill Cemetery be marked by marble from the mill. *Submitted by: Ruth Long*  
Sources: Information From Michael Pursely

### RAPP'S MILL MILITIA COMPANY

Between 1800 to 1859 this militia was organized. It was a local company of able bodied men, from the community. They were a part of Va. Local Defense.



Captain John Franklin Wilson was in command. Born March 1-1812, Captain Wilson owned a plantation on South Buffalo. Employees were neighbors, and some served in the militia, and many served in the Confederate Army or Militia. The Militia was made up of 86 men, before the Civil War. They may have numbered more prior to, and during the first couple years of the war. Names who served are too numerous to mention. The Rapps Mill Militia became known as Company H, 8th Va. Regiment. Men from this area also served in World War I.

They went to Europe to fight the Germans. It was known they never wrote home. They were deployed by ship. They printed cards, and left when they arrived at their destination. Their families read the cards (The ship on which I sailed has landed safely over seas.) *Submitted by: Micheal Pursely*

### COFFIN MAKER AT RAPP'S MILL

During the 1800 to early 1900, Andrew Willis Manspile was responsible to bury the dead.

He was a carpenter by trade, and he hewed coffins out of pine boards. He also made by hand the pews at the Rapp's Mill Church. When folks of the community passed away, it was the custom to lay them out in their homes for a day, and no embalming was done in those days.

He would harness two horses and come to the hearse house near the church. The hearse was black. He would hitch up to it and come to his shop, and pick up the casket for the deceased, then he would go pick up the body from their home. The family or neighbors would have the grave dug by hand, and there were no vaults. If it happened to snow, or the ice was real bad, the graves would be left open until appropriate time to cover it, as the dirt at times would be frozen solid.

The memorial service was at times in the church or at the grave side. A procession would follow the horse drawn hearse.

The hearse house was torn down in 1930.

*Submitted by: Ruth Long*

Sources: Information From Michael Pursely

### SLAVES AND PLANTATIONS RAPP'S MILL

Slaves were present in this area, and worked on what was referred to as The Poor Man's Plantations in the 1790-1800.

Quite a few families owned slaves. The slaves cleared the land, cut brush, and they had to use hand tools. They worked in the corn fields, they cradled wheat & rye, also the mowing and threshing of crops, along with the planting and harvesting tobacco.

There were carpenters & blacksmiths on these plantations. The slaves also had to do the washing, cooking and had to take care of the owner's crops.

Some of the slaves names were (Snowballs, Mackeys, Leggins, Rogers, Stuarts, Merchants).

Some of the slaves died of Whooping-Cough, Dysentery, Diphtheria, Inflammation of the bowel's, Jaundice, Unknown Fevers, and diseases. such as Scrofula-which is the swelling of lymph glands and Tuberculosis. Some also died of natural causes, plus from hard work, and of old age. Most of the slaves had families. The children also worked too.

Some of the slaves are believed to be buried across the road from the Rapp's Mill Church in unmarked graves. Some are buried in the Daniel-Turpin family cemetery, located on a hill on the old Daniel Plantation, and some are not known. *Submitted by: Ms. Ruth Long*  
Sources: information from Michael Pursely

## EARLY ROCKBRIDGE BATHS

In 1843 only one building, a small cabin, stood on the north side of North River now the Maury River. It flowed through an area known as the Cedar Grove and Strickler's or Letcher's Springs Country. Yet, a few people would occasionally spend part of their summers at this cabin for pleasure and recuperation of health. The attraction was a thermal pool fed by bubbling springs. Rockbridge Baths owes its name and notoriety to this watering place which supposedly possessed curative powers.

A hotel to accommodate bathers was built in the 1850's. According to W. Cole Davis in an address to the Rockbridge Historical Society, the name Rockbridge Baths was first used in 1857 as it became associated with the hotel that was incorporated into "The Rockbridge Baths Company" around 1857.



Rockbridge Baths Hotel

For a brief time previously, the Baths had been known as Jordan's Springs after William Jordan who built rows of cottages for summer visitors at the pool. Ostensibly Jordan's Springs existed for about one year, 1856. Yet, a copy of a letter addressed to Jordan's Springs in 1862 suggests that common usage of the name Rockbridge Baths did not occur until sometime after 1862.

In 1868 a hotel brochure described Rockbridge Baths as a place nestled in a valley two miles wide and two and one-half miles long between Buncomb and Marble Mountains on the east and Hogback and Jump Mountains on the west. According to the advertisement, the valley was "laid off into small and well-cultivated farms, interspersed with neat farmhouses, and thickly settled by a population kind, hospitable, moral, industrial and intelligent."



Rockbridge Baths Hotel, Young Visitor

Fertile lands made farming lucrative. In 1873 the *Rockbridge Citizen* reported Baths farmland selling for one hundred dollars per acre. Twenty-five years later, the *Lexington Gazette* credited Rockbridge Baths with some of the finest land in the valley, still valued at one hundred dollars per acre. The *Gazette* also stated that tobacco and corn crops were raised on farms that were well-kept with many outbuildings, suggesting a "thrifty, industrious and well-to-do population."

Descendants of the Scotch from Northern Ireland and the Germans from the Palatinate, the people of Rockbridge Baths did prosper. In his *History of Bethesda Church* Elder John Horne reported that church members, initially settlers on small farms along the river, had built thirty-five new houses in the Baths between 1854 and 1884. Horne also stated that another forty homes in the area contained male heads who were not church members. *Written by: Carrie Mast*  
Sources: <sup>1</sup> "The Rockbridge Baths Country", *Rockbridge Citizen*, June 18, 1873, p. 3. <sup>2</sup> W. Cole Davis, "History of Rockbridge Baths, Goshen Pass and Cedar Grove", *Lexington Gazette*, July 31, 1944, p. 1. <sup>3</sup> Harman and Mayo, *Rockbridge Baths, in Rockbridge County, Virginia* (Baltimore, Maryland: Selby and Dulany, 1868), p. 14. <sup>4</sup> Davis, "History of Rockbridge Baths", *Lexington Gazette*, July 31, 1944, p. 1. <sup>5</sup> A letter to Joseph Addams, Jordan's Spring, Rockbridge County, Virginia, February 4, 1862. <sup>6</sup> Harman and Mayo, *Rockbridge Baths*, p. 3. <sup>7</sup> "The Rockbridge Baths Country", *Rockbridge Citizen*, p. 3. <sup>8</sup> *Lexington Gazette*, 1898, from the *Withrow Papers*, Vol III. <sup>9</sup> E. W. McCorkle, "Bethesda Church", *Lexington Gazette*, from the *Withrow Papers*, Vol. III. <sup>10</sup> John Horne, *History of Bethesda Church*, February 17, 1884, p. 14.

### EARLY ECONOMIC LIFE ROCKBRIDGE BATHS

As the area of settlement expanded so did the Baths economy. Besides farming, a list of white voters in 1889 noted the following occupations of Baths residents: miller, blacksmith, undertaker, carpenter and shoemaker. A letter to the editor of the *Rockbridge County News* in 1885 also provides information about the prosperity of the Baths. The correspondent, Nebuchadnezzar, scolded the paper for neglecting news about Rockbridge Baths. In his complaint, he cited these evidences of a self-supporting community: a flourmill, sawmill, two cabinet shops, two blacksmith shops, a shoe shop, one store, and a good postmaster and wife with a millinery shop.

Other businesses at the Baths, unlisted by Nebuchadnezzar, included a pottery, tailor and cooper shop. At optimist, Nebuchadnezzar believed that his village of about one hundred citizens would soon be incorporated into a town.

The Baths never became a town although it boasted valuable mineral deposits for some time. A marble quarry of superior quality was opened on the farm of J.A. Logan near Rockbridge Baths in 1867. On July 30, 1873 the *Rockbridge Citizen* reported the following:

A correspondent of *The State Journal* writing from the Rockbridge Baths, says that among the handsome farms in that section which show thrift and comfort are those of Joseph M. Adams, Dr. McCorkle, and the Philadelphia Marble Co. This company has bought a fine farm, bordering on the North River, on which is found quarries of very beautiful translucent marble, with a view of working it out for the market. Hays Creek comes rushing down from the mountain gorges from the North and joins North River at this place; and on its banks are also found one of the marble quarries near here of fine quality.

Of much greater fame than the marble deposits were the two iron works of Rockbridge Baths. The Lebanon Valley Forge, whose products aided the Confederacy during the Civil War, stood directly across the North River from Bethesda Church. "The hammer, which must have weighed seven hundred pounds, marked the forge's location years after the river had washed all other vestiges away. About 1894 Dr. Samuel Brown Morrison placed the hammer in his front yard. Dr. Morrison's grandson, Robert Steel Hutcheson, finally gave it for scrap during World War II. Thus as stated by Bernard K. Bangley the Lebanon Valley Forge helped the United States during two wars."

The Gibraltar Forge can be claimed by the Baths even though its site rested on the Davis farm one mile south of the village. This forge made the hearths, fireplace bricks, nails and spikes for the Davis house.

After 1850 the iron forges declined as anthracite and ore replaced the charcoal furnaces. Most furnaces lasted through the Civil War and then closed permanently.

Like the iron works, the grist mill at Rockbridge Baths contributed to the Civil War by making flour for the Confederate Army. The flour was shipped by packet boat down the North River to the James River to Richmond.

Besides making flour, the mill, operated by William Foutz, ground rye, oats and corn into meal for bread, feed and use at local distilleries. Prices for these products varied little between 1856 and 1873. The Foutz Mill Ledgers from March 29, 1856 through November 1, 1873 showed the following changes:

December 18, 1856:	3 bushels of bran - .50
December 28, 1856:	2 bushels of corn - \$1.25
February 13, 1870:	1 barrel of flour - \$5.50
	2 bushels of feed - \$7.00
October 27, 1873:	1 barrel of flour - \$7.00
November 1, 1873:	4 bushels of meal - \$3.00

The greatest price fluctuations appear to be in flour which increased \$1.50 per barrel in three years. The barrels for the mill were made at a nearby cooper shop.

A tailor shop existed near the present residence of Mrs. Leona Newcomer. According to the shop's ledger, the business prospered between 1852 and 1880. The tailor, Mr. James M. Webb, bought the property from Mr. Stewart Taylor for two bonds of one hundred twenty and one hundred forty-five dollars. Mr. Webb, like Mr. Taylor, also served as postmaster of the Baths.

Mr. Webb's duties as tailor included making and "making over" vests, coats, pants, and suits out of such materials as tweed, linen and corduroy. Costs of the above services were as follows:

July 12, 1852:	cutting a vest - .25
	making a coat - \$2.00
April 25, 1853:	making white pants - \$2.75
	1854: a suit - \$5.00
	1868: making a suit - \$6.00
	1871: making pants - \$7.00

Customer payments consisted of cash and/or pork, beef, flour, etc.

The general store represents the only nineteenth century economic institution to survive modern times. A legend exists of an Irishman digging the foundation for the first store at Rockbridge Baths. When someone inquired of his actions, he replied, "I am digging a hole to bury Cedar Grove in." Cedar Grove, a nearby hamlet, did die but not due to the Baths.

After moving from Cedar Grove, Joseph Adams erected the first store around 1845. Walter Anderson built the present structure in 1870 and operated it until his death when his son, Tom Anderson, assumed ownership. In (1976) Mrs. Connie Wieman owned and managed the business.

Apparently some of the Store's prices seemed too high in the 1880's since Nebuchadnezzar's aforementioned editorial in the *Rockbridge County News* encouraged merchants to establish another enterprise in the Baths. Nevertheless, Nebuchadnezzar stressed that "our merchant is a gentleman in every respect."

The Rockford and Hays Creek Bridges helped perpetuate the Baths economy by providing access to outside areas. In their January 15, 1868 edition of the *Gazette and Banner*, the editors congratulated the "substantial and thriving" citizens on their accomplishment of getting a new bridge near the Baths. Encouraging people to contribute, the writers emphasized the importance of a good thoroughfare from Goshen to Lexington.

The Rockford Bridge, which crossed North River in front of the present day Berry residence, must have been the editorial subject. This bridge replaced a covered one that contained no pier in the middle.



Foutz's Mill built c1815 later Mast Mill c1935

In a contract between John Woods and the Bridge Committee on March 14, 1868, Mr. Woods agreed to "build the wood structure of an arch bridge across North River at the Rockford, one hundred and thirty-seven feet long with projections of eight feet at each end, with a roadway threw(sic) ... The construction cost of \$1850.00. Five hundred dollars would be paid when the frame was raised; the rest would be paid with the visible completion of the project — contracted for October 1, 1868.

On the east end of the Baths, Hays Creek posed problems for bridge contractors. The *Lexington Gazette* carried complaints in 1877 about late mail arrival, due to the dangers of crossing this bridge. By 1889 a new iron bridge stretched across Hays Creek making traveling more enjoyable — at least for awhile. *Written by: Carrie Mast*

Sources: <sup>1</sup> *List of White Voters in the Tenth District of Virginia*, February 1, 1889, pp. 265-66. <sup>2</sup> Nebuchadnezzar, "Editorial", *Rockbridge County News*, January 30, 1885, p. 2. <sup>3</sup> *Gazette and Banner*, January 23, 1867, p. 3. <sup>4</sup> "Rockbridge Farms", *Rockbridge Citizen*, July 30, 1873, p. 2. <sup>5</sup> Davis, "History of Rockbridge Baths", *Lexington Gazette*, July 31, 1944, pp. 7 & 8. <sup>6</sup> Recollections of Charles F. Hileman, June 30, 1976. <sup>7</sup> *Ledger*, "The Foutz Mill", January, 1867 - February 18, 1870, pp. 1-5. <sup>8</sup> *Ledger*, "The Foutz Mill", March 29, 1856 - January 28, 1857. <sup>9</sup> *Ledger*, "The Foutz Mill", September 6, 1860 - March 15, 1870, p. 52. <sup>10</sup> Recollections of W.A. Wilson, July 6, 1976. <sup>11</sup> *Ledger*, "The Tailor Shop", April 25, 1849-September 27, 1880. <sup>12</sup> Davis, "History of Rockbridge Baths", *Lexington Gazette*, June 31, 1944. <sup>13</sup> *Rockbridge County News*, January 30, 1885, p. 2. <sup>14</sup> *Gazette and Banner*, January 15, 1868, p. 3. <sup>15</sup> Recollections of W.A. Wilson, July 6, 1976. <sup>16</sup> *A Bridge Contract Between John Woods and the Rockford Bridge Committee*, March 14, 1868. <sup>17</sup> *Lexington Gazette*, January 19, 1877, p. 3.

## EARLY RELIGIOUS LIFE OF ROCKBRIDGE BATHS

The two churches at the Baths guided and directed the lives of their members. Sermons about the realities of hell admonished sinners to "fear God, his saints, and you will then have nothing else to fear."

Lambert's Meeting House, built by Tobias Lambert on his property, furnished the Methodists with a place of worship until the Civil War. During the war the church split into two factions. Soon afterward, a new brick church was built near the old site and the Methodist Episcopal Church began.

On May 23, 1907 the McCurdy heirs sold three acres and a house to the Methodists, and Ebenezer Church moved to its present location on the north side of North River, about one-half mile north of its original establishment.

One of the Methodist's most notable members was William Taylor. An evangelist, Taylor traveled in the United States, Canada, England, Ireland, Australia, Africa, the West Indies and British Guiana. In the 1870's the people of India and South America benefited from his work. Supposedly, Mr. Taylor began the educational work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in South America. Released from the ministry in 1896, William Taylor retired in Palo Alto, California where he died in 1902.

Bethesda Presbyterian Church was organized at Strickler's Springs in 1821. The Reverend A.B. Davidson held services at the springs and local schoolhouses until an arrangement was made with the Methodists who already had a meeting house. According to the agreement, the Presbyterians could worship in the Methodist building every other Sunday if they repaired the structure. Spending two hundred dollars, the Presbyterians fixed the windows, roof and pulpit of the log house.

However, the following incident, recalled by John Horne in his *History of Bethesda Church*, ended the aforesaid relationship:

One day a man by the name of Edward a Methodist preacher got in the pulpit and comment (sic) shoveing (sic) out his elbows for some time not saying a word after some time, he said they wanted room, they must have room and they would occupy (sic) all the time. The majority of our people was (sic) at church on that memorable day. It was too much for their Scotch Irish blood, ...

At that point the Presbyterians decided to erect a church of their own, and in 1843 their new building was dedicated. Installed on November 13, 1875 the Reverend C.W. Humphries oversaw the construction of the present church.

During the late 1800's Bethesda grew in ranks. From 1869 until June 7, 1880 the church received eighty-two new members by examination and twenty-four by certificate. By February 17, 1884, one hundred and sixty-four new members had been received.



Bishop Taylor's Home

In addition to providing religious activities, the churches sponsored social functions for the Baths community. The March 3, 1869 edition of the *Virginia Gazette* carried an advertisement for a dinner and fair at the Baths to be sponsored by the ladies of Bethesda Church. Dinner, costing fifty cents, would be served at one o'clock. The announcement promised "a bountiful table and plenty of innocent amusement."

To pay off a church debt, the ladies of Ebenezer Church gave an oyster supper and concert on December 26, 1879. A pleasant affair, the concert was under the management of Mr. F.B. Neal. *Written by: Carrie Mast*

Sources: <sup>1</sup> *Rockbridge County News*, February 2, 1889, p. 3. <sup>2</sup> Sermon, "Bethesda Presbyterian Church", *Rockbridge Baths*, June 25, 1886, p. 18. <sup>3</sup> Albert Cupp, *A History of Methodism in Rockbridge County, Virginia*, (No publication data) <sup>4</sup> John Horne, *History of Bethesda Church*, <sup>5</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, March 3, 1869, p. 3. <sup>6</sup> *The Enterprise*, December 18, 1879, p. 3.

## EARLY SCHOOLS OF ROCKBRIDGE BATHS

Intellectual life in the Baths centered around the Riverside and McElwee Schools and, for a short time, the local newspaper. On July 31, 1872 the *Rockbridge Citizen* announced the acquisition of two copies of the *Rockbridge Baths Review*. The *Review* was a tri-weekly published at the Baths by Brown Ayers, a multi-talented genius. The *Citizen* lauded Ayers' "spicy, readable" and well-printed publication.



Rockbridge Baths School (Riverside)

Surviving the tri-weekly by three-quarters of a century, the Riverside School opened its doors around 1879 or 1880. Originally a three room, one-story structure, the school was built on land deeded by William and Martha L. McCurdy to the School Trustees of the Walker's Creek District on September 8, 1879.

Although no information could be obtained about the instruction at Riverside in the 1800's, a report card, diploma and graduation announcement of the early 1900's suggest what might have occurred. In 1917 a Riverside report card cited data about department, attendance and performance in spelling, English, Latin, Algebra, History, Agriculture and Civil Government. As today, the announcement of the commencement exercises of Francis V. Hileman for May 22, 1918 at eight o'clock included a name card, class motto, colors, flower and roll. Academic excellence must have been stressed as the *Rockbridge County News* carried periodic announcements of those achieving the honor roll at Riverside.

Riverside served a social as well as intellectual role in the Baths. On January 30, 1885 the *Rockbridge County News* proclaimed nightly meetings of the YMCA at the school. Also, an oyster supper to be given by the Odd-fellows at Riverside was advertised by the *News* on January 2, 1889.

Unlike Riverside, the McElwee School was privately operated by Mrs. William Meek McElwee. A great community influence, Mrs. McElwee began a school at the home of Mr. Samuel Gibson where she and her husband, The Reverend William McElwee, lived before occupying the Bethesda parsonage. In 1889



Rockbridge Baths School, Teacher Margaret Tardy c1915



Rockbridge Baths School, Teacher Bettie Morrison

the McElwees moved to the parsonage near the church and Mrs. McElwee established a school in the church basement called "Mrs. McElwee's Private School."

About twenty pupils from five to twenty-four years of age attended the school which opened with prayer and Bible stories or reading followed by Bible verse recitation. Primary grade subjects, and Latin and Algebra were taught thoroughly. A strict disciplinarian, Mrs. McElwee conducted a successful school due to her impressive personality and the subsequent occupations of her pupils which embraced business, medicine, farming, engineering and the ministry. *Written by: Carrie Mast*

Sources: <sup>1</sup> *Rockbridge Citizen*, July 31, 1872, p. 3. <sup>2</sup> W.A. Wilson, July 6, 1976. <sup>3</sup> *Deed Book*, "Rockbridge County", RR, 1879-1880, pp. 124-25. <sup>4</sup> Francis V. Hileman, Report Card, Riverside School, 1917. <sup>5</sup> *Graduation Announcement*, Riverside School, May 22, 1918. <sup>6</sup> *Rockbridge County News*, January 1, 1886, p. 3. <sup>7</sup> *Rockbridge County News*, January 30, 1885, p. 2. <sup>8</sup> *Rockbridge County News*, January 2, 1889, p. 3. <sup>9</sup> Davis, "History of Rockbridge Baths", *Lexington Gazette*,

## EARLY SOCIAL LIFE OF ROCKBRIDGE BATHS

Even when the resorts, the Baths and Wilson's Springs, were closed, the people of Rockbridge Baths enjoyed a varied and exciting social life. Tournaments, fox hunts, concerts, plays, fraternal organizations, dancing and "rectifying houses" provided ample entertainment. For example, on July 17, 1872 the *Rockbridge Citizen* reported the following event: "The Baths has a tournament today. We can't promise for the riding and the ring poking, but we will bet on Brown doing his part in providing handsomely for those who attend." Obviously, Brown was Brown Ayers, editor of the previously mentioned *Rockbridge Baths Review*. The April 3, 1885 edition of the *Rockbridge County News* exclaimed that the Baths boys beat the Timber Ridge boys in a fox chase. It must have been fun since another one was to be arranged in April.

At least two bands supplied enjoyment in the Baths. A cornet band held regular meetings on

Tuesday nights in 1886, and a brass band led a "pounding and serenade" on January 2, 1889.

The Rockbridge Baths Lodge of the Odd Fellows organized on February 3, 1885. Meeting on Monday nights at 7:30 p.m. at the Riverside School, the Odd Fellows sponsored many social events such as plays and oyster suppers. The play "Ten Nights in a Barroom" was performed at 7:30 p.m. on March 31, 1893 at the Riverside School to benefit the I.O.O.F.

Some behaviors, namely profanity, drinking and dancing, met the consternation of the church. The greatest impropriety was drunkenness, perhaps because its practice predominated since Rockbridge Baths had a saloon or rectifying house. In April 1881 Joseph M. Adams applied for a retail license to sell liquor at his rectifying house.\* If one wished to bypass the saloon, there was always the local distillery. On April 3, 1885 Mr. H.A. McCormick informed readers of the *Rockbridge County News* of the near completion of another building where "he will dispense 'bug juice' by the gallon."

To fight intemperance, the YMCA, Temperance Society and prayer meetings evolved. Bethesda Church had its own weapon — the Session. Acting as an informal civil court, the Session called those members suspected of misconduct before them for a hearing. In one case, Mr. Robert F. Selby was requested to appear as he had been "using language unbecoming a Christian, fighting, carrying a rock as a concealed weapon and intoxicated at sundry times." Mr. Selby had also visited the bar room paying for spirits for other parties.

Besides the above weaknesses, Mr. Selby also had trouble with punctuality. The Session first issued a citation for Mr. Selby to appear on October 14, 1876 at one o'clock. When he did not appear, the Session sent another citation for October 21, 1876. Again, he did not come. Finally, on October 24 Mr. Selby went before the Session, explained his nonappearances, confessed his actions, asked for forgiveness and prayers and promised to thereafter follow the church rules.



Looking across river from Rockbridge Baths Hotel

Not all members were as compliant as Mr. Selby. On December 22, 1877 Mr. W.E. Day appeared on charges of drunkenness. After demanding to hear who reported him and foregoing a formal trial, Mr. Day confessed, but added that he did no one harm. A lecture by the Session followed and Mr. Day then promised not to drink any more "as a general thing" after New Year's. At that point, more pressure was applied to Mr. Day to promise to stop drinking immediately. In reply, Mr. Day said that "I will not bind myself with a promise not to take drams occasionally when I feel like it." Mr. Day was thereupon suspended from Bethesda.

John Anderson was called before the Session to answer charges of "sinful cursing and profane swearing." Becoming very angry, Mr. Anderson justified his actions, requested the removal of his name from the church records, and stated "that the church was full of hypocrites."

The general repertoire of offenders brought before the Session consisted of penitence, promises to change and appearance again within several months. Even the sternest of reprimands effected only temporary modifications in behavior.



Cottage Row South

Anyone distilling or selling liquor also suffered Sessional reprimands. On February 12, 1881, the Session moved to ask Mr. J.M. Adams to stop his bar due to its bad influence. In a letter to New Monmouth Presbyterian Church, the Session asked New Monmouth to accept Mr. Herbert Van Derver into its fellowship because of his operation of a distillery at the Baths. New Monmouth refused Mr. Van Derver since acceptance implied support of his conduct.

Along with intemperance, the church reproached frivolities and settled civil disputes. In her book *Mrs. McCulloch's Stories of Ole Lexington*, Mrs. Charles McCulloch related the following experience:

"I was playing 'Chopsticks' with two fingers on the piano with several children ... A minister approached and said 'Now is that something to play on Sunday?' Horrified, Mrs. McCulloch did not appear until late the next day.

Anyone known dancing at parties or public events had their names read from the pulpit and placed on the church's reserve roll until they appeared before the Session and promised abstinence.



Liberty Hall and Tennis Court

A civil dispute between Frederick Mohler and William Foutz was resolved by the church. Mr. Mohler was charged with cutting a locust tree not belonging to him upon the property of William Foutz. The Session acquitted him since no established boundary line, deed or plot was produced by Mr. Foutz.

In addition to the church, the Home Guard tried to influence and control behavior — toward the Negro and Confederacy. On April 20, 1861 a Home Guard organized at the Baths and adopted the following resolutions concerning conduct: 1) It was one's duty to break up Negroes (more than 3) gathered together off their master's premises, except for church. 2) Any white talking suspiciously with a Negro, or even heard talking from a good source, would be arrested and taken to a justice of the peace. Anyone disloyal to the South would be approached and warned. If the conduct continued, he or she would be reported to the authorities.

\*This must have been application for a license renewal since a later reference refers to Mr. Adams' bar in February, 1881. *Written by: Carrie Mast*

Sources: 1. *Rockbridge Citizen*, July 17, 1872, p. 3. 2. *Rockbridge County News*, February 13, 1885, p. 3. 3. *Rockbridge County News*, November 26, 1886, p. 3. 4. *Rockbridge County News*, January 2, 1889, p. 3. 5. *Rockbridge County News*, February 13, 1885, p. 2. 6. *Rockbridge County News*, December 4, 1885, p. 1. 7. *Rockbridge County News*, March 23, 1893, p. 3. 8. *Rockbridge Enterprise*, April 8, 1881, p. 3. 9. *Rockbridge County News*, April 3, 1885, p. 2. 10. *Minutes of the Session*, Vol. I, Bethesda Presbyterian Church, September 24, 1876, 11. *Minutes of the Session*, Vol. II, Bethesda Presbyterian Church, November 23, 1889, p. 10. 12. *Minutes of the Session*, Vol. I, p. 84. 13. *Minutes of the Session*, Vol. II, July 5, 1896, pp. 101-03. 14. Mrs. Charles McCulloch, *Mrs. McCulloch's Stories of Ole Lexington*, ed. by Charles W. Turner (Verona: The McClure Press, 1972), p. 45. 15. *Minutes of the Session*, Vol. II, February 2, 1896, p. 94. 16. *Minutes of the Session*, Vol. I, August 21, 1885, pp. 153-54. 17. Stuart Taylor, *Organization of the Home Guard*, April 30, 1862.

## ROCKBRIDGE BATHS RESORT

During the summer, social life focused upon the two allurements of the Baths — its resorts. As previously mentioned, the Rockbridge Baths referred to a thermal pool of bubbling springs. Having ostensibly curative effects, the pool attracted persons desirous of relaxation and therapy. To accommodate visitors, bathhouses, cottages, and a hotel were built.

The earliest bathhouse was described in the following manner by the *Rockbridge Citizen* in 1873:

The bathhouse consisted of a square pen made of rough boards or slabs set up endways, and without any covering. Privacy, and not style, was evidently the sole object of the rude structure. The toilet table of the bather was a big sandstone, kept clean by the rains from the heavens, and if he or she did not take the precaution to provide themselves with a towel, comb or brush beforehand, they would find they were in a bad way. The pebble bottom of the present day was then a bed of boulders ranging from the size of a half bushel and upward.

Mrs. Lucinda Smith was the first known person to open the Rockbridge Baths Hotel. No one knows exactly when the Hotel began except that Mrs. Smith enlarged a building, cleared away bushes and erected a plank fence eight to ten feet high. William Jordan succeeded Ms. Smith as owner of the resort until 1857 when it was incorporated into the "Rockbridge Baths Co." The corporation made it financially possible to build two bathhouses and enlarge the hotel.

On July 16, 1857 the *Lexington Gazette* announced the purchase of the Rockbridge Baths Hotel by a "Company of enterprising gentlemen who have erected additional buildings." Citing ample accommodations and new attractions, the *Gazette* encouraged its readers to visit the Baths. At this time, the boarding rate was ten dollars per week which included all expenses.

The next proprietors of the Baths were Col. B.D. Harman and R.G. Mayo. These men operated the hotel from at least 1867 through 1869 when it was sold at public auction.\* The June 23, 1869 edition of the *Virginia Gazette* advertised the "Rockbridge Baths" in Virginia for sale on July 29, 1869 at twelve o'clock in the afternoon. The property to be sold comprised thirty-two and one-half acres adjoined by the Trevey farm of eight acres that would be sold separately. The Baths property was sold to Col. M.G. Harman of Staunton for \$15,000.00 and the Trevey Farm was bought by Mr. Samuel F. Jordan for \$7,052.00.

From 1874 until 1900 Dr. Samuel Brown Morrison operated the Baths as a sanitarium. A man of renowned personality and surgical skill (a distinctive member of the Confederate Medical Corps), Dr. Morrison made the Baths a very popular place.

Popularity was nothing new for the Baths in the 1870's. According to the *Gazette and General Advertiser*, there were about one hundred visitors on August 4, 1859 including Chief Justice Taney. Also Governor Wise and a large group were expected to arrive soon.

During the Civil War, business quite naturally declined. A report of two men, who were called to war but received furloughs, recalled the Baths as having few visitors during their stay. After stating that some springs did not open at all, the men noted that "the worthy proprietor Mr. Jordan, adapts the place rather more to notaries of pleasure than to invalids. He 'feeds' too well to feed sick people."

To increase their business, proprietors Harman and Mayo compiled a brochure in 1868 describing the many attractions of the Rockbridge Baths. Two baths five to five and one-half feet deep provided seventy-two degree water all year to invalids, and on and after June the first to vacationers. Containing large amounts of magnesia and smaller quantities of calcium, iron, iodine, potassium and soda, the waters supposedly helped dyspepsia, diabetes, gout, rheumatism, psoriasis, paralysis, eye infections, uterine problems, ulcers, intestinal problems, syphilitic affections and disorders of the liver, spleen, lung, brain, nerves and skin.

Lengthy descriptions of the waters' magical effects upon specific diseases were presented as follows: "To persons suffering from the wretched form of disease technically known as spermatorrhea ... these Baths are highly beneficial. The worst forms of gonorrhoea are immediately cured by the use of this water internally and externally, with frequent injections." A testimonial by John Letcher, a frequent Baths visitor since boyhood, depicted the Baths as very helpful in skin diseases and invigorating in general debility cases.

Located eleven miles from Lexington and nine miles from the Goshen Depot on the Virginia Central Railroad, the Rockbridge Baths had daily stages leaving from "Lexington, Natural Bridge, Bath Alum, Rockbridge Alum



Rockbridge Baths Hotel and Springs



Rockbridge Baths Bath House and Spring

Springs ... Staunton, Alexandria, Lynchburg, Richmond, Washington, Baltimore ... " On July 2, 1873 the *Rockbridge Citizen* predicted greater success for the Baths due to railroad improvements.

Railroad advancements made the Baths more accessible, but the Morrison proprietorship proved a greater enticement. For twenty-six years Dr. Morrison offered low rates, rest and relaxation. Advising persons to stay in the waters only a few minutes at first, Dr. Morrison provided morning and afternoon bathing hours. The men and women bathed separately and each had a bath attendant. The "moving spirit" for the women was Nancy Steptoe. In her recollections, Mrs. Charles McCulloch described this black woman who "looked as if she had always been old" in this manner:

She wore the bandana that people wore in those days. She was a friend of everybody and she would manage the children. If any child was troublesome at all, Nancy would settle that in about two seconds. She rubbed down the people that needed rubbing and she had several maids who assisted her.

The male attendant, Ras Henderson, also gave great rubdowns.

Delightful as a country place, city people came to the Baths because Dr. Morrison was continuously on call as a physician. While managing the Baths, Dr. Morrison operated on a woman who refused surgery in Richmond due to little chance of recovery. After telling her that she might die in surgery but that she would die shortly anyway, he removed a large ovarian cyst. The woman's recovery greatly enhanced Dr. Morrison's reputation as a surgeon.

Before he assumed ownership of the Baths Hotel, Mrs. Stonewall Jackson, a cousin, wrote Dr. Morrison about changing the date of her gynecological examination. On August 7, 1873 Dr. J.M. Slede from Fincastle wrote asking for advice and consultation about one of his patients, an "inferral case."

One final attraction, the food, lured people to the Morrison place. The large dining room served a huge midday dinner. You helped yourself to pitchers of milk, buttermilk and water drunk from large glass goblets. Supper featured cold beef, various breads and desserts. Cake made by Mrs. Morrison and preserves were unlimited.

Amusements at the Baths included croquet, ten-pins, walks, nightly parlor readings, and piano playing and singing ended with family prayer. According to Mrs. McCulloch, there were two parlors in the Baths Hotel. One contained a piano, the other an organ that was used on Sundays for church services after supper. Other family activities were tennis, chess, going to the store for candy and notions, and picking blackberries on Jump Mountain with tin buckets bought at the store for 10 cents.

Tournaments and balls comprised the more pretentious forms of entertainment. On July 25, 1866 the *Gazette and Banner* announced a ball to initiate the tourist season at the Baths. Excellent music, a "good time generally and a glorious bath to boot" was assured to all who attended. The August 18, 1869 edition of the *Virginia Gazette* reported on a Grand Dress Ball that had already occurred. At twelve o'clock, cakes, fruits and ices had been served in the dining room, and dancing went on until two o'clock. The same article informed readers of two approaching balls — a Chinese Ball for August 20 and a Masquerade Ball for August 27.

Another reason for a ball was the tournament. On August 5, 1870 the *Virginia Gazette* proclaimed a tournament between the Knights of Augusta and Rockbridge. Afterward, a coronation, followed by the ball, would be held for the queen and maids.

Visitor prominence and frequency exemplified the success of the Rockbridge Baths. Two of the most prominent and frequent visitors of the Baths were Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Lee. In a letter to his mother on September 25, 1865 Lee, using the baths two to three times daily, reported them as delightful. In the summer of 1866 Lee took his wife, an invalid, to the Baths to hopefully procure relief from her pain. When he could, about once a week, Lee left Lexington to visit his wife. In a letter to his son on July 28, 1866 Lee reported that his wife found the water agreeable as it had reduced swelling in her feet and ankles. Remarking that the Baths had given Mrs. Lee more confidence, Lee said that she now used her crutches more and longer. Mrs. Lee stayed at the Baths for the rest of the summer.

Other notable persons to visit the Baths were the Shah of Persia on June 28, 1877 and Ulysses S. Grant and Bismark on June 30, 1877. On August 12, 1868 the *Gazette and Banner* reported the reservations of Commodore Matthew Fontaine Maury and family at the Baths.

According to the *Rockbridge Baths Hotel Register*, from June 6, 1876-June 3, 1882, people visited the Baths from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Tennessee, Missouri, Louisiana, New York, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Massachusetts, West Virginia and South Carolina. Entries from foreign countries such as France, Ireland, Africa and Spain were also included. Some of these addresses can probably be explained by the proximity of Washington and Lee University. Of course, most travelers came from places in Virginia: Lexington, Harrisonburg, Staunton, Charlottesville, Winchester, and Richmond.

The marginal notes of the *Baths Hotel Register* provided insight about some of the visitors to the area. Besides recording the name, address, room number and number of meals taken and horses brought by the Misses Carrie Walker, Fannie Morrison, Nannie Morrison and Ida Rafifs, the desk manager noted that these

ladies were "deadbeets"(sic). Remarks about physical appearance were also common. Mrs. H. Prentis from Carrollton, Missouri was "very ugly" while Bob Brown and his wife from Jacktown, Texas were thought to be "good looking." \*No source informed the writer of this fact. It is assumed due to a *Gazette and Banner* advertisement of the Baths on July 3, 1867 citing B.D. Harman & R.G. Mayo as proprietors. *Written by: Carrie Mast*

Sources: 1. *Rockbridge Citizen*, June 18, 1873, p. 3. 2. Harman and Mayo, *Rockbridge Baths*, p. 14. 3. Cole Davis, "*History of Rockbridge Baths*", June 31, 1944, p. 1. 4. *Lexington Gazette*, July 16, 1857, p. 2. 5. *Lexington Gazette*, July 23, 1857, p. 2. 6. *Virginia Gazette*, June 23, 1869, p. 3. 7. *Virginia Gazette*, August 4, 1869, p. 3. 8. Cole Davis, "*History of Rockbridge Baths*", June 31, 1944, p. 2. 9. "*News of 100 Years Ago*", *Gazette and General Advertiser*, August 4, 1959, p. 2. 10. *Lexington Gazette and General Advertiser*, August 1, 1861, p. 1. 11. Harman and Mayo, *Rockbridge Baths*, 12. *Rockbridge Citizen*, July 12, 1873, p. 1. 13. McCulloch, *Mrs. McCulloch's Stories*, p. 43. 14. Davis, "*History of Rockbridge Baths*", p. 3. 15. McCulloch, *Mrs. McCulloch's Stories*, p. 43. 16. Davis, "*History of Rockbridge Baths*", 17. A letter to Dr. Samuel B. Morrison from Mrs. Stonewall Jackson, September 31, 1871. 18. A Letter to Dr. Samuel B. Morrison from Dr. J.M. Slede, August 7, 1873, p. 1. 19. Mrs. McCulloch, *Mrs. McCulloch's Stories*, pp. 44-45. 20. *Lexington Gazette*, 1898, from the Withrow Papers, Vol. III. 21. Mrs. McCulloch, *Mrs. McCulloch's Stories*, pp. 44-45. 22. *Gazette and Banner*, July 25, 1866, p. 3. 23. *Virginia Gazette*, August 18, 1869, p. 3. 24. *Virginia Gazette*, August 5, 1870, p. 3. 25. Robert E. Lee, *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1904) 26. *Register*, Rockbridge Baths Hotel, p. 39. 27. *Gazette and Banner*, August 12, 1868, p. 3. 28. *Register*, Rockbridge Baths Hotel

## WILSON'S SPRINGS

Originally known as Strickler's Springs, Wilson's Springs was bought from Joseph Strickler by William A. Wilson on November 16, 1843 for seven thousand dollars. Since 1843 the land has remained in the Wilson family, and unlike the Baths, anyone had the privilege of using the springs without expense. The deed made by the executors of Daniel Strickler to William A. Wilson granted the right of access to the springs by the public.

After the Wilsons moved there in 1843, the name Wilson's Springs gradually evolved. There were ten springs, but the sulphur ones became the most famous. The Wilsons cleared the land and improved the main house — previously a two room log cabin with a "lean to kitchen." More rooms were added and one room with a piano was reserved for the ballroom. The ballroom later became the men's quarters or den.



Old Summer Cottage, Wilson Springs, 1939

Like the Baths, the main attraction of Wilson's Springs supposedly lay in the waters from the sulphur and chalybeate springs that rose from a small island in the middle of North River. One reached the springs by crossing a long foot log. The route held little danger since the water was only a few feet deep. At first, mainly farming families of Rockbridge County came for three weeks of changed routine after the harvest and the corn "laid by." This influx of farmers occurred the last two weeks of July and the first week of August.

According to Oren Morton in his work *Rockbridge County, Virginia*, the farmers arrived in



Wilson Springs Hotel, Entrance to Goshen Pass

four-horse drawn covered wagons equipped with beds and supplies. They slept in their wagons, did their own cooking and ate on benches on the front porch. During the Civil War, rows of log cabins were built opposite the sulphur springs. The cabins quartered Confederate soldiers who guarded the east end of Goshen Pass. After the war, families used the cabins and constructed more. The area on which the cabins stood became known as "the green." Located across from the sulphur springs, the crude cabins generally contained two large rooms, one for the men and one for the women. Although the people slept on straw-filled "ticks" no recorded complaints of "roughing it" exist.

The food at Wilson's Springs became as famous as that served at the Baths. Fried ham, bacon, coffee, homemade pickles, jellies, preserves, watermelons, cantaloupes, fresh vegetables and fruit bought locally adorned the tables at mealtime.

The social life at the Springs offered as great an attraction as the sulphur waters. Women visited in cabins and under oak trees while girls flirted, swam and picked huckleberries. The children waded in the river or played in the sand. The men fished for black bass and silver perch and hunted bear. If a bear was killed its meat and hide were seldom used since the real purpose of the quest was female adoration.

Other forms of pleasure at the Springs consisted of croquet, tennis, and dancing on a platform in the middle of the Green to the accompaniment of a banjo and fiddle. Walks provided a good excuse for youthful straying. Yet swimming was segregated, and a guard accompanied the ladies and gentlemen to the river to insure proper decorum.

Since the river was used for pleasure, bathing and sewage disposal, typhoid fever caused many deaths in Rockbridge County in the 1800's. The fly also carried the fever and August dinner tables were "black with flies" as no screens existed. A swinging brush of long strips of paper three feet above the table helped protect the hotel's food.

At its heyday Wilson Springs' Green housed two hundred and fifty guests while the Hotel accommodated seventy visitors. This may be slightly overstated since the June 28, 1878 edition of the *Lexington Gazette* reported the Springs as "full to overflowing" when a gentleman there counted one hundred and forty people at the Hotel and cabins. The article also predicted that the Springs would always have visitors since its hotel rates were very low and the cabins were like staying at home.

Home was a great distance for some of the Springs' visitors. Along with entries from England, Scotland, France, Norway, South America, Alaska and the West Indies, the *Hotel Register* of July 4, 1892 through September 15, 1899 showed guests from Texas, Canada, Ohio, Massachusetts, California, and Pennsylvania. Local travelers came from Staunton,

Alone Mill, Lexington, Spottswood, New Monmouth, Fairfield, Collierstown, Walker's Creek, Raphine, Buena Vista, Waynesboro, Hays Creek, Kerrs Creek and Richmond.

Resembling the *Baths Register*, miscellaneous notes supplied information about the visitors to Wilson's Springs. For example, on June 30, 1897 the Reverends F.C. McConnell, C.J. Thompson and J.B. Johnson from Lynchburg and T.A. Johnson from Lexington stayed at the hotel while on a bicycle tour. Fourteen people stopped "off for a picnic" on May 25, 1899.

The advent of the automobile, which emancipated farming families, ended the success of Wilson's Springs. As the prosperity of the Springs waned, the popularity of Rockbridge Baths also declined. With the exception of the houses, only the general store, obsolete schoolhouse, two churches and part of Wilson's Springs remain — faint remembrances of a bygone era. *Written by: Carrie Mast*

Sources: 1. W.A. Wilson III, *Lexington Gazette*, February 15, 1956. 2. Edmund Pendleton Tompkins, *Rockbridge County, Virginia* (Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1952), p. 2. 3. W.A. Wilson III, *Lexington Gazette*, February 15, 1956. 4. Tompkins, *Rockbridge County, Virginia*, p. 1. 5. Oren F. Morton, *Rockbridge County, Virginia* (Staunton: The McClure Press, 1920), p. 159. 6. W.A. Wilson III, *Lexington Gazette*, February 15, 1956. 7. Tompkins, *Rockbridge County, Virginia*, 8. Morton, *Rockbridge County, Virginia*, p. 159. 9. Tompkins, *Rockbridge County, Virginia*, p. 4. 10. Tompkins, *Rockbridge County, Virginia*, p. 2. 11. W.A. Wilson III, *Lexington Gazette*, February 15, 1956. 12. Cole Davis, "History of Rockbridge Baths", p. 3. 13. W.A. Wilson III, *Lexington Gazette*, February 15, 1956. 14. *Lexington Gazette*, June 28, 1878, p. 3. 15. Register, Wilson's Springs Hotel, July 4, 1892 - September 15, 1899. 16. Cole Davis, "History of Rockbridge Baths", p. 4.

## CEDAR GROVE AND ROCKBRIDGE BATHS

It seems strange to speak of any place in Rockbridge County as being a victim of the commercial age, but that applies to Cedar Grove. Few people know where it was and the only thing to mark the site is a few foundation stones practically buried from view. One hundred and twenty years ago Cedar Grove was the busiest place in the county because it was the furthest point up the North River, now called the Maury River in which barges or bateau could be floated down to Lynchburg and Richmond. Shipments could be made down the river only when it was quite high. Iron was made in Cedar Grove up until after the Civil War, then much richer deposits of ore were found in other sections that it no longer paid to work the Rockbridge mines and the old charcoal furnaces of the county.

There is no information on who first settled at Cedar Grove or when. There was a post office named "Flumen" by Charles Bosserman, who was postmaster there.

In the 1830's Cedar Grove was important as a trading center, and quantities of iron and flour and some tobacco were shipped from there in

bateau. These barges required a skillful crew of 4 men who knew the channel well. The cargo would consist of 9 tons of iron or barrels of flour, or a mixed cargo. The goods were sold in Lynchburg or Richmond. The iron shipped from Cedar Grove came from Bath Iron Works at the North end of Strickler Pass, now known as Goshen Pass. Some iron came from the Davis forge which was located on the island opposite the present site of the Bethesda Church and one half mile above Cedar Grove. The hammer of the forge opposite the church marked the site of the forge for many years after the river had carried every thing else away. It was a solid block of iron with a hole about eight by 12 inches for the handle, and weighed about seven hundred pounds. Around fifty years ago Dr. Samuel Morrison had it moved to his front yard and then it was given in the scrap iron drive in World War II. The old forge worked for the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

There was a store at Cedar Grove run by Joseph Adams and a flour mill which got its power from the river.

Rockbridge Baths is younger than Cedar Grove, but again there is no information regarding its settlement. The first store and post office were established about 1840. There is a legend that an Irishman, when digging the foundation of the Baths store, was asked what he was doing and he said that he was digging a hole to bury Cedar Grove. Cedar Grove did decline and die but it was from other causes.

The greatest attraction was the Baths Hotel which was built by John Jordan sometime before the Civil War. Dr. Samuel Brown Morrison, who was born near New Providence and served in the Medical Corps of the Confederate Army, rented the hotel and made it a very popular health resort. There was a bathing pool filled by a number of springs that bubbled up from the bottom, which was covered with pebbles. The temperature of the water stayed 72 degrees the year round. Dr. Morrison would caution the bathers not to stay in more than a few minutes the first times they bathed. There was a magnetism spring near the pool and drinking the water was supposed to be very beneficial.

Dr. Morrison became ill and had to give up the hotel. It was bought by a man named Carter who refurbished it and ran it at a loss for a few years. The property was sold to Mr. Tom Anderson in 1906. Mr. Anderson sold it to Mr. William Hutcheson in 1914. In 1921 Virginia Military Institute rented the property for a summer school which proved successful, so they took up their option to buy the next year.

In May 1926, the hotel burned to the ground and was not rebuilt. Virginia Military Institute sold the property to Mrs. Martha Blair.

The present general store was built in 1870 by Mr. Walter Anderson who ran it until his death and then it was run by his son, Tom Anderson. *Submitted by: Mary Margaret Logan*

## CAMP OKAHAWIS

Camp Okahahwis was a summer camp for girls which first opened in 1918. It is located north of Rockbridge Baths, on the east side of the Maury River, in the mountain gap opposite Wilson Springs resort, with the Sulphur Spring on an island of the river directly between the resort and the camp. Mrs. Evan R. Chesterman founded the camp which began small and gradually increased in size to as many as 100 girls.

Word of the camp spread by one girl telling another, and advertising wasn't needed. Girls came from all parts of Virginia and from outside the state, with the largest number from Richmond. The bugle girl was a red-head from Texas. Girls from one family came from Daytona, FL, and three sisters came from Lovington, VA. Most were awfully nice girls, although some were brats. I took out garbage after supper, and one little girl would save her watermelon for me. She just wanted to share.





Camp Okahahwis 1947 Rockbridge Baths, Virginia

Fred Swope, a neighbor boy, went along to help me, and met his wife Agnes there. She was from South Carolina.

Two counselors were Red Griffith from South Carolina, and Mary Williams. Harold Hockman was helping me the day Mary passed out, and we put her in the station wagon to go to the hospital. She had pneumonia. The counselors would come back in October for a meeting, and one time they went down in the cave on our place. Mrs. Chesterman heard about the hurricane in October, 1954, and called to cancel their meeting, but I had gone up to the camp to turn on electricity and get it ready. I got caught up there by myself when the storm hit and downed trees. Some of the nurses who worked at the camp infirmary were Ivy Hotinger Gering, Joan Washburn, and Bess Leech.



On the Trail at Camp Okahahwis

The camp had a lodge, a large building with an auditorium and stage, the infirmary, cabins, a swimming pool with a diving tower, and tennis courts. Most of the buildings are gone now, and the place is privately owned.

A typical day at the camp would include breakfast, then inspection, followed by an assembly. There they sang songs, had various kinds of announcements, and programs. After assembly, they had classes in tennis, badminton, swimming, horseback riding, and others, like crafts. After lunch, they would rest, and have more classes. Sometimes they would



Outdoor Dance at Okahahwis

swim in the Maury River, or go across to the Sulphur Spring. When they put on plays, or had banquets, Eleanor Burruss and I had to gather stuff they needed, furniture or shrubbery or flowers, and decorate. I made lots of wishing wells and bridges.

A man named Serrett first provided horses for the camp. Then Ruth Wade Beard helped her daddy up there. "Kite" Wade had horses there for 23 years, then I had them 17 years, until the camp closed in 1967. Sometimes we would bring the girls on a hay ride over to our place, and they would play games or have a watermelon feast. Sometimes I'd take the surrey to the camp for rides.



Camp Dance at Okahahwis 1946

Each year we took the girls to the Goshen Horse Show the last Saturday of July, where some of the campers and counselors showed the horses. A girl named Lulu burst her britches just before the show one year. The only thing we had to stitch them with was a needle and leather harness thread I used for saddle repairs. I stitched them with the leather thread, and she showed horses the rest of the day in those britches. The whole camp would go to the horse show, but the campers who didn't show horses went by school bus for the afternoon show.



Art at the Maury River, Okahahwis campers

Camp started the last of June, right when my hay was ready to go up, wheat was ready for harvest, and I had to shoe all the horses for camp use right then, too. It ran for eight weeks each summer. There were two four-weeks sessions, but some stayed for all eight weeks. It was for girls ages 8-16, and the counselors were college girls.

Probably the most exciting event was the time Effie got hurt. I had gone home for the evening. The camp had johnny houses, some for the campers, but a separate one for the maids. The girls couldn't smoke, but the counselors and other grownup could in certain areas. Well, Effie was sitting on one hole in the johnny house, lit up a cigarette, and threw the burning match down the other hole. That place exploded and blew that poor old woman out the door. They took her to the infirmary, where she laid face down for three weeks. She told the story as a lesson for the girls. The next morning I was going up the road leading a whole string



Camp Okahahwis Rockbridge Baths, Virginia

of horses, and a woman who lived there by the river ran out the door hollering, "Was someone hurt up there? Dr. Brush come up this holler like he was a runnin' from Ole Scratch."

After Mrs. Chesterman gave up being the Director, Mrs. Venable A. Stern, who had been a camper there herself, became the Director in 1953. Submitted by: Bennie Fauber, As told to Bobbie Sue Henry

## VILLAGE OF SPRINGFIELD

The village of Springfield came into being about 1790 when John McConkey laid off forty town lots two and one half miles south of Natural Bridge along the Great Road - also known as the Wilderness Road and the Road to the Carolinas - becoming U.S. Highway 11. Early purchasers of lots included Samuel Barclay, John Pettigrew, Joseph Gilmore, David Reece, James Taylor, Stephen Bowyer, William McCorkle and Jacob Cyler (Siler) who was a gunsmith and friend of Daniel Boone. At one time Daniel Boone left his gun with Siler to be repaired after Indians had burnt his camp and damaged his gun. While his gun was being repaired he carried a musket which is still in the possession of John F. McClelland, a son of the last family remaining in the vanished village, and descendant of Daniel David Heck who bought property and established a home in Springfield in the 1790's. This home was a log structure with large stone fireplace and chimney, weatherboarded and added to over the years and home to five generations of Heck descendants. This house and a beautiful stone house built by Audley Paul were the last remaining Springfield houses when Int. 81 took the whole area.

Some interesting things in the history of Springfield were the many visitors coming through on the Stage, among whom were three Presidents - Martin Van Buren, Andrew Jackson, and James K. Polk. Another well known frontiersman besides Daniel Boone known to visit Springfield was Davy Crockett, who it seems had run away from his Tennessee home and spent some time with the Siler family.

The town was never incorporated as Springfield because of the town so named in northern Virginia and the postal address was Lombardy.

While the town flourished for many years as a stage stop, with stores, blacksmith and gunsmith shops, it is vanished and dead - which brings to mind a funny story. One day after the village had lost most of its vitality and motor cars traveled the old highway, two smart young fellas stopped their automobile and getting out hailed John McClelland with the rather smart aleck question of "Well, how long has this place been dead?" With his usual quick wit McClelland replied, "Not long I guess, you're the first two buzzards to show up". Submitted by: Anne McClelland Bradford  
Sources: Family records; article by Goodridge Wilson quoting F. B. Kegley

# STEELE'S TAVERN

In the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, midway between Staunton and Lexington on Lee Highway, is the quiet little village of Steele's Tavern. (Once known as Midway, it became Steele's Tavern when the post office opened in 1825. It straddles the counties of Rockbridge and Augusta.) During the 19th century the public institutions of the village were few: combination country store and post office, town hall, Presbyterian Church, two flour mills, cooper shop, blacksmith shop and two-room schoolhouse. The farm dwellings numbered less than a score.

The greater part of the village and surrounding lands have been owned by the Steeles since the Revolution. Consequently, no history of the village would be complete without the story of the man for whom it was named.

After the Battle of Guilford Court House, North Carolina, March 15, 1781, left among the supposed dead was a young man, barely twenty, named David Steele. He had received fifteen wounds, but retained consciousness enough to pretend he was dead to prevent the British from bayonetting him to death. Then under cover of night he crawled out of the battlefield and made his way home. His skull was so badly injured that a piece of the bone was removed, replaced by a silver plate which he wore until his death.

At the age of twenty-two he married and settled in a house by the road at "Midway". He ran a flour mill, made rifle butts and gave lodging to the few travelers who came by. After the Revolution when stage coaches began stopping regularly at his home to change horses, it began to be known as Steele's Tavern.

Upon the death of David Steele, his son John David Steele, Jr. inherited the tavern and most of his father's land. On December 9, 1825 he was appointed the first postmaster of Steele's Tavern and held that position until 1851.



Steele's Tavern Highway Marker on Route 11

In 1831 John let his friend Cyrus McCormick give his first public exhibition of the reaper in a field of oats in front of the tavern. Less than a mile away stands the old blacksmith shop and homestead of this famous Rockbridge inventor.

A mile and a half from the village of Steele's Tavern is the old Gibbs homestead of Rockbridge where, in 1857, James E. A. Gibbs invented the machine known today as the Wilcox and Gibbs sewing machine. Thus, Steele's Tavern gave the world two of the foremost labor-saving devices of the century, the reaper and the sewing machine.

Steele, McCormick and Gibbs have passed on. All the village has to boast of today is the surrounding scenic grandeur. To the east, the age-rounded peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains tower majestically, forming a hazy purple barrier. To the west, the Alleghenies trace a pale blue outline against the sky. In between are thousands of acres of rolling meadow, field, and forest land.

But the village is practically unchanged. The population has not increased by a hundred in the last hundred years. Our little village lies dormant, waiting for another great native to achieve fame and put it back upon the pages of history. This was written by Mildred Searson Goeller in 1929 and edited for this publication.

Submitted by: Sylvia Butler Camper

# SOUTH RIVER REVISITED

Part 1

The South River communities of Cornwall and Riverside had thriving businesses in the 1880's and 1890's. William Sumpter Beard, pen named "Sumpter", recounted them in his Rockbridge County News. Taking a backward glance we find out how it was 100 years ago on South River.

At White's Gap in April 1885 Campbell's distillery burned down and he lost thirty barrels of whiskey. Tribbett and Campbell had a heavy business buying and selling tan bark. In July at Riverside the Shenandoah Valley Railroad (SVRR) killed A. M. Glasgow's horse and mule, two more in a series of RR accidents. S. P. Campbell's apple orchard contained 1800 trees, 200 of them wine saps, and he expected to sell thousands of bushels. A. B. Grant sold his Big Hill Tin Mines and 150 acres of land to A. D. Robinson and Brothers for \$7500. Some of their ore went to a furnace at Cornwall, England. At Riverside the anvil used by John McCown to forge the McCormick sickle was stolen and then returned to its resting place at Beard's home.

In May 1886 Indian camps at Riverside turned up numerous Indian relics during planting season. The foundations of the J. W. McCown foundry and machine works of 1807 were still in existence. So was part of McCown's brick home where inventors and businessmen, such as Leander and Cyrus McCormick, discussed the principles of mechanics and the properties of steel. By July 1887 Daniel Paxton was the contractor for a school/chapel at Midvale. The wagons were rolling out tan bark for the Green Forest tannery.

May 1888 in Riverside the Deckers were busy sawing lumber at their steam saw mill, Isaac Swartz of Augusta opened a blacksmith shop, and William Lee was running a stave factory. By October J. P. Tribbett opened a brand new mercantile at Riverside, doing a lively business. W. M. Showalter sowed 130 acres of wheat on the Buena Vista farm. The SVRR killed more cows and paid the farmers what



Irish Creek Tin Mine c1885

they pleased for damages. In December walnut and popular lumber and railroad ties were in demand. A schoolhouse built at old Neriah Church and another on the Goodman farm.

For the inauguration of President Cleveland in March 1889, passenger trains headed for Washington were full and had extra cars attached. The Texas train carried the sign, "Texas 162,000 majority for Cleveland". In June the flood took Press Green's springhouse, rails, and part of his crop. And the railroad killed two of his cows. The Crowder (now Cornwall) mercantiles were busy furnishing supplies for the tanbark hands. In August the Jordan Canning Company was busy canning tomatoes. The Buena Vista Company sawed 10,000 feet of lumber daily.

In September 1889 Thompson and Crowder developed the manganese and iron ore beds to be offered for sale. W. G. McDowell opened a large brick yard at Riverside Station to make bricks for building the City of Buena Vista. Mr. H. W. Wallace made 300,000 bricks at Midvale for shipping to Buena Vista. Excerpted and written by: Ruby Leighton

# SOUTH RIVER REVISITED

Part 2

In late 1889 business flourished at Crowder with a daily average of 20 wagons unloading tan bark, cross ties, and lumber. The Decker brothers had two saw mills, A. M. Glasgow sold 1,000 bushels of corn, and Buena Vista paid more for butter and chickens than did Lexington.



Relics of Iron Works on South River, 1930

In July 1890 a contract was issued for an iron bridge to be located near Marvin Methodist Church. The SVRR in one day carried 37 loads of watermelons. Riverside had four brick kilns, with Waddy and Jordan turning out 18-25 thousand bricks daily. The Buena Vista Co. planned to build a RR and road from new BV to old BV for the people's convenience.

By March 1891 the BV Company was digging iron and manganese from the mountains near Cornwall. A boarding house for 150 hands was built. In May Whitmore and Shields opened a livery in Cornwall. A late frost killed the South River famous fruit, the paw-paw. In July 1891 Crowder changed its name to Cornwall, for Cornwall, England. Stone work for the Cornwall hotel was completed. Water pipes for the hotel were laid by J. E. Thomas and John Harris of Nelson contracted as plasterer. The hotel would cost \$8,000.

By December 1891 Western Union of Petersburg had installed new telegraph poles along the NWRR. By February 1892 J. G. Alexander had shipped from Midvale 700 bushels of apples at 35 cents per bushel. The new Cornwall hotel was finished February 1892 with D. H. Davis, watchman, for \$30 monthly.

In March 1892 a building contract was let for a tramway from Dorothea's mines atop Irish Creek mountain to the Cornwall RR station. About 100 hands worked mines in 1892. Small business for December 1893 was James Whiteside received \$2.75 for an otter hide from Mackey's cave. In 1894 the tanbark trade

continued active, 160 carloads being shipped yearly for the last five years. By September the Deckers brothers had threshed 30,000 bushels of wheat and began their fall/winter lumber work. Street cars were shipped South by rail, and Barnum's great show passed through Riverside for wintering in New York.

By March 1895, the Cash tin mines produced twenty tons of ore daily. Cora Julia Beard had one of the "Old Grandfather's Clock" made by the Whitesides in 1810 for \$75. J. H. Whitmore shipped a carload of milch cows and hogs from Riverside to PA and sheared his sheep. Northbound on the N&W RR were watermelons, chickens and lambs. Some trains needed two engines. Buyers wanted two carloads of huckleberries, paying \$1.20 a bushel. In October T. A. Sterrett of Timber Ridge hired the Decker's ten-horse steam engine to run his flour mill machinery because of low water. By February 1896 rains came, saving Sterrett \$4 daily expenses.

Time goes on, just like the trains still passing through Riverside and Cornwall, but now there are no products to market. Business as usual will never be like it was 100 years ago on South River. *Submitted by: Ruby Leighton and Excerpted by Ruby Leighton from the Rockbridge County News from April 20, 1885 to June 1896.*

## MY FLOOD EXPERIENCE

On Tuesday, August 19, 1969 I worked the polls at Mountain View School. It had been raining right much that day. When I came home I noticed the river was up. A friend came by that night, took our children to band practice, and returned around 9:30 PM. By then it was raining hard.



*Flooding in Rockbridge Co.*

We went to bed around 10:00 PM and received a call around 11:00 saying the river was getting high. I called my parents who lived next door and they came to our house. We sat around talking and watching TV, thinking it would soon stop raining. The river had gotten up before many times. We realized that before long we should leave the house. My husband and father went outside to check and found it was impossible to leave. South River had broken over above us, running down behind our house. Irish Creek was over its banks on the other side, covering the bridge.

First signs that we were in real trouble were when we saw water take the cushion off our front porch glider. Thunder was very bad, and lightning was so bright we could see the water rushing down through the field towards our house.

Muddy water gradually started coming into our rooms. We started taking bottom drawers and things that were low, setting them higher. At this point our phone went out and electricity went off, leaving us with two candles and a flash light. My husband realized something had to be done quickly. He took a knife and cut a hole in our hall ceiling large enough to crawl through to our attic. This was round 2:00 AM. There were five of us and my parents, with nothing but 2x4s to sit on.

You can't imagine the thoughts going through our minds as we sat there hearing glass breaking, boards ripping and feeling the house shaking, thinking every minute would be our last.

My husband was speechless during this time. He said he was thinking if the house did go, he felt like he would be the only one with a chance to survive.

Daybreak came around 6:00 AM. We could see the water had gone out of the house, after being up to the door knobs. We came down to see what was left. Everything was covered with slick, slimy mud several inches deep. It had taken one room completely off the back of the house, broken several windows, and knocked holes in the walls of several rooms. The bathroom had a log through the window. Sticks and debris filled the room. There was a huge hole washed out at one end of the house. A contractor later told us that end of the house had been afloat during the night.

By 10:00 AM the water had gone down enough to walk around the house. We saw some men on the railroad track and hollered to them. They phoned their company and a helicopter came to pick us up.

We were not able to get back to our house until two days later, waded water, and walked several miles to get to it.

With the help of *good friends* we were able to wash our house out and repair it enough to live in it in a few months.

My theory from this experience is you can stand anything when faced with it, which goes back to the saying, "The Lord never put more on you than you can stand". *Written by: Betty Bryant*

## SUMMERS

Summers was the name of one of the local post offices in the Broad Creek/Plank Road area. Miss Lucy Ackerly's books *Yesteryears*, *Miss Lucy's Stories*, and *More Yesteryears*, *Miss Lucy's Stories*, tell a little about her life growing up in this community. Her father for a time was the postmaster at Summers, and her family also ran the Mill here (Ackerly's Mill).

In the little Ackerly Cemetery on the hill, one finds such surnames as Ackerly, Chapman, Conner, Falls, Hatcher, Jennings, Lavell, Marshall, Moore, and Supinger. Others of this community were buried at the Broad Creek/Miller Cemetery, High Bridge Presbyterian Church Cemetery, and in the Stonewall Jackson Cemetery in Lexington.



*Ackerly Mill on Plank Road*

A road went in at the old Valley Railroad Culvert (at David Bolen's, 1997) forked with the road which went to Willow Pond, and then came out near Cedar Hill Church (present Jimmy Tilson farm near Murat). Another road sectioned off of this one and came out through Lick Run, to Plank Road (present Cindy Morton farm). Kirbys, Conners, and other families lived in this section.

The house on the present Cindy Morton farm was built by the Dryden family very early in the history of Rockbridge County.

In Sulphur Spring Hollow resided the families of Miller, Lackey, Whiteside, Watkins and others.

Henry Hatcher and Mr. Tardy were large landowners here.

Broad Creek Church was a community center, as was Sulphur Spring School. *Submitted by: Angela M. Ruley*

## TIMBER RIDGE STATION

When my father, William Miller Harlow, was born on September 10, 1911, Timber Ridge Station was a busy community with a school, stores, chapel, post office and a train depot. My father's parents were Arthur Edward and Katherine (Jarvis) Harlow. They had six children: William, Lurtie, Francis, Melvin, Louise and Charles.

Grandfather Harlow was a member of a section team that worked for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad on the line that ran from Harrisonburg to Lexington. He and his colleagues used handcars to inspect the tracks for needed repairs or dangerous situations. The trains were making three trips daily with stops at Timber Ridge for freight, mail and passengers.

A wooden bridge carried, what is now, Mt. Atlas Road over the tracks. This bridge was near the Harlow home. It remained into the late 1940's and I have fond memories of helping my grandmother bring her cows from pasture, across the bridge. I loved the sound of their hooves on the heavy timbers.

The presence of the station gave rise to various businesses. Charles R. Goodman owned and operated a general store along with the post office. My father remembers John Floyd carrying mail from the post office to the train and back in a mail sack. Telegraph service was available at the depot.

Industrious citizens of the community supported their families using the services needed for, and provided by the railroading business. Logs, pulpwood and tannin bark could be cut and sold to the large wood yard near the station. The stockyard was located north of Timber Ridge in Decatur. Farmers drove cattle to the pens. Hogs and sheep were taken in horse-drawn wagons.

Even young people could make extra money. My father remembers that boys would trap and dress rabbits. They would be bought and shipped to Baltimore!

Other businesses in Timber Ridge included a second general store, owned by Samuel Harvey Moore Greene. My father says he could go to Moore's store, be measured for a suit, and have it ordered. A. Mr. Gill owned a blacksmith shop. Shoes were repaired by Mr. Schyler Coffey.

Education and religion were a part of life in Timber Ridge. Children in grades one through seven attended a two room school house. Daddy's first grade teacher was Margaret Bell (Moore). She attended his eightieth birthday celebration.

Mt. Atlas Chapel was a mission of the Timber Ridge Association Reformed Presbyterian Church. It was built in 1914 during the ministry of Ira S. Caldwell (father of author, Erskine Caldwell). The chapel was located on the ridge overlooking the station.

Train service was halted in 1942. The Baltimore and Ohio had been purchased by the Chesapeake and Ohio and routes were changed. The chapel is gone, as is the school. Goodman's Store and the post office are empty. Altered as a private residence, the depot remains. Timber Ridge is a quiet neighborhood today, except for the distant drone of trucks and cars on the interstate highway, the sounds of modern times that meant the end of the old rail systems. *Submitted by: Katherine Harlow Clements*

Sources: Mr. William Harlow; Mrs. Inez Marks Moore, daughter of station agent, O. L. Marks; Dr. George West Diehl. *The Brick Church on Timber Ridge* (Verona, Virginia: McClure Printing Company, 1975). *Sesquicentennial History of Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church* (Clinton; S.C. Presses of Jacobs Brothers, Printers 1951), pp. 572-575.

## AH SID

Ah Sid Post Office in the Thompson home was a temporary name for this post office during the change from what had been Timber Ridge Post Office on the stagecoach line between Lexington and Staunton to what would become Timber Ridge Post Office on the B & O or Valley Railroad. The new Timber Ridge Post Office was in Charlie Goodman's store near the train depot, a couple of miles west of Timber Ridge Church. All the names suggested for this temporary post office were already being used. An agent for the railroad came into Thompson's store one day, and overheard Alice Thompson reprimanding her son by saying, "Ah Sid!". He then chose this nickname of the Thompson's son, John Armistead Thompson, as the name for the post office.



Gravestone of Ah Sid

Ah Sid was a son of John Andrew Thompson (1837-1919) and his wife, Alice Davenport. John Andrew, a son of Rev. Horatio Thompson, was a graduate of Washington College (W&L), a teacher, farmer, and postmaster/merchant. Horatio Edwin Thompson, another son of John and Alice, married a cousin Judith Edna Thompson (source of this story), and lived at "Church Hill", where the old post office artifacts were stored after it closed. Ah Sid was born in 1833 and died in 1896, aged 13, and was buried in the stone church cemetery directly opposite his parents home. His mother kept a candle burning in the window opposite his grave. The children of the Timber Ridge school,

taught by Miss Barr, gave Ah Sid his nickname and made up a song about him.

"Church Hill" is the large brick house built by Rev. Horatio Thompson and his wife Eliza Kinnear (daughter of John and Elizabeth McCune Kinnear). The Houstons had first owned this land, and the cabin where General Sam Houston was born stood near the present Thompson home. Rev. Thompson was born in NY and came to Virginia to pastor The Associate Congregation of Rockbridge (1833-1844), and later The Timber Ridge Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (1884-1882).

In 1961, A. L. Hench of UVA, and a member of the "Virginia Place-Name Society" put an ad in The Rockbridge County News which aroused the curiosity of this writer. He was looking for a post office in Rockbridge County named Ah Sid. He mentioned the Kinnears, Thompsons, and Lyles as some of the families who received their mail at Ah Sid Post Office. The writer recognized the names as those near Timbr Ridge Presbyterian Church and asked R. M. Henry if he remembered a post office in that area. He recalled that the home of Harry and Clara Armstrong on the corner across from the stone church's cemetery was once a store run by the Thompsons and it had been a post office. Further search revealed that Mrs. Edna Thompson, then 92 years old, and living with her son Horatio at "Church Hill", remembered the old post office. She shared the story of Ah Sid Post Office with this writer, who forwarded it to UVA, and to The County News where it was published in the December 14, 1961, edition. Submitted by: Bobbie Sue Henry

## VESUVIUS, VIRGINIA

The beginnings of Vesuvius date back to the Iron Furnace that was built in northeastern Rockbridge County around 1828. Named for the Mt. Vesuvius volcano in Italy, Vesuvius Furnace was located about one-half mile from the present intersection of Routes 56 and 608. The ore used in the ironmaking process came from nearby Mary Creek Mine and Dixie Mines. The cast iron "pigs" produced were hauled by horse-wagon teams to Richmond, with some of it hauled at least part of the way by canal boats that ran from Lexington to Lynchburg. Pig Iron stamped "Vesuvius" has since been recovered from the port at Richmond.

Although the Furnace ceased operations on December 15, 1854, ruins of the Furnace stack still stand, giving an idea as to what it was like in Vesuvius Furnace's heyday.

In 1843, Vesuvius Foundry was built close to the location of the Vesuvius Furnace. The Foundry used iron products by the Furnace for the manufacturer of plows which were sold locally to farmers and as far away as Richmond.

The Foundry thrived, despite devastating fires in about 1870 and again in 1913. By 1918, it was known as the Vesuvius Plow Works. As many as 13 men and boys were employed to supply parts for plow repairs. At that time it was Rockbridge County's oldest manufacturing enterprise. However, due to changes and

improvements in farming and equipment manufacturing, the Foundry's equipment gradually became unusable for present day manufacturing processes.

In February 1958, the Foundry ceased operations. The old buildings are still standing as mute reminders of the time it was a prosperous and important member of the community.

North of Vesuvius was the Vesuvius Mine where manganese was mined by the Vesuvius Manganese Corporation. Other mines in the area produced top quality clay.

In 1882, the Shenandoah Valley Railroad was extended north through the community that had built up around the Furnace and Foundry operations. The present intersection of Routes 56 and 608 was selected as the site for a railroad station; "Vesuvius" was the natural choice as the name for the station. The first train arrived at Vesuvius on March 17, 1882.

During the boom days following the building of the railroad through Vesuvius, most of the land in the area was owned by L. S. Bryan, who then lived in the Bryan brick house. He was a son of a former owner, Matthew Bryan. L. S. Bryan conceived the idea of having a map made for the plan of the streets of the village. Some of the names were: Pine Street, Nelson Street, Sycamore Street, as well as Brooks and Railroad Avenues.

Among the early names of the residents of Vesuvius can be mentioned Bryan, Bradley, Campbell, Cash, Crist, Drawbond, Fitzgerald, Hite, Humphries, and Wright. Descendants of these early families may still be found in the area.

For many years after, the railroad station did a thriving business in the shipping of materials such as foundry products, lumber, tanbark, hay and straw. In the early years of the station, the majority of goods shipped by rail were hauled to the station by ox-teams from points in the nearby mountains. But recent years have seen great changes due to the development of the automobile, and trucks have taken most of the business once handled by the railroads.

The railroad no longer stops at Vesuvius, as the track through the community now serves only freight trains. This was a bustling shipping center not too long ago: the passenger tunnel under the railway still serves as a reminder of those times. The railroad era in Vesuvius has been preserved by the internationally acclaimed photographer, O. Winston Link, in still photographs and his video, *Trains that Pass in the Night*.

Today, this quiet but thriving little village boasts a post office and other businesses for the convenience of its residents and visitors to the area. Residents attend nearby Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches, and there is a community building sponsored by the Ruritan Club. The nearby South River is a popular destination for fishermen. The area is spotted with vacation and hunting cabins and the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs' Nature Camp is located just south of Vesuvius. Submitted by: Vesuvius Ruritan Club, Margaret Ann Whittington, President

Sources: Members of the local Ruritan Club, including Clarence T. Cash, Sr., retired Postmaster, and *Bonds of Iron*, by Charles B. Dew.