ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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AN INFORMAL HISTORY

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Edited by

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WHITTET & SHEPPERSON • RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

FOREWORD

AMERICAN HISTORY has too often been written from the top down, rather than from the bottom up. The group involved has usually been the Senate, the Cabinet, or the General Staff. The scene has too often been New York, Washington, or the library stacks, rather than the American land and Main Street from which our culture springs and from which all our power is ultimately derived. The real American heritage is apparent only to those who follow the smaller contours and meanings, and fit them carefully into the general picture. Only when the individual fibers are understood is the completed pattern comprehensible.

Edmund Pendleton Tompkins (1868-1952) spent years examining the fibers that went into Rockbridge county, and found in its diversification incentive and material for an Odyssey of the human spirit. Born in Lexington, Dr. Tompkins attended Washington and Lee University and the Medical College of Virginia. From 1897 to 1907 he practiced medicine in the Natural Bridge neighborhood, and in 1913 toured the hospitals of Europe. Returning to his native county in 1925, he practiced medicine until his eighty-second year, endearing himself to thousands of people whom he attended. For many years he was county coroner, and he always participated in the various affairs of his community.

Especially vigorous was his interest in history. A founder and guiding spirit of the Rockbridge Historical Society, he

wrote monographs and sketches about Rockbridge and the surrounding area for over half a century. In all his professional, historical, and social relationships, he was a person of gentle ways, integrity, and devotion. If ever a man probed deeply into our county's soul, it was he; for its brooding majesty, bleak poverty, green wonder, and simple sturdiness never failed to stir him. He watched over its historical documents and artifacts as would a loving parent, and delighted in long drives over its little-travelled back roads. The continuous interplay between the old and the new intrigued him. In one of his newspaper sketches, he wrote that in Lexington, "Passing years have left their signatures upon the bricks, faded from pristine brightness; chimney-tops may be slightly bevelled out; but fan-lights above ancient doors, an occasional diamond-paned window or sidelight of door, lend a note of exquisite beauty, never lost upon the truly observant." Such things were never lost while Dr. Tompkins dwelled with us.

Dr. Tompkins lived to see the Rockbridge Historical Society approve the publication of a book by him, but not to assemble it. The Publication Committee, headed by Dr. W. Cole Davis, asked me to complete the task, with the help of various members. In going through Dr. Tompkins' papers I was constantly impressed with the scope of his knowledge and interest. Medical, legal, social, political, and economic matters all fascinated him. One finds his sketch for a movie centering around Natural Bridge, part of a novel on colonial settlement, drawings of local buildings and events, and poems extolling the county's natural setting. These will all be preserved by the Society, as part of its permanent collection; Mrs. Tompkins has generously arranged this.

It is hard to select a few people as having been more cooperative than many others; but certainly the efforts of our

president, Mrs. James P. Alexander, Dr. Davis, and Dr. Charles Turner should be mentioned. The typing of Mrs. Thomas Barrett and proofreading of Mr. Brewster Ford were invaluable. The book before you is truly a composite work, although all except the last chapter are largely Dr. Tompkins.' The introduction is by the editor.

Examining American history on a local level is still viewed by some as mere antiquarianism. Actually it might be one of the keys to our survival. Our Republic was formulated with a great deal of power at the local level, like a pyramid. To increase the power at the top to the detriment of the bottom is dangerous business. Local history is Everyman's history; and Everyman has an important role in democratic survival.

MARSHALL W. FISHWICK

Lexington, Virginia

INTRODUCTION

COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS on the American mind, by both Americans and foreign visitors, have provided a popular form of intellectual diversion ever since the launching of the American republic. Several writers, among them Alexis de Tocqueville and August de Beaumont in the nineteenth century, and Frederick Jackson Turner in the early twentieth, are best known for their generalizations about the American character. Among contemporary historians Allan Nevins, H. S. Commager, and A. M. Schlesinger, to select three names from a long list, have added further to this body of literature. Such writers do not of course see our nation in exactly the same light; but the area of agreement is large, so that a sort of master pattern emerges from their work.

The interesting thing about this general pattern, so far as the reader of this book is concerned, is that it is quite inadequate, even inaccurate, when held up against the Rockbridge county that Dr. Tompkins' careful study reveals.

In the writings of each of the six commentators named above, for example, one finds mention of American opulence, democratic spirit, low political morals, and belief in progress. Yet in Rockbridge, and many another Virginia county, one finds that scarcity is the key to the economic pattern; that the emphasis is on aristocracy rather than democracy; that political integrity and *noblesse oblige* characterize the political scene; and that most citizens are skeptical about the brand of progress

which factories, urbanization, and Washington bureaucracy have produced. Reading our commentators more closely, we find that Tocqueville stressed our feverish pace, obsession with the future, and anti-militarism. Yet Rockbridge people pride themselves on a leisurely pace, speak more often of the past than the future, and are decidedly militaristic. Turner was impressed with the mobile quality of Americans and their opposition to tradition and custom. Upperclass Southerners, in Rockbridge county and many others, make a fetish of stability and traditionalism. Nevins stresses restlessness, passion for money, and equalitarianism — but these do not describe well the people who figure in Dr. Tompkins' chronicle. Nor do experimentation, rudeness, and social equality — qualities singled out by Commager — prove more adequate. To say that their opposites (lack of experimentation, politeness, and social inequality) were true would get us nearer to actuality. A. M. Schlesinger emphasized our social mobility, opposition to custom, and mingled population; but it seems that in Rockbridge county mobility is severely limited, customs are more often revered than opposed, and the population has been homogeneous for generations.

Here is a state of affairs worth noting: the best-known accounts of the American mind give little insight into the life and ways of one of America's most historic counties. This does not mean that those accounts are erroneous; but it does mean that until we have many competent, microscopic studies of the United States, we must depend on very tentative generalizations.

Consider the difficulties involved in drawing up a general cultural pattern for one single state of the Union — Virginia. Even before the white man came, the area which is now the Old Dominion supported three cultures so distinct that inter-

preters were required before they could deal with one another. The powerful Powhatan confederacy, with which John Smith and his cohorts dealt, centered in the Tidewater area. The Mannahoacs lived at the headwaters of the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers, while the Monacans dwelled at the headwaters of the James River and in the limestone region.[1] Within the third area lay what has since become Rockbridge County. Not until eastern Virginia was well settled did the sturdy Scotch-Irish covenanters win over this land. Driven from Scotland to northern Ireland, then to the new world, they were equal to the ardors that confronted them. They were willing, to use one of their own expressions, to fight the devil and give him an underhold. Well into the nineteenth century a Rockbridge man, Sam Houston, presented himself to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun dressed like an Indian.

From the beginning, the culture of Rockbridge differed from that of the predominant Tidewater region. With no great tobacco barons, no large stockholders, few contacts with Europe, and slight allegiance to the British crown, the society here was shaped by frontier conditions, stern Calvinism, and local adaptations. The ethnic group to which Rockbridge settlers had the easiest access was not English, but German. At Winchester, New Market, Harrisonburg, and Staunton German newspapers were published, the one in New Market, *Der Virginische Volksberichter Und Newmarketer Wochenschrift,* as early as 1807. In the village of Singer's Glen, in western Rockingham County, the first Mennonite printing press in America was established in 1847. A knowledge of this

1. For a discussion of these three cultures see G. T. Surface's *Studies in the Geography of Virginia,* unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1907.

early pattern of settlement is essential to an understanding of what Rockbridge county is like today; for during decades of comparative isolation there was little change in the mores and occupations of the people of the Valley.

The automobile, more than any other factor, brought that isolation to an end. Certainly the rate of change has been more accelerated in the past twenty-five years of the county's history than in any previous period of twice that length. The once tranquil and leisurely Valley Pike has become a modern speedway, and a main tourist artery to the South. The effect of tourism on twentieth century Rockbridge has been enormous, and the county seat, Lexington, has even adopted the nickname "Shrine of the South." In 1936 the 327,000-acre Shenandoah National Park, which drew land from Rockbridge and seven other counties, was set up; it was the first national park east of the Mississippi River. An even larger plot, 450,000 acres, including the entire Massanutten Range, was later set aside as the Shenandoah National Forest. Later Natural Bridge National Forest was established so as to be contiguous with the Shenandoah National Park. This vast domain attracts more visitors every year, and the Skyline Drive and Blue Ridge Parkway are scenic thoroughfares over which tens of thousands of tourists move into middle Virginia. The Natural Bridge from which Rockbridge county derived its name has become so important a tourist stop that it now supports a community of its own. The scenery, cooking, handicrafts, and hospitality of Rockbridge have found an eager tourist market, and the basically agrarian economy has made good use of the dollars visitors leave behind. Quietly the long-time residents have adjusted themselves to the new problems and opportunities that have come with the automobile, clinging tena-

ciously to local traditions, but modifying and advertising them whenever so doing provides them with extra income.

As in most American communities (for in this Rockbridge can certainly claim no uniqueness) income has been of primary importance to the people there. More so than in many other places, scarcity has been the keynote of the economic pattern: scarcity of resources, capital, planning, training, professional services, and employment. This condition helps explain the clannishness and intellectual isolation one confronts when he leaves the towns and main roads. Since World War II Rockbridge has enjoyed an unprecedented prosperity; but being mainly agrarian, it must be prepared for such unavoidable calamities as the 1951 flood or the 1952 drought.

The high hopes held out for Buena Vista's growth, after its incorporation as a city in 1892, wilted in the new century; the older agricultural pattern has remained the dominant feature of county life. The county seat, Lexington, has grown steadily, and Glasgow, Goshen, Brownsburg, and Collierstown have increased their facilities and resources — but they are still towns set in large farming areas. Saturday afternoon in Lexington is still the time when the true face of the county can best be seen.

In agriculture the trend towards big farms and cattle raising is of primary importance. Rockbridge now ranks sixth among Virginia's hundred counties so far as number of farms over 500 acres is concerned. With 239,705 cultivated acres, she has the sixteenth largest farm acreage, although the total value of her farm products (about $3,000,000) ranks only thirty-fourth. The area in which she is making giant strides is cattle raising. With 26,628 head in 1950, she ranked twelfth among state counties; and the number of farmers turning to cattle increases every season. The assessed value of real estate

for Rockbridge county jumped from roughly three and a half to twelve and a half million dollars between 1900 and 1952, which indicates, despite inflation, the rise in the real holdings of the farmers. Still, many of them live on sub-standard land, in dwellings not fit for human habitation.

The county has long felt the lack of possible income from suitable industrial plants. The establishment of the Stillwater Worsted Mills in 1930, and the James Lee and Sons mill in 1934, was extremely helpful to county economy. The latter corporation, which hires over 2,000 people, has undertaken a novel personnel experiment. Instead of bringing in new workers and establishing a mill town, officials have hired county people, to be transported to the mill in company buses. Thus the workers' income has been spread over a wide radius, without uprooting workmen from their homes.

Many aspects of county life parallel those of similar areas anywhere in America. For example, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and various women's clubs have done many noteworthy things. In the rural areas 4-H clubs, Ruritan, and Home Demonstration groups provide social outlets. In 1952 there are sixteen 4-H clubs, twenty-three Home Demonstration clubs, and eight Ruritan clubs in Rockbridge. The latter are located in Brownsburg, Fairfield, Kerrs Creek, Natural Bridge, Mountain View, Effinger, Ben-Wesley, and Rockbridge Baths — communities which must be examined if one would have a full understanding of county affairs and attitudes.

Church life plays a major role in Rockbridge county, and many residents are proud of the claim that it is "the most Presbyterian county in America." They point to the fact that the 20 Presbyterian churches have in 1952 over 4,000 members, and that many rural churches are stronger than they

were in 1900. Other denominations, some of them stressing religious fundamentalism, have prospered in the county. That this religious emphasis dates from the earliest settlement is apparent from Dr. Tompkins' chapters.

Another major concern of the area is education. In addition to public and private schools, there are in the county three institutions of higher learning — Washington and Lee University, the Virginia Military Institute, and Southern Seminary. Their history and influence, too, is dealt with in the pages ahead.

Rockbridge county at the turn of the century was sharply divided on political issues, with a powerful minority attached to the Republican party as a holdover from the Readjuster movement. The Democrats usually managed to capture the local offices, but only by vigorous campaigning. Postoffices and other Federal assignments went to faithful adherents of the Republican party during its long national supremacy. With the Wilson administrations and the Democratic victories under Roosevelt and Truman, the Republican group lost its incentive. There has been no effective opposition to the ruling group since the Great Depression. A generally lethargic Democratic organization fills most elective and appointive posts without difficulty. From the county have come since 1900 an attorney-general, William A. Anderson, and two members of the House of Representatives, Harry St. George Tucker and A. Willis Robertson, the latter of whom is at present serving in the Senate. In line with the general trend of the Southern Democrats, voters of the county have supported the conservative side of most issues. Still there exists in the county a strong core of liberal thought, which has on occasions made its weight decisive on local matters. Francis Pickens Miller, closely associated with the county all his life, has been a

leading opponent of the Democratic machine in recent years, and has rallied liberal elements throughout the state. The result of this admixture is an independent rather than a captive body of voters.

The movement towards greater concentration in government has shown itself clearly in figures dealing with Rockbridge county income. State contributions to local costs have risen to 53% for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1951, while grants of Federal aid have accounted for almost 3% more. Whether or not receiving more than half the county income from outside sources will gradually change the whole complex of local government remains to be seen. Honesty in local politics, and service on councils and boards because of wide acceptance of the principles of *noblesse oblige,* provide one of the happier phases of the local report.

The county seat suffers greatly in the 1950's from inadequate zoning and planning. The current map of Lexington reveals a crazy-quilt design of sixty-odd streets, only two of which are not dead end on one or both ends. Far too narrow for present traffic, they have been made worse by unchecked encroachments on their width. Worst of all, the town's Main Street serves as a major north-south truck artery, so that the roar and smell of the clumsy leviathans, by-passed by many other towns, still mars Lexington. Some action has been taken to relieve this condition.

Race relations in the county have improved steadily since 1900, due partly to the superior type of colored people in the area, and partly to the cooperation of thoughtful white people. The proportion of colored to white in the county is about 10%. An exodus of Negroes from Rockbridge, especially in rural areas, has been steady, and there are virtually no colored farmers left. An Interracial Commission has been established,

and a number of matters have been openly considered and discussed at its meetings.

To observe that Rockbridge county people are bound together in common beliefs and prejudices is not difficult; to explain why this is true, is quite a task. It is one of the many things on which the Tompkins manuscript throws light. For the basis of this sense of fellowship extends back to the pattern of settlement in the eighteenth century, and draws from the mutual ancestry, historical events, and remembered tradition of ten generations of Rockbridge life. Especially does it build on the 1860's, when civil war, military occupation, and reconstruction became real problems. The fact that both the greatest general and the most brilliant tactician of the Confederacy, Robert E. Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson, spent years in Rockbridge county has intensified the importance of the period in local tradition.

Part of this tradition has been made by history, but another part by human contrivance. People have fostered it, extolled it, won office by endorsing it. Those who have expended this effort have depended not so much upon the search for truth as upon the softening quality of an atmosphere and the willingness of others to listen. Men of Rockbridge have loved and still do love their land; they are still tightly, inextricably held together by the long tentacles of the past and the force it exerts over them.

Two world wars and the Great Depression have done much to alter the area which Dr. Tompkins describes. Modern devices have brought the world's problems into Rockbridge county living rooms. The canned culture which large movie, radio, and newspaper syndicates peddle around the nation has supplanted much of the earlier local individualism. In many social and political matters it is evident that there is

no longer a uniform viewpoint. The problem today is to preserve the best of the old ways by supplementing them with the new. There is still no shortage in the county of those whose main interest is to defend the old. The struggle between those whose allegiance is mainly to the past and those whose aspirations center on the present is a very real one. From this give and take many workable compromises have come. Most of the contenders would agree that people in Rockbridge county should neither ignore nor belittle their history and uniqueness, but rather study and preserve it. The general fabric of our Republic can be no stronger than the individual fibers which go into its composition. When one becomes acquainted with some of the things that have been done and said in Rockbridge county, and some of the men and women who have guided its destiny before our time, he cannot but face the future with confidence and faith.

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BENJAMIN BORDEN MOVES WEST

In the spring of 1737 a lone horseman moved southward through the Valley of Virginia on the colonial frontier. Even on horseback it was a hard trip. No road, but merely a narrow and sometimes indistinct pathway wove back and forth between the virgin trees. The defiant call of an animal or screech of a bird, who had not yet heard the blast of a gun, occasionally pierced the velvet silence. Through the trees Benjamin Borden occasionally caught glimpses of the ancient mountains that encompassed the fertile valley, blue and brooding in the morning light.

Borden could tell it was a good land. He noted the limestone soil, the blue grass, the plavine, the heavy foliage on the trees. The Indians, he knew, used the Valley as a common hunting ground, and the path he was traversing had first been stamped out by buffalo. "The Great Path," the Indians called it; and it was destined to be a great path in American history.

Originally from New Jersey, Borden had gone to Williamsburg the previous year on business, and had met a likable Virginian named John Lewis. A few years prior to the meeting Lewis had taken this same journey westward from Virginia's colonial capital, establishing his grant near what is now Staunton, Virginia. He was swept away with the promise and beauty of the country over the Blue Ridge. God never made better country. The Shawnees came all the way from

Illinois, the Cherokees from Tennessee, and the Catawbas from North Carolina, just to hunt there in the fall. Borden listened, questioned, and began to share Lewis' dream of settling in this country. After a quick trip home he applied to the British authorities at Williamsburg for a "patent" or grant of land. Anxious to see the western land brought within their ken, the authorities agreed to grant Borden 100,000 acres if within two years he would settle a hundred families there. Neither the British officials nor Benjamin Borden knew it; but the seed that was to grow into Rockbridge County had been planted.

First of all it was necessary for him to locate the land, and to see for himself how his domain appeared. This was his motive in 1737 when he was on the Great Path. Papers he had secured told him it was on the watershed of the James River, and southward of Lewis' lands, which were on the Shenandoah River. He continued his lonely ride until he realized he must soon stop for the night. As he rounded a curve in the path he discerned several horses and their riders, and he stopped to observe them. They were white people, four men and a woman, and they were already making preparations for camping. He rode on to join this little company, and presently asked the privilege of "taking the night" with them, which was promptly accorded him.

After they had hobbled their horses and turned them loose to graze, and had themselves eaten, Borden told the others he had assurances of being granted a large tract of land, "if I can ever find it." The small company comprised Ephraim McDowell, an elderly man, his two sons, James and John, his son-in-law James Greenlee, and Greenlee's wife, Mary. As they sat talking around their campfire Borden asked many questions of the quartet, telling them of his own plans and

wishes. He learned they were on the way to settle on John Lewis' land. John McDowell stated that he was a surveyor, and he showed his surveyor's instruments, which he had with him. Nothing could have been more fortunate for Borden; he soon made a contract with McDowell by which the latter agreed to locate his grant for him. In consideration of this service McDowell was to receive one thousand acres, wherever he might select it. A rough memorandum of this agreement was then drawn up, and signed by each.

Next morning the party continued their journey to Lewis' home, where the rough memorandum was made into a more formal and presentable writing, and signed as before. Continuing their journey, they at length came to where McDowell noted the streams were flowing in more decidedly southern direction. Thinking they had reached Borden's tract, he was anxious to confirm this before giving it forth as a certainty. However, nightfall was now at hand, so they made preparations for camping. A highway-marker, standing near Steele's Tavern, in front of Mount Carmel church, at the border of Augusta and Rockbridge counties, reads: "HERE THE FIRST SETTLERS IN ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY HAD THEIR FIRST CAMP." Settlement in Rockbridge was a reality.

Next morning John McDowell and Borden left the others at the camp and set forth afoot to explore. They followed a small stream down to a larger stream, South River; then followed South River some miles to where its waters unite with North River, a large branch of the James. Thoroughly convinced this was the territory intended to be granted to Borden, they returned to camp. From there they continued, with the others, two miles. When John observed a section which particularly struck his fancy, they called a halt. They had now reached their journey's end; and the men set to work felling

trees with which to build log cabins. A portion of this land is now embraced within the boundaries of the farm of Mrs. Louise Alexander, two miles south of Steele's Tavern.

Most of the other settlers were in such haste to provide a roof over their heads that they built of unpeeled logs; but McDowell took time to remove the bark from his. When they had moved into the house, he secured red ochre from a nearby bush and stained the logs a brilliant red. His house received the name "Red House," a designation it bore for more than a century. The Great Path or the Great Trace became a part of the Wilderness Road and was traversed by thousands of settlers even before it was made wide enough to pass a wheeled vehicle, many of which were on their way to Kentucky and to western North Carolina. These pioneers carried their belongings on pack-horses. The trail divided at Big Lick, now Roanoke City, one fork proceeding southward into the Carolinas, the other through Cumberland Gap into Kentucky. Many families came to their journey's end all along the Trail, throughout the entire extent of the Valley of Virginia, extending from Harper's Ferry on the north, to Bristol, Tennessee, or Cumberland Gap, Kentucky, on the south, a distance of over five hundred miles.

Other members of the McDowell party received from Borden boundaries of land, and constructed habitations. In a short time other settlers appeared, all seeking land. McDowell and Borden were kept busy visiting various sections of the domain with newly-arrived settlers, assigning the area and fixing boundaries of the various tracts. The building of a cabin entitled a man to a "Cabin Right" of 100 acres. On this tract the settler had to pay a tax known as the quit-rent, bitterly opposed by Thomas Jefferson later on. Opportunities for settlement in colonial Virginia were so great, and the trip

to the Valley of Virginia so long, that Borden was unable to get 100 families settled within two years. The Council of Virginia, upon petition, extended his time; and in the fall of 1740 the conditions had been met. Borden's Grant was signed and sealed in Williamsburg and presented to him. A few years afterwards the senior Borden, first legal owner of what is now Rockbridge county, died. To his son, Benjamin Borden, Jr., fell the task of carrying on the settlement. An illiterate but efficient man, young Borden came to the grant and married the widow of John McDowell, who had been killed with seven of his men in a 1742 Indian battle. Ten years later Borden died of smallpox, leaving no children to bear his name. The wife who survived him, now doubly-widowed, married a third time. Her new husband was John Bowyer, and he was determined to build a home fitting the dignity of his wife, the richest woman in the territory. That place was Thorn Hill, built in 1796, the earliest Greek Revival building west of the Blue Ridge. It stands today, two miles south of Lexington, overlooking the rolling hills which so impressed Rockbridge's first settlers, and documenting the faith they had in the good life which could be lived here.

What, meanwhile, had happened to the Mary Greenlee who was the first white woman to settle in Rockbridge county, and who met Benjamin Borden, Sr., when he was looking for his grant? Like the hills around her she endured, living to the remarkable age of 102 years. Her husband died in 1763, after which she went to live with her son Samuel. Finally she moved near Natural Bridge, to live with a younger son, David, and when she died she was buried in the little cemetery on her son's farm. This historic grave was marked in 1944 by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and rightly so. If counties may be said to have mothers, ours

is that strong and spunky woman who had in her a vein of iron, Mary Greenlee. Not only her life, but the Deposition she made at court in 1802 give her maternal claim validity. Both the Bordens were careless with records, and by the turn of the century records were completely muddled. The only person alive who could speak authoritatively on the earliest days was Mary Greenlee. Although she was not far from her own centennial date, she was up to the task. The court subjected her to a test of her memory and accuracy before recording testimony. "How old are you?" a young lawyer, according to county folklore, is supposed to have asked her. "Ninety-five the seventeenth of this instant," she replied tartly. "Why do you ask? Do you think I am in my dotage?" The judge ordered the Deposition to be recorded, and her testimony is called by local historians the "cornerstone of Rockbridge County history." Since no document is so important in the county's annals, it is included here just as it appears in court records.[1]

Deposition taken November 10, 1802, in the suit of Joseph Borden vs. Alex. Custom and others. Mrs. Greenlee, being sworn, deposeth and sayeth:

"That she with her husband, James Greenlee, settled on Borden's large grant as near as she could recollect in the fall of the year 1737. That shortly before her settlement on said grant, she together with her husband, her father Ephraim McDowell, then a very aged man, and her brother, John McDowell, were on their way to Beverley Manor, and were advanced as far as Lewis' Creek, intending to stop on South River (Shenandoah River) at that time never having heard

1. Mary Greenlee's Deposition is on file in the Record Office of Augusta County, Staunton, Virginia. It is published in full in John Lewis Peyton's *History of Augusta County* (Staunton, Samuel Yost & Son, 1882), p. 69 ff.

of Borden's tract. That she remembers of her brother James, the spring before, having gone into said Manor, and raised a crop of corn on South River, about Turks, near what was called Woods' Gap. That about the time they were striking up their camp in the evening, Benjamin Borden, the elder, came to their camp, and proposed staying all night. In the course of conversation said Borden informed them that he had about 100,000 acres of land on the waters of James River, if he could ever find it. He proposed giving 1,000 acres to anyone who would conduct him to it. When a light was made he produced two papers, and satisfied the company of his rights. The deponent's brother, John McDowell, then informed the said Borden he would conduct him to the forks of James River for 1,000 acres, and showed said Borden his surveying instruments, etc., and finally it was agreed that said McDowell should conduct him to the grant, and she thinks a memorandum of this agreement was then made in writing. They went on from there to the home of John Lewis, in Beverley Manor near where Staunton now stands, who was a relation of the deponent's father. They remained with him a few days, and there she understood further writings were entered into, and it was finally agreed that they should all settle in Borden's tract. That the said John McDowell was to have 1,000 acres for conducting him there, agreeable to the writing entered into, and that the settlers were moreover to have 100 acres for every cabin they should build, even if they built forty cabins, and that they might purchase any quantity adjoining at 50 shillings per hundred acres. The said deponent understood that Borden was interested in these cabin rights as they were called, for each cabin saved him 1,000 acres. These cabin rights were afterwards counted, the deponent understood, and an account rendered to the government, then

held at Williamsburg, and she had heard about that time, many tests by which one person, by going from cabin to cabin was counted, and stood for several settlements. She recollects, particularly, of hearing of a serving girl of one James Bell, named Milhollen, who dressed herself in men's clothes, and saved several cabin rights, perhaps five or six, calling herself Milhollen, but varying the Christian name. These conversations were current in that day. She knows nothing of the fact but from information. She understood it was immaterial where the cabins were built; that they were to entitle the builder to 100 acres wherever he chose to lay it off, and that he had the right to purchase, as aforesaid, at 50 shillings, any larger quantity. One John Patterson was employed to count the cabin rights, as she understood. He was accustomed to mark the letters on his hat with chalk, as she had been informed, and afterward to deliver the amount to her brother, John McDowell, and remembers to have heard that her brother had expressed surprise at so many people by the name of Milhollen having settled on the land, but which was explained by the circumstance of the serving girl above mentioned, and was a subject of general mirth in the settlement. She does not know whether this plan of saving several cabin rights by one person appearing at different cabins, was suggested by Borden the elder, or not. She understood that each person got 100 acres for each right so saved, and that he, Borden, was to have a cabin for each 1,000 acres. When the party with which she travelled, as aforesaid, came as they supposed into the grant, they stopped at a spring near where David Steele now lives, and struck their camp, her brother and Borden having gone down said branch until they were satisfied it was one of the waters of James River. The balance of them remained at the spring until her brother

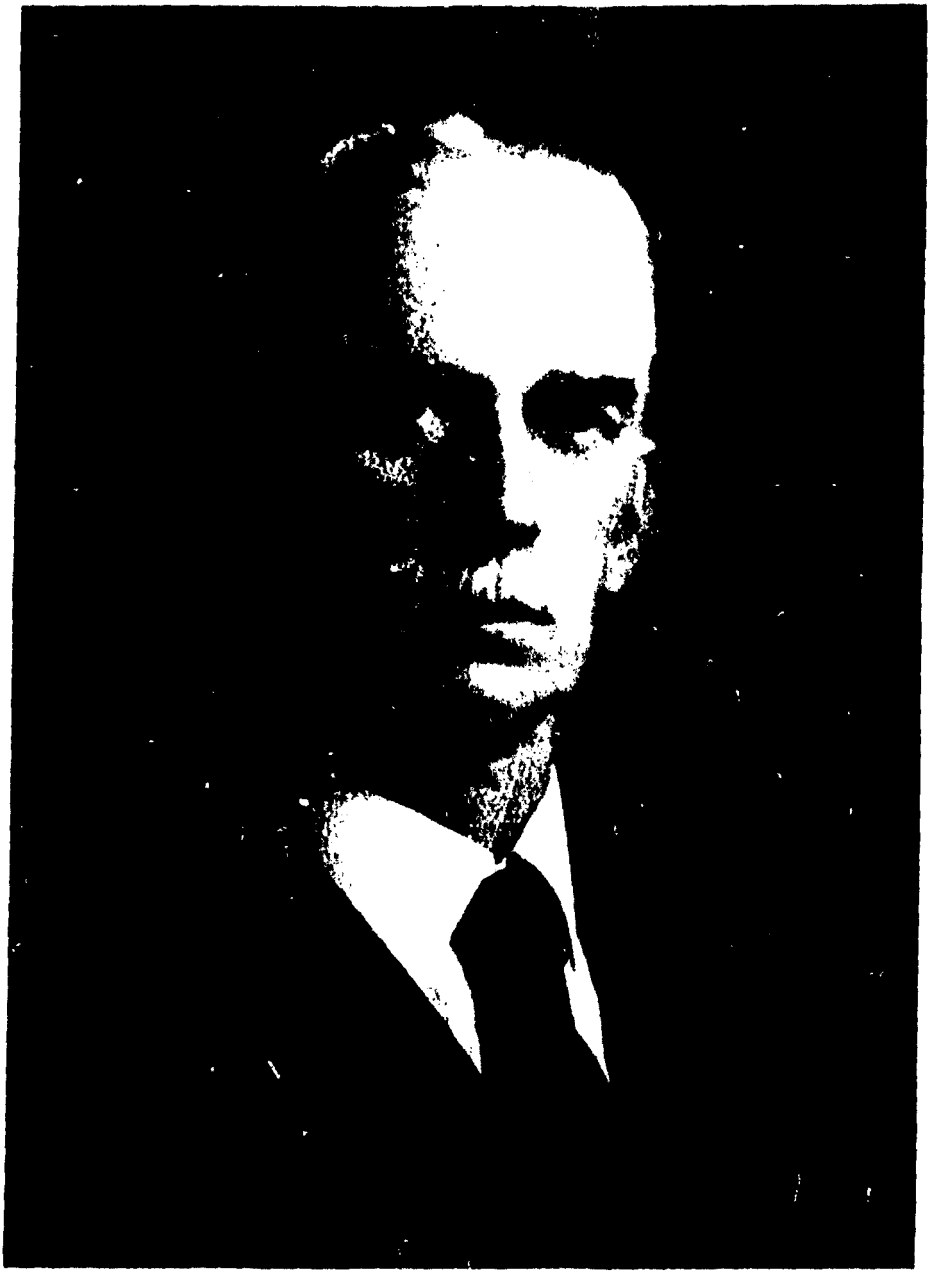
and Borden went down, as she understood, to the forks formed by the waters of South and of North Rivers, and having taken a course through the country, returned to the camp. Then they went on to a place called Red House, where her brother John built a cabin, and settled there, where James McDowell now lives. The first cabin her husband built was by a spring, near where Andrew Scott now lives, but when deponent went to see it she did not like the situation, and they then built and settled at the placed called Brown's. They sold this after a short time, and purchased the land on which her brother James had made an improvement, called Templeton's now, where she resided until about the year 1780, being in sight of where her father, then near a hundred years of age, resided.

"This was the first party of white people who ever settled in the Grant. The said Borden the elder remained on the Grant from that time, as near as she can recollect, for perhaps two years or more, obtaining settlers, and she believes there were more than a hundred settlers before he left them. She believes he was in the Grant the whole time from his coming up till he left it before his death, but how long before his death she does not know. He resided some time with a Mrs. Hunter, whose daughter married one Greene, and to whom she understands he gave the tract whereupon they lived. When the said Borden left the Grant she understood he left his papers with her brother, John McDowell, to whose house a great many people resorted to see about lands; but what authority her brother had to sell, or whether he made sales or not, she does not know. Her brother John was killed about Christmas, before her son, Samuel, the first son of that name, was born. He was born, as appears from the record of his birth in a Bible, about April 1743. The date of this register is partially obliterated in the last figure, but from the date of the birth

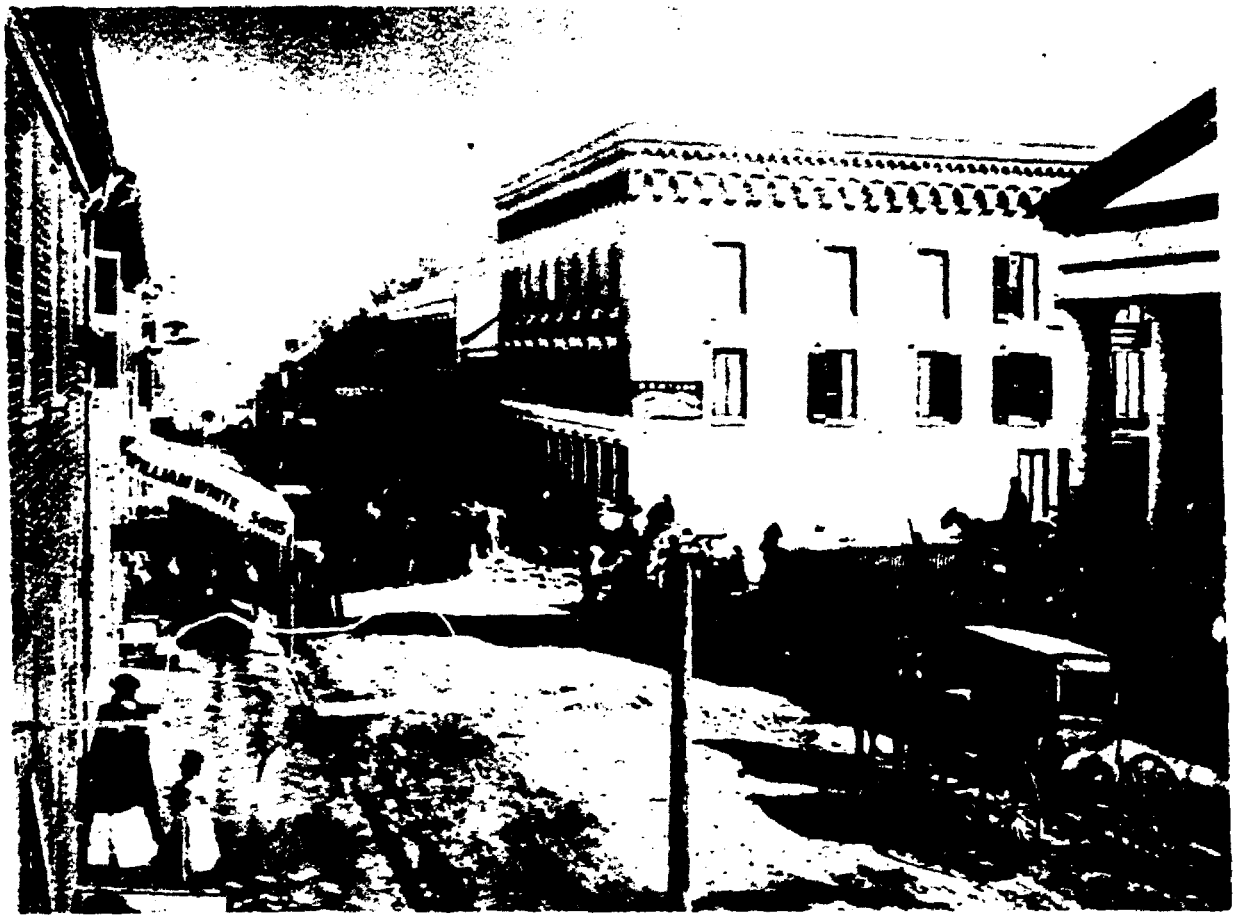
of the preceding and the subsequent child, it must have been in 1743 that the said Samuel was born.

"Young Ben Borden came into the settlement before her brother's death. She recollects this from his being in ordinary plight, and such that he did not seem to be respected much by her brother's wife; and when she afterward married him she could not but reflect upon the change of circumstances. She understood that he was altogether illiterate. The said Benjamin, junior, lived with her brother John while in the Grant, but returned to his father's before the death of the said John; and after his father's death returned fully empowered by his father's will to complete titles and to sell land, and he then married the widow of her said brother, and continued to live at the same place where her brother settled as aforesaid, until his death. This place, now called Red House, is about three-quarters of a mile from Templeton's where the deponent resided as above.

"Joseph Borden, a son of old Borden, the grantee, had resided at his brother Benjamin's some years before his (Benjamin's) death; and gone to school, and was here at his brother Benjamin's death; sometime after which (deponent does not remember precisely but it was not long), he went away, being not very well liked as she understood, and not made very welcome; was then but a lad of 18 or 19, as well as she can recollect from his appearance. The deponent recollects John Hart, who had removed to Beverley Manor some time before the removal of this deponent and her friend as above stated, but she cannot say whether he surveyed for the said Benjamin or not; she understood he was a surveyor. The people who first settled did not always have their lands surveyed at the time of the purchase. Some had their land surveyed and some had not, but when it was not surveyed



Edmund Pendleton Tompkins
1868-1952



The funeral of Robert E. Lee

This picture was made by Michael Miley from the window of his Lexington studio.

it was described by general boundaries. Beatty was the first surveyor that she knows who surveyed in the grant. The said Borden had been at Williamsburg, and someone, perhaps the Governor's son-in-law, by name Needler, and his other partners, had in a frolic given him their interest in said grant. She understood there were four of them — the governor, Gooch, his said son-in-law, and two others whose names she does not recall, who were interested in the Order of Council for said land, and that Borden got it from them as above; this was his information. She well recollects that her brother John assisted one Woods to make the survey of said large tract after they had removed to it as aforesaid, it being at the time of their removal held by Order of Council, as she understood. The said Woods and her brother made the survey, she believes, after the cabin rights were taken in, as above stated. Many people came, and settlements and cabins made immediately after their settling on the tract, as aforesaid.

"Being interrogated as to the value of the land remaining unsold by Ben Borden, she stated that one Harden, who she understood was an executor, and who was in the country after the death of young Borden (which occurred from the smallpox in 1753), and after John Bowyer had married the widow, and who she understood was settling Borden's business — but she does not know by what authority — she recollects that said Harden offered to her brother James the unsold lands for a bottle of wine, if he would but clear him of the quit-rents. She also recollects that her said brother consulted with her father about the proposition, who advised him to have nothing to do with it, as it probably would run him into debtor's prison. This she thinks was shortly after Bowyer's marriage. She does not know whether Ben Borden, Jr., was distressed on account of the quit-rents or not, but recollects

clearly that shortly before his death Colonel Patton was at her house; a horse of said Borden's broke out and came there, which said Patton wished to have caught, that he might take it for some claims against the said Borden, but she did not hear what. She, however, had said horse sent home, fearing that as there had been some misunderstanding between said deponent's husband and said Borden about the land, he might think they had aided in said seizure. The deponent further states that her husband purchased 1,000 acres of land from old Borden at an early day for 50 shillings per hundred, which she understood he had located on Turkey Hill, as it was called. After the death of old Borden his son disputed giving a deed for the whole quantity there, alleging it was all valuable land, and afterward for the sake of peace it was agreed that a part should be taken there — a part adjoining Robert Cutton, which was sold to old Buchanan — and a part near John Davidson. This arrangement was made at a time Borden was present, as aforesaid, who seemed willing to give the land and advised this deponent, whose husband was then abroad, to take it at those places, which she did. All the land purchased by her husband was purchased from old Borden. He had purchased this 1,000 acres before they came to the tract, when at Lewis', as before stated, provided he liked the land when he saw it, which he did.

"The deponent being asked what she knew of the persons named in a mutilated paper, purporting to be a report of entries and sales, beginning at "No. 1, McDowell, John, to No. 22, Moore, Andrew," on the first side where the paper appeared to be torn off beginning on the other side at "No. 42, Martin, Robert, and ending at No. 62, Brown, Robert," and whether these persons were settled in the Grant at an early day, or owned land in it, answered that she knew a number

of persons therein named. Many of them lived in Beverley Manor, and others in the Calf-pasture, and elsewhere, but that she did not know many of them to have lands in Borden's tract. The McDowells and her husband she had before spoken of. She also knew John Moore, who settled at an early day where Charles Campbell now lives; Andrew Moore, who settled where his grandson, William Moore, now lives. William McCausland also lived in the Grant, as did William Sawyers and Robert Campbell, Samuel Woods, John Matthews, Richard Woods, John Hays, his son, Samuel Walker, etc., all of whom settled in the Grant at an early day.

"The deponent being interrogated whether she knew Alex. Miller, and if he was an early settler, answered, he was the first blacksmith that settled on the tract. She did know said Miller. She recollects of his shoeing old Borden's horse, and understood he purchased land of said Borden. He lived on land adjoining John McCrosky's land, who also purchased his land from old Borden. He also joined the plantation, near Stewart's millplace, as she believes, whereon one Taylor, who she believes married Elizabeth Paxton, formerly lived. She recollects being at the burial of said Taylor, who was killed by the falling of a tree, not long after his marriage. Said Miller's land, she understood, has been in the possession of people by the name of Teaford since the said Millers removed. The deponent recollects one McMullen who resided some distance above the place where Robert Stewart's mill now stands, but up the same branch, and near a spring. Said McMullen was living on said land, and had a daughter married when this deponent's daughter, Mary, was a sucking babe. She recollects this from having gone to the wedding when a daughter of said McMullen was married, and having left her child at home. Her daughter Mary was born, as

appears from the register of her birth, in May, 1745. Humphrey's cabins, as they were called, were over the hill, at another spring, not far from where said McMullen lived. She knows not from whom McMullen purchased, but rather thinks her brother James McDowell gave him a piece of land there for teaching school. There was no mill where Stewart's mill now is, in the lifetime of Ben Borden, Jr. John Hays' mill was the first mill built in the Grant, and was very early after the settlement.

"The deponent said that the people paid no quit-rents for two years after the time the Grant was first settled. She understood this exemption was granted by the Governor at the instance of one Anderson, a preacher. When they had to pay quit-rents they raised money by sending butter to New Castle, to Williamsburg, and other markets below, and got in return their salt, iron, etc.

"Being asked if Joseph Borden was frequently in this country after the death of young Ben Borden, she answered that he was frequently in this country some time after the death of said Benjamin. He called at her house, inquiring after a horse, and she thought she knew his name, and afterwards heard he lodged in the neighborhood at one William Campbell's. She saw him again at her house about 12 or 15 years ago. He made some inquiry about her husband's estate or something of that kind; she does not recollect the particulars, but she had very little conversation with him. She also heard of his being through this country some little time before this, but does not recollect how long, nor did she see him.

"Question by the defendant's agent: Did not many persons in the lifetime of old Borden settle in the Grant under the expectation of getting lands at the usual prices, and without first contracting with said Borden?

"Answer: I believe that they did. I think many settled before they had opportunity of seeing Borden, and Borden would frequently direct them to deponent's husband, to show them the land, as they said.

"Question: Do you not believe the first deeds were made for the cabin rights?

"Answer: I suppose the cabin right, with such land as the settler had purchased would be deeded together, and perhaps these were the first made.

"Question: Did Ben Borden, Jr., appear when he first entered on the affairs of the estate, to be disposed to do justice to the divises?

"Answer: I thought he did. He appeared to be a good man. She understood he was the heir-in-law, and did not hear of the sisters' claim except to five thousand acres, which she understood, had been assigned to them on Catawba where the land was good.

"Question: Did he ever leave this country and go to New Jersey, after he came up and got married?

"Answer: No, I believe he did not. I am pretty confident he did not.

"Question: Did you know of Archibald Alexander and Magdalen Bowyer selling land?

"Answer: I did not know that they were executors, and had the right to sell. I understand that John Bowyer sold a great deal, and gave away a great deal. Alexander was as respectable a man as I ever knew. Bowyer, I understand, claimed what Ben Borden claimed, though she had no conversation with him about his claim.

"Question: Had Alexander paid Borden any money on account of the estate?

"Answer: I never heard that he had, and from my intimacy

with the wife of said Bowyer, I believe, I would have heard of it if it had taken place.

"Question: When Borden produced his right to the land, as you have stated, were you not satisfied, and was the company not satisfied, that the right was completely in him?

"Answer: Yes, the papers appeared perfectly satisfactory.

"Question: Did you not understand that the brother, James McDowell, built a cabin, and purchased the land where Thomas Taylor, above mentioned, resided?

"Answer: My brother James purchased a considerable tract, perhaps four or five hundred acres, either at or near where Stewart's mill now stands. It ran, as I understand, on a large hill, but whether in one or two tracts I do not know. This tract he sold to some person but I do not know who. I do not know whether it had been surveyed or not but think it was merely designated by general boundaries. If I were on the land I think I could point out the tree on which his name is cut, if it is still standing. It stood by a deep hole in the creek. Do not know how he acquired it, but believe he had built a cabin on it, and saved a cabin right. Never saw the cabin nor know where it stood, but the land was called his very shortly after they went to the Grant, and in the lifetime of old Borden.

"Sworn before us, 10th November, 1802.

"JOSEPH WALKER J. GRIGSBY"

Rockbridge county history, then, extends back into colonial times, Indian wars, and frontier trails. Long before the colonies had declared war against the British, or even the French and Indians, staunch men and women brought their courage, their strength, and their integrity to the Valley. The foundations on which we have been able to build were firmly laid.

AN AUCTION, A FIRE, AND A LOTTERY

THE COLONIAL HISTORY of what became Rockbridge county is filled with excitement, exultation, and despair. The county seat of Lexington was begun by auction, almost destroyed by fire, and in part resurrected by a lottery. Few people now living in our placid and orderly modern-day Lexington have heard of these events; but out of them the town has sprung.

This early history pre-dates the establishment of the county according to its present borders. From 1745, when Augusta County was organized, until 1770, when the county of Botetourt was cut off from Augusta, the people living in what is now Rockbridge county had to travel to Staunton whenever they had any business with the county officials, such as recording deeds or wills, getting a marriage license, or conducting business before the court. After 1770 those living southwest of North River had to go to Fincastle for such purposes, while those residing to the north-east of this river continued to go to Staunton.

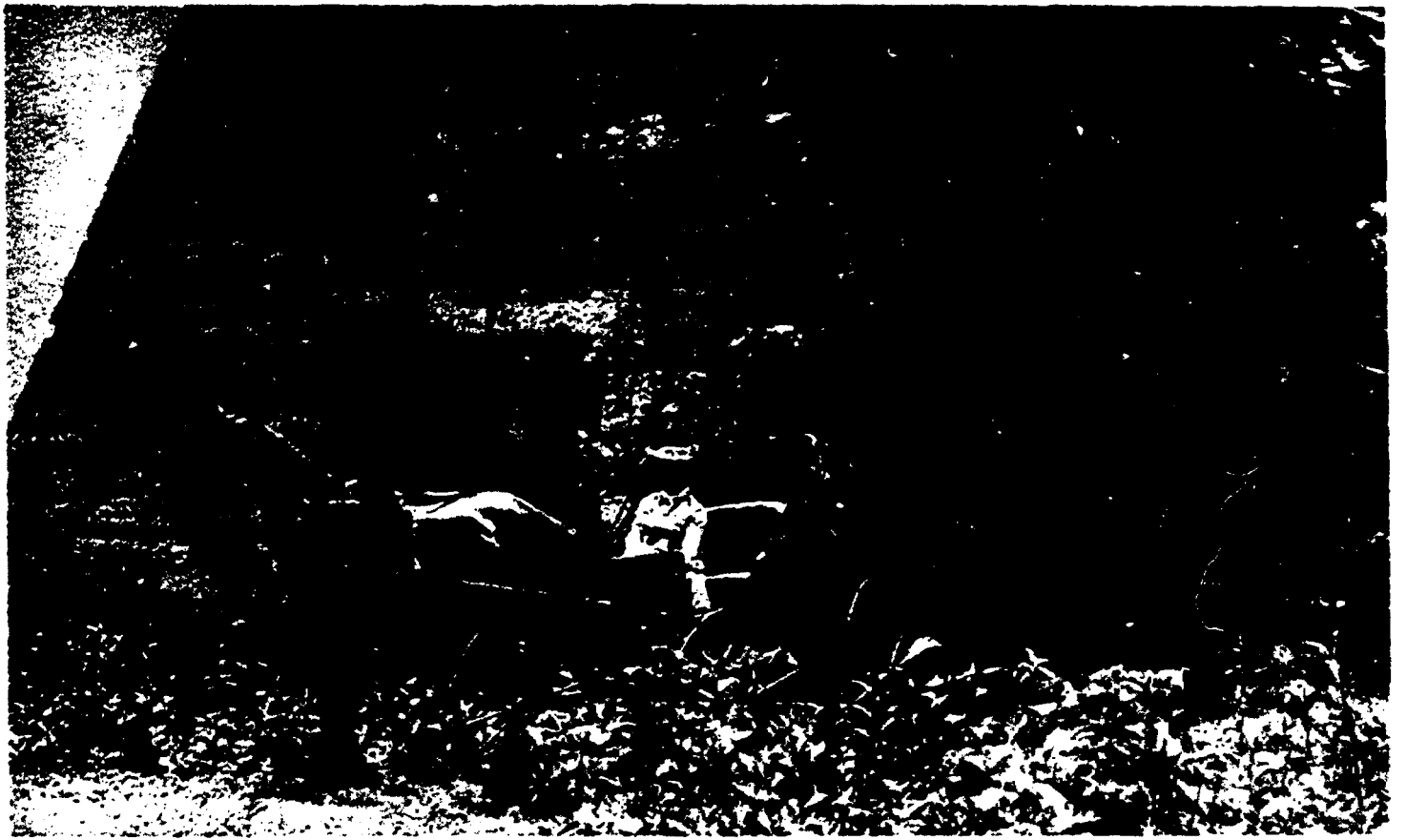
The distance from North River to either one of these county seats being considerable, in the day of dirt roads and horse-drawn vehicles, the people found the trip burdensome. This resulted in the Legislature, or as it was more commonly called in that day, the General Assembly, passing an act providing a new county. Since the same conditions prevailed in other

localities, the same Act of Assembly made provision for three new counties.

And so we read this October, 1777 enactment,[1] "Whereas it is represented to this present Assembly by the inhabitants of Augusta and Botetourt counties that they labour under many inconveniences by reason of the great extent of said counties and parishes: "Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly, That from and after the first day of March next the said counties be divided. (Here is given the lines of division.) And all those parts of the said counties and parishes of Augusta and Botetourt included within these lines shall be called and known by the name of Rockbridge. And a court for the county of Rockbridge shall be on the first Tuesday of every month at the home of Samuel Wallace. And the justices shall fix on a place for holding court at or as near the center as convenience will admit of, and shall thenceforth proceed to erect the necessary public buildings, and after the public buildings shall be completed shall thenceforth hold court at such places.

"And be it further enacted, That at the place which shall be appointed for holding court in the said county of Rockbridge, shall be laid off a town, to be called Lexington, thirteen hundred feet in length, and nine hundred feet in breadth. And in order to make satisfaction to the proprietor of said land the clerk of the said county shall issue a writ directed to the Sheriff, commanding him to summon twelve able and disinterested freeholders, to meet on a certain day, who shall upon oath value said land. The Justices at the laying of the first publick levy shall make provision for paying the said proprietor, and the property of the said land shall become

1. William W. Hening, *Statutes at Large in Virginia* (Richmond, 1819-23), p. 420.



Fielding Lewis Poindexter made this picture of his mother at Glendale furnace, 1896.
The furnace was important during the days when iron making was a major enterprise in Rockbridge County.

The Morrison sisters out for a boat ride at Rockbridge Baths. Betts Morrison, far left, later became Mrs. Earnest Sale, while her sister Halley was at this time Mrs. Charles Wait. The young lad is her son; the colored nurse and oarsman Tom McPheeters complete the group.

Timber Ridge church, near which Sam Houston was born.

vested in the Justices and their successors; one acre to be reserved for the use of the said county, and the residue to be sold and conveyed by the said Justices to any persons, and the money arising from such sale to be applied to lessening the publick levy; and the publick buildings shall be erected on the lands reserved as aforesaid."

It has been said by some, that the county of Rockbridge (which embraces practically all of Benjamin Borden's Grant) was established and cut off from Botetourt County, in order that the men responsible for the death of the Indian, Cornstalk, might be tried by a jury of their neighbors, who knew first hand of the atrocities committed by Cornstalk's Indians, rather than by a jury more remote from these massacres. The fact that this act was passed by the General Assembly, and actually made law in October 1777, while the murder of Cornstalk occurred on November 11th, effectually nullifies any such theory.

The spot chosen, after considerable discussion as to adequate amount of wood and water available, was land owned by Mr. Isaac Campbell. The record indicates that he was a public-spirited man who donated ten acres of the amount of land required, which in all was twenty-six and a fraction acres. In the words of the official account:

"We the subscribers being first sworn, have appraised and valued a certain Lot of Land, late the property of Isaac Campbell laid off by survey for the use of Rockbridge County, Town to be called Lexington, containing 26¾ acres, ten of which said acres Mr. Campbell gave gratis for ye benefit of said County. Given under our Hands and Seals this 14th day of May 1778.

"Appraised two hundred and fifty pounds.

"Hugh Barclay	Alexander McClure	William Paxton
James Gilmore	James Lyle	Henry McClung
William Ramsay	John Thompson	Joseph Walker
Moses Whitesides	John Caruthers	Samuel Caruthers"[2]

It would be interesting to know who first suggested the name of the new county; perhaps Thomas Jefferson, as only three years before this Mr. Jefferson had a grant of 157 acres of land, and the Natural Bridge, from the King of England. He was much enamoured of his new property, and mentioned in a letter to a friend that he sometimes thought he might make his home there, when he had retired from the burden and perplexities of public affairs. It has been remarked that if Jefferson had been a few years later making application for this grant, the King might have much preferred giving him a hangman's rope, rather than such grant. A street in the newly established county seat was named in honor of Jefferson.

Two-thirds of Rockbridge territory was cut off from Botetourt County, and the remainder from Augusta County. The lines of Borden's Grant, adjoining the Beverley Manor Grant, had been established many years before, and a part of this boundary was taken as the bounds of the new county.

The Act of Assembly specified that the county seat must be "at or as near the center as convenience will admit of." This largely served to fix the location; as did the presence of three good springs, one near the corner of Henry and Randolph streets, another two hundred feet to the north of this one, and a third located at what is now the corner of the Washington

2. Rockbridge County Will Book number 1, page 16.

and Lee University campus. The latter is now entirely covered from sight, because the street level at this point was later raised by digging down the surface of Main street along near the courthouse, and hauling the material to fill in the area at the junction of Washington and Jefferson streets. The spring had been protected by masonry wall and arch over this spring, built when it still was used, before water had been piped to the town. The water from this spring now is conducted away by underground pipes.

The legislators who voted on the matter of the new county themselves fixed upon the name, Lexington. Their model was the Massachusetts town where a short time before occurred one of the battles beginning the Revolutionary War. There "The embattled farmers stood, and fired the shot heard round the world."

The town was surveyed by James McDowell, duly commissioned by "the President and Masters of William and Mary College" as County Surveyor, and laid off "78 poles 13 feet in length, and 54 poles 9 feet in breadth." This area was divided into sections by six streets, three running lengthwise, and three crosswise. Lots were laid off on both sides of all streets and not only on the central streets. The "Lotts," as the small tracts were called, contained a half-acre each. This arrangement made each lot in the town a corner lot. There were no alleys.

The lots were offered for sale at auction, because the terms of Sale set forth by the Trustees, the forerunner of our Town Council, says, "The Trustees reserve a bid at each lot on behalf of the County." The result of this auction, or "vendue," has not come to light. Only in the Deeds made to the several purchasers does one find a record of who became the owners of the several lots.

The Act specifies that the town shall be 1,300 feet long, and 900 feet wide. The surveyor could not add a foot or even a part of a foot to this. He decided the two central streets would be fifty feet wide, and the other streets forty feet, or a total of 130 feet taken up in streets. When the half-acre lots were measured off the lengthwise measurements were in exact number of feet, but when the crosswise measurements were made it was found to be, not exact feet, but four inches over. The surveyor was obviously governed by the very letter of the law. This does not explain why he used pole measure, instead of foot measure.

It would be interesting to know on just what date, and at what place, the sale of lots took place. We can imagine, however, a group of citizens gathered (maybe in the vicinity of the half-acre reserved for the use of the county), interested in the affairs of the public, and at the same time anxious to enhance their own fortunes by a land investment. The auctioneer may have mounted one of the farm wagons standing around, from the tail of this wagon read out the terms of the Sale, then proceeded to offer the lots one by one. An iron-clad stipulation in these terms was that one-half the money must be paid down in cash, and the other half in six months; otherwise the land would revert to the county. Some of the buyers failed to make the second payment when due, and so forfeited their rights, because recorded deeds show the Trustees often sold the same lot twice, or even three times. Or the purchaser may have failed to comply with another regulation, namely, that he "build a house at least 20 feet by 16 feet, with a brick or stone chimney, within three years," and so may have forfeited his lot in this way.

The names of the purchasers of these various lots are in many instances familiar. William Alexander seems to have

been impressed with the importance of being a landholder in the new town, for he bought six of the half-acre tracts. He was canny enough to buy one with a spring.

First he bought lot number 18, paying for it two hundred pounds. This is the space fronting on Main street, and extending from Henry street up to midway of this block. Four years later he bought lot number 19, and so owned all on west side of Main street from Henry to Washington streets. For number 19 he paid only ten pounds. We can only account for the difference paid as compared one lot with the other, by the fluctuation of the currency about the time of the Revolutionary War. On number 18 stood the old Jordan House. Whether it was there when Alexander bought this lot we do not know. Some think this was the house in which lived Isaac Campbell, on whose land the town was built.

On number 19 Mr. Alexander built an imposing brick house, diagonally across from the Courthouse, and known today as the Withrow house. Tradition says this house was built before the fire of 1796, which destroyed the town, and that this brick house was the only one left standing after the fire was out.

Samuel Wallace, in whose house beyond the boundaries of the present town of Lexington the first sessions of the county court were held, bought in 1810 the lot extending from the present R. E. Lee Hotel up to Nelson street. Here he spent the latter years of his life, and here he died. He bought and paid for the lot, but he never did get a deed for it. His heirs had to take steps, after his death, to get the deed. This is known, because their deed reads, "Purchased by Samuel Wallace in his lifetime, but said Trustees having made sale of said lot, and not having made conveyance."

The authorities reserved a whole lot for the courthouse, but decided this was more than enough, for the Court Order Book number 3, page 312, in June 1790, shows this: "Ordered that John Bowyer, Mathew Hanna, and James Caruthers or any two of them sell by auction, at one month's notice and one year's credit fifty feet in front on Main street, and extending back the same width to Randolph street; and the house Robt. McKee built to be removed by purchaser."

Mathew Hanna, one of the Gentlemen Justices of the court, came here in 1782. A sterling upright man, he at one period of his career operated a tanyard, which was located in what is now a corner of the Washington and Lee campus. Sometimes he was referred to as "the pious tanner at the foot of the hill." He owned various tracts of land, as the dozen or more deeds recorded in his name testify. These were not only in and around the town, but out toward Poplar Hills.

William Brice bought one of the original lots in the town. His deed is dated December 4, 1787. He was the contractor who built the courthouse. In the Augusta County records[3] is a notation, "Receipt by William Brice August 3, 1786, for part payment for building court house. Suit involves settlement of account for building the Rockbridge courthouse."

John Dolton did not buy a lot in the beginning, but meditated on the matter for twenty years before he ventured twenty dollars for lot number 4, receiving his deed on December 4, 1798. He must have been pleased with his purchase, for after considering the matter another eighteen years he bought the one just across the street, number 5. These two purchases are all the land transactions recorded

3. See Chalkley's *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia* (1912), vol. 2, p. 25.

in the name of John Dolton. He may have been contemplating another purchase, but death overtook him. Life is so short!

Mr. Andrew Reid occupied positions of trust and responsibility all his long life, as clerk of the court as well as in other capacities. He seems to have been rather modest in selecting a lot not in the center of town, but on the outskirts, beyond Randolph street. His deed is dated January 3, 1794, but he may have had possession of the land some time before he received his deed. The purchase price is given in dollars, rather than in the usual pounds, fifty dollars being the consideration. On Mr. Reid's lot stands the structure known to many citizens today as the Castle. Some persons have thought, partly because the Castle is not perfectly aligned with Randolph street, being nearer at one end than at the other, that the Castle was already built when the street was laid off. But if Mr. Reid, in 1794, paid for this lot only fifty dollars, the lot could hardly have had a house on it at that time.

A noticeable aspect of these transactions is the variation in prices. For example, lot number 15 was deeded to Robert Shaw, on March 7, 1780, at the price of one hundred pounds; while lot number 16 was deeded to William Brown on October 3, 1786, at the price of only five pounds. Brown's lot was the present Dold House lot, while Shaw's extended from the present Central Hotel to the Rockbridge laundry corner on Henry street. The variation here was probably due to the fluctuation of the currency. Yet this fact would not seem to account for all the variations, even though the people of post-Revolutionary times had problems of inflation far worse than did any other period of our history.

When the first court of Rockbridge county was being organized, we read in the Order Book: "Archibald Alexander produced a commission from His Excellency Patrick Henry,

Governor, appointing him Sheriff. And John Bowyer produced a commission from His Excellency, Patrick Henry, Governor, appointing him County Lieutenant." The Clerks of the County Courts had their commissions from the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Then James McDowell presented a commission appointing him surveyor, signed by the President and Masters of William and Mary College. Apparently the Governor of the State was competent to furnish men able to deal with problems of law or government, but when a scientific consideration entered, such as surveying land, only the President of a college was competent to select the proper man.

The town having been properly laid off, and some of the lots sold, the purchasers began building houses. All of them were log houses in the beginning of the town's existence. This was of course in Revolutionary War days. But presently these anxious war years were past and gone, and men began coming back from the army to take up their usual pursuits, rejoicing in their freedom. The first few Federal years were uneventful.

By 1796, when the town was eighteen years old, it had some dozens of houses neatly aligned with the streets, and the place had begun to assume the appearance of a real town. Then occurred a tragic thing. Someone, it is said, was burning trash, and let the fire get beyond control, and houses caught afire. In a few hours the town was destroyed. As mentioned elsewhere, the one and only brick house, diagonally across from the courthouse, was the only one left standing. Even this house was somewhat damaged but was still in condition to be lived in.

The people were poor even before the fire took place and afterwards they had almost nothing, for their household belongings had gone up in smoke and flames. How were they

Fancy Hill

Sunnyside

o

These homes are among the best known Rockbridge homes.

Stono

Reid White House

These two well known Rockbridge homes were built by John Jordan

to rebuild their homes? The outlook was exceedingly gloomy, but these people were not easily defeated. Various schemes to aid the distressed householders were suggested. Finally some nimble-witted soul hit upon the idea of rebuilding the town by having a lottery. If they had no money to rebuild where would the money for a lottery come from? Their idea was to get people at a distance from Lexington to buy lottery tickets; so the lottery was decided upon.

Next the community induced the Legislature to pass a special act authorizing the lottery "to raise twenty-five thousand dollars with which to rebuild the town." The act was duly passed. Maybe the legislators felt so much sympathy for the homeless ones that they stifled their consciences for the moment. Tickets were printed, and officially signed by those named to conduct the drawing when the proper time should come. The community, though it did not know it, was letting itself in for more than a peck of trouble.

Twenty-five thousand dollars would seem a small sum with which to rebuild a whole town, but there was not that much ready cash in the entire county or in several counties immediately after the Revolution. The sale of tickets went very slowly. People had no money with which to buy. Apparently outsiders did not care particularly about this lottery, and if they had money, they did not want to buy lottery tickets with it. Years dragged on; in course of time the treasurer of the lottery died, and another was appointed. Then the secretary also died. Both these men apparently had kept their records concerning the lottery in proper order, and the treasurer's books accounted for every dollar which had been paid in. But a deplorably small amount had been realized.

The "peck of trouble" above alluded to may be documented by a perusal of records in the county courthouse, where anyone

may read (if he has the patience to wade through almost a hundred pages written in longhand) in *Records of the Superior Court of Law and Chancery,* beginning on page 207. In part this reads:

"Bill filed December rules, 1833 [the matter had now dragged along for almost 40 years], Bill of complaint of the Trustees of the Town of Lexington, represents that in the year 1796 the town having been destroyed by fire, the Legislature of Virginia passed a law authorizing raising by lottery the sum of $25,000 to be applied to rebuilding of the houses consumed by fire. This act was not carried into effect. The principal part of the houses were rebuilt without the aid of the lottery and all hope of relief from it having been abandoned by the sufferers, they consented that the proceeds of it might be applied to the opening of a road across North and South Mountains, passing through Lexington, and connecting with the State road at the mouth of Dunlap's Creek. Accordingly in 1802 another law was passed, constituting certain citizens Trustees, and authorizing them to carry into effect the provisions of the first-mentioned act, in relation to the drawing of said lottery. A demand had been set up by A. S. and M. L., who instituted suit against the said Trustees to obtain indemnity for losses sustained in said fire. This suit was finally determined against the claims of the said A. S. and M. L."

Others besides those mentioned may have felt themselves aggrieved, but apparently no others entered suit. Perhaps the fate of the first suit gave them but scant hope of redress. Years passed. Children born about the time of the inception of the lottery scheme grew into adults, and inherited their parents' grievances. Some tickets had been sold, and the money paid in for them. The suggestion that such money be appropriated to building of the road seemed a good one, and was

agreed to by nearly everyone. But even that beneficent scheme introduced new entanglements. Those interested in the road doubted that all the money collected for the tickets had been expended on the road. The Court had to intervene. The accounts of a quarter-century before had to be raked over anew, and reports made by a Commissioner appointed for the purpose. Ill-feeling was engendered, and old grievances vied with new contentions regarding the collection and disbursement of such funds. Tempers ran hot.

Whether or not the matter was ever satisfactorily settled, or whether the people most concerned got tired of it, and quit, is not plain. One suggestion was very pertinent, and would seem to imply that at least a part of the funds collected might still be available, for in the same record book we read that: "Upon petition of the inhabitants of said town, a law was passed in 1827 to the effect that the surplus money raised by said lottery be applied to the purchase of engines and other apparatus for the protection of said town against fire." Whether or not this use of any available "surplus money" actually came about, this record does not state. A fire company had been organized almost immediately after the 1796 fire, and would need apparatus with which to subdue any succeeding fires. Probably their equipment was increased in 1827 by purchase of new apparatus for their use. The Lexington Fire Company was composed of fifty citizens, and our present excellent Fire Company is its lineal descendant.

This is only a brief outline of the story of the Lexington Lottery, which is told fully in the record books in the Clerk's office. The time came when the Commissioner appointed to wind up the lottery matter could and did file his final report. We can almost hear his sigh of relief when he turned in this document: "The Commissioner submits this report, being as

perfect a one as he can make from the materials placed in his hand. He has with great care and assiduity and labor examined the books and all the documents placed in his hands, and has collated all he can glean from them. The want of a general account, which must have been kept, but cannot be produced, leaves the subject in much darkness, upon which that alone would shed light."

Having to go back forty years, and try to extract desired information from books of treasurer and secretary who had died many years previously, he had a task none would envy. He undoubtedly was happy to wind it up.

The decree entered in the case is dated 23rd day of April, 1836, almost exactly forty years after fire had destroyed the town. The worst days were over. The citizens of Rockbridge, proud to have a man so much like them as Andy Jackson running the country, looked forward with optimism to the future.

AN ARCHITECTURAL LANDMARK

In the contemplation of any house or property it is interesting to know something of the people who have owned or lived on such property. After the lapse of many years it is not always easy to learn about such individuals, yet even the meager records of courts afford some information. For instance: 1st., if many deeds are recorded in the name of a certain man or woman, we can be fairly certain that individual was reasonably frugal, else there would not have been the means of acquiring property. 2nd., The value of such property is a sort of index to his financial status. 3rd., if the record shows he bought and sold rapidly, we have some sort of idea of his propensities -- probably a shrewd trader, and perhaps a money-maker. 4th., on the other hand if he or she bought property and continued to own that "piece or parcel of land" for many years, we reasonably conclude, in general, that party was careful in buying and satisfied with the purchase. 5th., if we find that any given individual was accustomed to buying "on time," and in many instances placed incumbrances on his property in the way of mortgages or deeds-of-trust, we naturally think that individual was adventurous in nature, or even of that which in modern days we call a "plunger."

So, although a person may have been dead and gone a century or more, some insight into that person's qualities

may be gained from even so prosaic a source as the deed books in a musty record office.

One of the interesting houses of Lexington stands on the West corner of the block at the intersection of Main and Washington streets. It is across Washington street from the courthouse, and is known as the Dold House; well-named, as it had been in the Dold family for five generations.

This property, almost exactly in the center of town, was sold to William Brown for $16.66 on October 3, 1786. The buyer, Brown, was a man of substance, having no inconsiderable amount of real estate, as will be seen from the more than twenty deeds he made to lands he sold. But he finally left Rockbridge county — whether he tired of the locality or whether some other inducement took him away we do not know. At any rate he went, because he states in a Power of Attorney given to his friend Andrew Moore: "I, William Brown, late of the County of Rockbridge and State of Virginia, but now an inhabitant of the State of Georgia, etc." William's wife, Margaret, probably did not go at once to Georgia with her husband, because in relation to the execution of several deeds made under this Power of Attorney it is stated that she *came into court* and relinquished her dower rights. William and Margaret had two sons and two daughters; the daughters married and both removed to Blount county, Tennessee — at which place they later signed a deed to this property. Then the two sons disappeared — they disappeared so completely that upon the death of the father neither could be found to claim his share of the estate, and so they were proclaimed officially dead.

Exactly one year after William Brown bought Lot 16 he sold off one-half of it — a part fronting on Main street, but not that on the corner — to Mr. Andrew Reid. He retained

title to the corner portion — now the Dold house — as long as he lived, and it was sold by his heirs.

As the "terms of sale" laid down by the Trustees required building on the lot within three years, William Brown undoubtedly built a house. It was almost certainly a log house, as were practically all houses of that day. As a matter of fact he most probably built two houses, because just about ten years after he bought came the disastrous fire of 1796, wiping out practically every house in the town. He must have rebuilt, because when his heirs sold in 1813, March 26th., the price received was $525, more than a *vacant* quarter-acre lot was worth at that time. The size of the lot stated in this deed was 128 feet 4 inches by 97 feet 6 inches, and John Irvine was the purchaser. (Deed Book "H," page 335.)

Mr. Irvine had to pay five hundred and twenty-five dollars, and he may have groaned over this extravagance. But he now had a town house, even if it was only a log house. And he must have been well satisfied with it, as he continued to own it, and most likely lived in it, for seventeen years, along with his wife, Selina Ann.

The Irvines sold their home on June 8, 1830, and the new purchaser was Samuel Darst. So John and Selina Ann moved out, and Samuel and his wife, Nancy, moved in. Or did they move in? The record at this point is somewhat puzzling. We read that Irvine deeded the place to Darst on June 8, 1830, and Darst executed a deed just a week later, namely on June 15, 1830, to Samuel Dold. And the consideration stated in this deed is four thousand five hundred dollars (Deed Book "Q," 593). This would certainly indicate quite a pretentious house had been built on this lot. If we are guided entirely by *dates* Samuel Darst owned the property only *one week*. But we know that in those early days men were sometimes dilatory

about getting their deed – they might get a *contract* properly signed and witnessed, and not get the actual deed for months or even years later.

Consequently Darst, it is most likely, had possession of the property and used it as his residence for some time before he actually got the deed.

Having then considered the immediate surroundings, let us take a look at the house itself – that house known to all as "The Dold House." As one stands at the opposite side of Main street, and looks across at it, an observable feature is a line of cleavage, as it may be called, running from top to bottom of the front wall, which clearly indicates that one portion of this wall was built at a later date than the other part. This line, when one examines it at closer range, is not vertical throughout its length, but is "offset" at two points of height; which would indicate that the part of the house directly on the street corner was erected first, and the other part facing Main street was of later build. The two "offsets" indicate that the wall first built was *thicker* at its lower portion, and then some feet above the ground was made slightly thinner. The foundation portion is abundantly thick – considerably heavier than in most modern construction – and obviously it was not necessary to carry this thickness all the way to the top. So the wall was "stepped back"; and when a new wall was joined to the old it was done in a manner which leaves the "stepping back" process still visible. Just when this later portion was built is not known to this writer. A sort of legend has it that the corner portion of the house was put up in 1824, but apparently there is no way to verify this.

A photograph of Main street made shortly after the War Between the States shows no balcony such as exists today,

and when this embellishment was placed there, is likewise unknown to the writer.

It should be borne in mind that when the brick house was first built the street was on a higher level than at present. (It was, in fact, about on a level with the top of the court-house wall.) Whether the heavy stone foundation wall on the Washington street side, which is about seven or eight feet high, was built this high, or deep, in the beginning, or whether it was changed when the street level was lowered, we cannot tell. But it is probable that what is now the store building on the street level was first put to use after the cutting-down process had occurred.

With all its accretions, it still stands proudly today, one of our unique historical landmarks.

THE EARLY IRON INDUSTRY

No sooner had the colonists planted their foot upon the soil of America than they began looking about for precious metals, gold and silver. They likewise had in mind sources of iron and copper. Supplies of iron were early discovered in the regions not far distant from Jamestown, and as early as 1609 the colonists sent to England enough ore to smelt sixteen tons of excellent iron.

Governor Spotswood interested himself in establishing a furnace at Germania in the year 1714. This was the first furnace to be built in America. It was at a somewhat later date that the Valley of Virginia was explored and settled, so the history of the iron industry in this section belongs to the later part of the eighteenth century. The records are not very full nor explicit, but it may have been as early as 1760 that a beginning was made in Rockbridge county.

There were a number of iron furnaces in Rockbridge, the outstanding ones being the Bath furnace, Vesuvius furnace, Mount Hope furnace, and California furnace. Many others were built in adjoining counties, such as the Jordan furnace on James River below Snowden. Another not far from Rockbridge was the Lucy Selina, which stood on the present location of Longdale. At one time the father of the writer was part owner of the latter, called by the colored folk "Lu-seleen," and part of his duties was in the capacity of paymaster. The

banks of that day were few and far between, so that it was necessary for the paymaster to make periodical trips to Lynchburg to secure currency. This required a two-day trip each way, spending the night at some tavern or private home. To better protect the payroll he obtained a clever little device (which is at this time in possession of the writer) designed to screw into a door frame after the door is shut and locked, which explodes a charge of gunpowder through a crack only an inch wide, should the door be opened even that much.

In support of a plea for improvement in river transportation we are told in a petition of 1850 that seven furnaces were operated on or near North River, and the total output was around 7,000 tons per year, costing $5.50 per ton freight from Balcony Falls to Richmond. This of course was by the canal. What the cost was when it was floated down the river on batteaux before building of the canal, we do not know.

Much of the labor was done by slaves from eastern Virginia, hired out by their masters for the purpose. It was a hundred of such who were on the freight boat when the towrope broke while crossing the mouth of North river, and most of them drowned when the boat went over the dam. Some of the pig iron was sold to local merchants, and farmers hauled it to Scottsville, at such times as farmwork was not pressing. They traveled in company, sometimes nearly a dozen teams, often "doubling teams" to pull through the worst mud holes. A foundry once stood in or near the upper entrance to Goshen Pass, where it probably was conveniently located with reference to the Bath furnace; and another is said to have been near Rockbridge Baths. The one operated by Taylor and McDowell was on Irish Creek not far above its mouth.

Watson's *Mineral Resources of Virginia* gives the following sources of iron ore in the county: Victoria mines (47 per cent

metallic iron), Buena Vista (53 per cent), Dixie mine (48.50 per cent), Mary Creek mine, Buck Hill mine—these three near Vesuvius—and Midvale mine. Of the Buena Vista mines he says they were operated by the Jordans for 40 years.

No reference to iron industries would be complete without mention of the Jordans, the most notable ironmasters of this section or perhaps of the state. The most prominent of family in that day was Colonel John Jordan. A large man, six feet three inches, and of dominant character, he was largely instrumental in developing not only the iron industry of Rockbridge, but its mills, its roads, its manufactures and its buildings. He was the contractor who built Washington College, the Ann Smith Academy, and for year after year all the large buildings in or near Lexington. The grades on roads in the Blue Ridge and in the North mountains are tribute to his skill as a practical road man, though he was not a college-trained engineer. He cleared out a batteau canal through Balcony Falls, and took a part in building the James River and Kanawha Canal. He was a loyal and influential member of the Baptist communion and had a large part in organizing the Baptist church in the town. He came to the county at almost the beginning of the nineteenth century, and he and his descendants have been connected with the iron business for a full century. They have owned and operated no less than twelve furnaces, here and elsewhere in the state. Out of the strength and energy of such men as these came present-day Rockbridge County.

MILLS, MASTERS, AND MEETING HOUSES

Once the southern portion of the Valley was opened to settlement, immigrants began to move up the Great Path in ever-increasing numbers. An earlier wave of Germans had taken hold in what we now know as Shenandoah, Rockingham, and Frederick counties. The Scots, most of them Ulstermen, followed closely behind and pushed southward into Augusta, Rockbridge, and Botetourt counties. English, Swiss, Dutch, and Welsh settlers came too, but in much smaller numbers; when the Baptist circuit rider, James Ireland, toured the Valley in the 1760's he found them living together in "a common state of sociability."

According to the most reliable estimates on Valley population there were about 20,000 whites and 1,000 blacks there in 1763; 48,000 whites and 5,000 blacks in 1776; and 71,000 whites and 12,000 blacks in 1790.[1]

Agriculture was, of course, the almost exclusive concern of the early settlers of Rockbridge. While the land was rich and productive, market conditions were unfavorable. Mountain barriers blocked the way to the coast, and there were no urban areas close by to supply. Because it was easier to move north than either east or west, Philadelphia became the leading

1. See E. B. Greene and V. D. Harrington, *American Population Before 1790* (New York, 1932); Miles Malone, *The Distribution of Population on The Virginia Frontier in 1775* (Princeton thesis, 1935, unpublished); and the *Census of 1790*.

trading center. We find frequent petitions to the legislature asking for highways leading into and out of the Valley. In the 1760's and 1770's hundreds of local roads were opened by the labor of tithable persons living near them.

Today we never think of the Valley as being the home of cowboys, unless we count those who visit the local theaters to see Saturday afternoon "horse operas," attired for the occasion, as such. There were real cowboys here in colonial days. William Crow, for example, landholder in Rockbridge and Botetourt, made his living from cattle, driving his herd of 200 or more head north to Winchester and Philadelphia in the spring. Since there were few fences in his days, some of his neighbors thought his herd increased as it went by their land, and the wife of one Rockbridge farmer complained for the court records that "Crow's drove increased damnable."[2]

But grains were the chief crop; rye, oats, barley, corn and wheat all proving successful. Wheat was by far the most important of these, and scores of mills dotted the Valley by the Revolution. The mill looms up in Rockbridge county history as the first major example of communal livelihood.

MILLS

Most of Scotland is mountainous, which may account for the Scotch-Irish seeking mountainous country when they migrated to America. The English avoided the mountains, but the Scotsmen sought them wherever they settled in this country. One reason was that the streams furnished them water-power, the only kind of power other than human or animal muscle available in that day.

2. *Augusta Judgments*, August, 1767. Quoted in Freeman Hart, *The Valley Of Virginia in the American Revolution, 1763-1789* (Chapel Hill, 1942), p 12.

The fast-flowing streams, in particular, furnished power to operate the little mills for grinding grain for the settler's daily bread. Almost as soon as they had a roof over their heads they set to work to build a mill. Among the early settlers were men who had been trained as mill-wrights, skilled in erecting and furnishing mills. Metal machinery was unknown, as it was heavy to transport and expensive even if it could be had at all. So they fabricated nearly everything of wood; even the necessary cogwheels for the mills were ingeniously designed and worked out in wood. Almost every feature of such mills was wooden except the heavy iron gudgeons at each end of the shaft upon which the wheel turned. These usually rested upon a heavy stone, having a deep groove in which the gudgeon turned.

Such mills could be built with simple tools, but these required exact knowledge and much skill to use correctly. After a suitable spot had been selected, to which the water might be made to flow through a ditch and a wooden trunk to the wheel, a log house would be built, with heavy stone walls for the basement. Two firm stone pillars, one inside, one outside the basement wall, would be erected to support the wheel shaft. Then a straight white oak tree would be cut, about three feet in diameter. A log of suitable length would be taken from the tree and carefully worked down to a cylinder or octagon of about thirty inches diameter, straight and true. The iron gudgeons having been placed by very careful measurements in the center at each end of this shaft, and deep mortices, about four by eight inches in size having been made, two rows of them encircling the shaft, it was ready to be mounted on the supporting stone pillars. The distance separating the two rows of mortices determined the width of the waterwheel, which was accurately figured beforehand.

Things to be considered were the size of the stream, the vertical drop, the rate of flow, and other technical points known to the mill-wright.

Into the mortices would be fitted the "arms" or long spokes of the wheel, these being slightly shorter than the height of the pillars between which the wheel would turn. These arms were of seasoned timber, whereas the shaft, being constantly wet, could be of green wood. The arms were fitted tightly, and driven into place with a heavy maul. This was a part of the art of mill-wrighting, in which all apprentices were bound to a master craftsman. By this apprentice system knowledge of the various eighteenth century trades was passed on.

The next step was the selection of a level spot of ground large enough to build thereon a ring-shaped workbench, about waist-high, and in size slightly larger than the finished water wheel. In the exact center of this circular table a post would be set in the ground. On top of this post a straight strip of wood called the "traveler" was pivoted, extending a few inches beyond the edge of the circular work bench. Holes bored at proper places in the "traveler" carried pencils fitted for the craftsman's use in marking circles or segments of circles. The edge of the strip, as it swung around its pivot, was used to mark the radial lines. By this device the various full-sized sections of the rim of the wheel were accurately laid out and sawn into the proper form, so that they fitted neatly into place on the wheel when it was assembled.

Certain portions of the wheel's rim, made from thick planks, had to be grooved carefully to receive the ends of the board forming the front of the bucket on the perimeter of the wheel. Having turned the wheel, the water spilled out at the bottom into the tail-race. Then the wooden trunk was made, with its penstock and fore-bay, with gates of solid

wood which were operated by levers to retain or release the water pouring upon the wheel. Inside the mill were the nether and the upper stones. The former was set and fixed in the floor — usually the floor of a second story, or at least one with ample room below to accommodate the machinery. This stone, the thinner of the two, had a center hole to accommodate the shaft attached to the rotating upper stone. The cogwheels and fittings of various sorts were made of wood. Sometimes a few metal parts could be made in a local blacksmith shop. Above the stones was a big hopper to hold several bushels of corn, and mechanism to shake the funnel below the hopper, insuring a steady feeding of the grain to the mill.

Around the upper stone was a wooden casing, tightly fitted at the bottom and furnished with a wooden top with a large central opening. Through this opening grain was poured in a small stream to fall through the upper stone and then between the stones to be ground into meal. This in turn was conveyed to the meal chest on the lower floor. The stones had grooves cut into their faces in the proper pattern. From time to time the miller had to deepen and sharpen the edges of these grooves. To do this he had to lift and turn over the upper stone, which he did by a system of levers designed for that purpose.

To build such a water wheel and mill required weeks or even months of skilled labor. There were no factory parts or outside technicians to help with the job — it was a matter of local skill and ingenuity. One has only to examine some of the early mills which still stand in the county to appreciate the workmanship and integrity of the early settlers. One can well understand that after completing a mill, much excitement prevailed when the stream of water was turned into the trunk, and began to turn the wheel with its weight. Then the inside

mechanism was "put into gear," and in a very few minutes a thin trickle of corn meal was running into the meal chest. One can also understand the sense of relief now that the pioneers had a mill operating in their midst. No longer would they have to pound their grain by hand power in a crude mortar made from a section of tough wood. They were bringing civilization to the wilderness.

These small pioneer grist-mills were to be found in every community. Some of them operated until very recent times, although now practically all have fallen into decay. The first to be built in Rockbridge county was Hays' mill on Walker's Creek; probably the second was Young's mill, near the mouth of Whistle Creek, a site marked by remnants of stone masonry. These mills were designed to grind both corn meal and flour, and were fitted with bolting-cloth sieves for the flour. A reconstructed one may be seen today as a sort of museum-piece on the old McCormick homestead, "Walnut Grove," near Steele's Tavern in Rockbridge County. This is not the original mill, but an accurate reproduction. The original had already fallen victim to the tooth of time when the McCormick family decided to have it reproduced in every feature. So Mr. Herbert Keller of Chicago came here and spent eight months on this project. First he traveled through the mountainous sections of Virginia and of North Carolina, seeking out old water-mills and carefully photographing details of their mechanical features. Soon he had an elaborate collection of pictures, from many of which he had enlargements made, so that even the most minute detail could be understood.

Then he secured after a long search a qualified and competent mill-wright. After they had studied the photos at some length, and after Mr. Keller had explained certain points which he wished to emphasize, the man stated that he was

prepared to undertake the work, and would guarantee satisfaction. So a contract was drawn up and signed. Mr. Keller remained in daily contact with the work until it was completed, and the mill had been operated sufficiently to make certain that every feature of the work would perform as intended. The results were highly satisfactory, and Rockbridge is the richer by having this authentic specimen of a pioneer mill in its midst.

This writer's knowledge of these matters comes from his having rather closely studied the mechanical parts of various old mills he has examined in past years, but more especially from his very close attention while yet a small boy to the details of such work, when his father had a new water wheel built for the mill on their farm at that time. And he can, at this moment, visualize the many wagons loaded with shelled corn awaiting their turn to get corn ground into meal, when almost every other mill in the community had been disrupted by the effects of a cloudburst or freshet, from which effects this mill escaped. And so the mill ran unceasingly all day and about half the night till the emergency was over.

MASTERS

One thing in which most of the early immigrants, and the Presbyterians in the Valley in particular, were concerned was the matter of education. John Knox had insisted on a school in every parish, and the ability to read the Bible catechism was considered almost mandatory. In judging the early progress made in this field, however, we should recall that education was left entirely to private devices in the eighteenth century. Not until 1809 did the Commonwealth of Virginia create a Literary Fund, the income of which was to help

educate students whose parents were unable to send them to school; and Rockbridge does not even seem to have availed herself of much aid until the middle of the century.

In the records of the 1740's and '50's we run across the names of early schoolmasters, or more probably, tutors, such as Charles Carrigan, James Dobbins, and Robert Fulton.[3] Often the instruction given was of only the most basic kind, and in numerous wills one may find the provision that a son be taught arithmetic "as far as the Rule of Three."

The teachers hired to begin this important work were called "old-field schoolmasters." Frequently they were indentured servants, which merely meant that they had gone in debt for their passage and agreed to work a stipulated length of time until the debt was paid. Many of these men were well-educated and read both Latin and Greek. Of course, not all of them were so well qualified, and probably depended more upon the switch than on profound knowledge to hold their students' attention.[4]

One of the children taught in an early Rockbridge county school house was the Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, founder of the Divinity School at Princeton University. He was born in a house built of logs near South River opposite Irish Creek. He gives us a realistic picture of the schooling small children got in those early days. "My father went to Baltimore and there purchased several servants. Among them was a youth about 18 or 20 years old, named John Reardon, who had been for some time at a classical school, and had read Latin as far as Vergil, as well as a little in the Greek testament. This

3. See Oren F. Morton, *A History of Rockbridge County, Virginia* (Staunton, 1920), Chapter 24.

4. See James Curtis Ballagh, *White Servitude in the Colony of Virginia, a Study of the System of Indentured Labor in the American Colonies* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1895).

young fellow, it was thought, might teach school, and accordingly a hut of logs was erected in Paxton's meadow, where there was a spring. The custom was to read with as loud a voice as we could, while getting our lessons. When within a quarter of a mile of a country school, one might hear like a distant chime, the united voices of the young scholars. I cannot think I derived the smallest benefit from the year spent in this school. Before the year was out the Revolutionary War commenced, and all who were in my father's service went off, including Reardon." Paxton's meadow was the strip of land along Woods' Creek on the outskirts of Lexington, and the log schoolhouse was located near the present Cook's coal yard, or where the Collierstown road crosses Woods' Creek.

Some of the settlers, however, had educational aspirations beyond the three R's for their sons. These were not content for their sons to stop their education only one step beyond illiteracy. Consequently schools of broader scope and more extended curricula known as "classical schools" came into being.

The earliest of such schools, and for a considerable length of time the only such school, was established by Robert Alexander. He was a well-qualified teacher, being a graduate of Dublin University, from which he held a Master's degree. This school was the acorn from which sprang, in the years to come, a mighty oak; for its inception was the frail effort from which, as the years unfolded, came Washington and Lee University.

Robert Alexander was a brother of Archibald Alexander, an early pioneer, and a man whose strong character and wise counsel had much to do with the building up of the social structure which gradually evolved in the infant settlement. When Benjamin Borden, Sr. died, his estate descended to his son, Benjamin, Jr. The latter had married the widow of

John McDowell, and when the younger Borden was taken by death in 1753, the complicated business of land titles, and the various phases of business incident to these matters, devolved upon his widow, Magdalen. Feeling the need for advice at every step, she associated herself with Archibald Alexander. Hence many of the later deeds for land in Borden's Grant bear the signatures of both Magdalen Borden and Archibald Alexander. His sagacious mind and good judgment helped her over many a difficult situation.

The mind of Archibald Alexander seems to have turned largely to business affairs, while the trend of thought in his brother, Robert, was toward education. Each was influential in his own direction. Robert Alexander was first and foremost an educator, and almost as soon as he arrived he arranged to open a school.

His "Augusta Academy" was the first classical school west of the Blue Ridge, and probably continued for some years to be the only one. But in the course of years it was followed by others. They grew out of a need for a better preparation for college than the secondary schools usually supplied. The state encouraged their founding, and some were given pecuniary aid; others held lotteries, which were not frowned upon in that period, or developed from family or neighborhood schools; still others were supported by the churches. Some were for boys only, some for both sexes, and a few for girls only. The courses were classical, literary, and mathematical. Exercises in declamation were universal, and literary societies became important features. The teachers were graduates of Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Wesleyan — some native-born, some from the North. Jefferson complained at one time of "some bad Latinists from Connecticut." Academies increased

in number until in 1850 there were 317 in Virginia, with 9,000 pupils.

One of the well-known academies in Rockbridge was the Ann Smith Academy in Lexington. Those citizens of town and county interested in the education of girls, held a meeting at the county courthouse on April 20, 1807. The presiding officer was James McDowell, and John Leyburn was chosen as clerk. Discussion of the proposal to establish such a school resulted in the naming of a committee to select a site, estimate the probable cost of a building, secure temporary accommodations, formulate rules for governing the students, and secure an act of incorporation from the General Assembly. In August the committee was ready with its first report. It stated that a certain lady of culture, and experience as a teacher, by name Miss Ann Smith, had offered her services for one year without salary. She was employed, and continued satisfactorily and successfully in the school for some years.

Tuition was fixed at twenty dollars per year; and board, which included lodging, fire, candles, beds, and washing, cost fifty dollars per year. The school year was divided into two terms, one from November to April and the second term from May to the third Wednesday in October. The school was opened in the autumn of 1807. A two-acre lot was purchased on the edge of town where the town's elementary public school now stands, and the building was let to contract. Colonel John Jordan, who was the builder of many of Lexington's more notable structures, undertook the brick work. The building was completed some time in 1808, but the building funds, solicited by private subscriptions, were quite slow in coming in; almost twenty years elapsed before the last of them were paid. This, of course, created considerable financial embarrassment for the Trustees. In order to secure funds for

pressing emergencies, a part of the two-acre lot was sold off. From an educational standpoint, however, the school was flourishing. At one time it had seventy students enrolled. In addition to the "three R's," grammar, natural philosophy, chemistry, belles-lettres, French, painting, music and embroidery were taught.

In 1821 application was made the State Literary Fund for aid, and in support of their claim the Trustees cited that the school had been successfully operated during fourteen years, and that though education for boys and young men had been taken care of, females had been left to transient and temporary schools. Such an institution as this, properly conducted and well patronized, would help break down local prejudices, and have a good influence on society. Apparently their appeal elicited scant assistance, for the school was ordered sold to pay the accumulated debts. This was a grievous blow to all concerned, and the outlook increased in gloominess. But help came from an unexpected source. John Robinson, who was widely known in the county as "Jockey" Robinson, a bachelor and a man of some means, came to the rescue. Out of his own funds he paid off the indebtedness, and gave the Trustees a deed of release.

Miss Smith sent in her resignation in 1812. Apparently, from such records as have been preserved, she served the entire four years without compensation. The Trustees, however, made sure she was "kept clear of all expenditures." Items such as postage, pencils, shoes, stockings, and one yard of blue satin, were paid by them, as well as such items as $22.39 for "one pair dogge-irons"; $100.00 for a trip to Maryland; and $66.00 for going to "ye springs in summer." Her history seems to be somewhat obscure. Some say she was from Fredericksburg, Virginia; others, that Maryland was her home.

Her letter to the Trustees is well-expressed and most courteous. Where she went after leaving Lexington history is not known, but she left enough of an impression upon the community to have her own name bestowed upon the school. When the Academy went out of existence her name was perpetuated in the public free school which in time came to occupy the same site.

After Miss Smith severed her connection with the school, a succession of a dozen teachers followed, the last principal of the school having been Miss Madge Paxton. For a full century it was a notable factor in culture and education in the community, but its influence gradually waned. So in 1908 the Trustees made over the title to the property to the town of Lexington, stipulating only that a building worth not less than fifteen thousand dollars be placed on the lot. Likewise the Trustees included a cash donation of $730.00 from which sum is derived two scholarships for Rockbridge county girls.

A school for boys similar in many respects to the one we have just considered was that taught by Professor David E. Laird, at old Fancy Hill. This was a classical boarding school. Some men of this community, now white-haired veterans, still recall the days of their boyish pranks when students at Fancy Hill Academy; the number of such, however, is few, as most of the "old boys" have passed on.

Rockbridge county, from its inception, has been noted for being God-fearing and church-going. The boys of the Laird school were almost every Sunday to be seen at Falling Spring church, some three miles distant. Frequently a large farm wagon would be piled with straw, or filled with chairs as seats for the boys, and would presently draw up at the church door; or halt in the lovely grove surrounding the church, with a full contingent of lively, active schoolboys. Woe betide the

unlucky wight who incurred the disapproval of the head-master, either during church service or in the vicinity, or for that matter at any time. One rhymster has left this record of the Scotch-Irish upbringing of their children:

"They raised them rough, they raised them well –
When their feet were set in the paths of hell
They put in their souls the fear of God,
And tanned their hides with a stiff ramrod."

Perhaps the "stiff ramrod" was not literally brought into use in Professor Laird's school. But we may be sure discipline was strict, and infractions swiftly punished.

Senator Miles Poindexter, a one-time student at Fancy Hill Academy, relates a small circumstance stored in his memory. "Most of the boys at Mr. Laird's school, at the time I attended there, and I was entered when about twelve or thirteen years of age, were about my own age. I recall that at one time, it was in the middle of the session, I think, an older boy made his appearance there as a student of the Academy. He was assigned to room in the same quarters as myself and two others. He appeared at our room after supper, and we sat there talking, and perhaps doing some studying, until just at nine o'clock a bell rang. The new boy asked: 'What is the meaning of that bell?' Some one of the boys replied: 'That is the prayer bell. We have to go down now for prayers.' 'What do you do when you get down there?' The other boy, intent on playing a prank on the new arrival, made answer: 'The first thing you do as you enter the room, is to make a bow to the principal, Mr. Laird, and then repeat a verse from the Bible,' which latter rule he made up on the spur of the moment. The new student was in some perturbation of mind

about the Bible verse, of which he had heard nothing. He hastily picked up a Bible lying on the table, and began searching for a suitable verse. This of course gave the others time to get down, and be seated before the new student arrived. As he stepped into the room I can in imagination see him yet, dressed in bright yellow trousers, and a long-skirted coat. He made a low bow and repeated: 'There was a man of the Jews named Nicodemus.' Mr. Laird looked up in some surprise and quietly remarked: 'Take a seat, I see some of the boys have been playing a prank on you.' From that day on the new boy was stamped with the name 'Nicodemus' and that is all the name by which I now recall him."

MEETING HOUSES

Wolves were still howling on the ridge, and Indians stalking down the Great Path, when Rockbridge pioneers erected their earliest meeting houses for the worship of their God. Only eight months after the first settlers arrived we find a petition from John Caldwell to the Presbyterian Synod in Philadelphia to "procure the favor and countenance of the Government" in the matter of church-building. And on May 30, 1738 such a petition was written to the Honorable William Gooch, Esquire, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Virginia. So important is it as a milestone in the development of religion in the Valley that a portion of it is included here.

"We thought it our duty," wrote the ministers at the Synod, "to acquaint your honor with this design and to ask your favor in allowing them the liberty of their consciences, and of worshipping God in a way agreeable to the principles of their Education. Your Honor is sensible that those of our profession in Europe have been remarkable for their inviolable

attachment to the House of Hanover, and have upon all occasions manifested an unspotted fidelity to our gracious sovereign, King George, and we doubt not but that these brethren will carry the same loyal sentiments to the most distant settlements, where their lot may be cast, which will ever influence them to the most dutiful submission to the Government which is placed over them. This we trust will recommend them to your Honor's countenance and protection, and merit the free enjoyment of their civil and religious liberties. We pray for the Divine blessing upon your person and Government, and beg leave to subscribe ourselves Your Honor's most humble and obedient servants."

On May 28, 1739 this statement was recorded in the Philadelphia records: "Mr. Anderson reports that in compliance with an order of Synod last year, he had waited upon the Governor of Virginia, with the Synod's address, and received a favorable answer, which is as follows: 'Sir, by the hand of Mr. Anderson I received an address signed by you in the name of your brethren of the Synod of Philadelphia. And as I have always inclined to favor the people who have lately removed from other provinces to settle on the western side of our great mountains, so you may be assured that no interruption shall be given to any minister of your profession who shall come among them, so as they conform themselves to the rules prescribed by the Act of Toleration in England by taking oaths enjoined thereby, and registering their place of meeting, and behave themselves peaceably toward the Government. This you may please communicate to the Synod as an answer to theirs. Your most humble servant, William Gooch.'"

At several points within Borden's Grant congregations were soon organized in log meeting houses which they built with their own hands; and while they had no regular minister, they

would now and then obtain temporary "supplies" from Pennsylvania. Such congregations were formed at Timber Ridge and New Providence, within the bounds of Borden's Grant, and about the same time at Falling Spring a few miles outside it. A few years afterward Forks-of-James was formed.

In the Court Order Book may be found this entry: "May 20, 1748, Certified that Presbyterian Meeting Houses have been built at Timber Ridge, at New Providence, and Falling Spring."[5] Following the date August 21, 1752 is this item: "On motion of Richard Woods on behalf of himself and others, ordered that a Presbyterian Meeting House in the Forks of James River, in this county, be and hereby is recorded as a Place of Public Worship." This, of course, does not give the date of the establishing of such Meeting Houses, which may have been in existence before. It is merely the formal recognition by the court of their existence, as was required by the British law. An adjoining item certifies the Forks-of-James meeting house, sets forth that: "Reverend Alexander Craighead, a dissenting minister, took the oaths, subscribed the tests, and the Thirty-nine Articles except what is exempted by the Act of Toleration, which is ordered to be certified." It may be that the Reverend Mr. Craighead was one of the "supply" ministers, here for a short season only. He owned the land now embraced in the Thorn Hill estate, but there is no evidence he ever made his home there. His land he later sold to General John Bowyer, and removed to North Carolina. The Synod of Hanover was organized in 1755. Until that time the Synods of both New York and Philadelphia had jurisdiction over the Presbyterian church in Virginia, and they sent a number of their ministers to preach here. The Synod of New York directed that all its ministers should preach in

5. Augusta Court Order Book, number 2, p. 20 ff.

Virginia for eight Sabbaths, but it is not known whether this arrangement was fully carried out. The Reverend John Blair visited the Valley and places east of the Blue Ridge in 1745 and again in 1746; during the second visit he organized the congregations of North Mountain, New Providence and Forks-of-James.[6]

With reference to the latter church, the minutes of the Synod of New York, under whose jurisdiction it was at first, mentions in 1748 that a call was brought into the Synod to be presented to the Reverend Mr. Dean, from the Congregations of Timber Ridge and Forks-of-James. A year later Mr. Dean died, perhaps before he received the call. Various supplies, including Mr. Anderson, Mr. William Robinson and Mr. Bryan, ministered to these congregations. Not until 1776 did a regular pastor reside at Forks-of-James, the Rev. William Graham.

All the early meeting houses were built of logs. These buildings were used until the several congregations felt the need of larger, better houses of worship, or until the membership found themselves financially in position to erect more durable buildings. Usually the succeeding building was of stone construction, although in reference to Forks-of-James some evidence exists that a frame building was at one time in use; and it may have been this structure that was known by the name of "Hall's Meeting House." This name persisted even when the older house of worship was supplanted by a newer, the stone church, of which but a small section of a wall now remains.

As to the date of building this stone structure, in the archives of the New Monmouth church is a subscription

6. See Rev. Willit Henry Foote, *Sketches of Virginia Historical and Biographical* (Philadelphia, 1850), Chapter V.

paper, dated September, 1788, reading: "We the subscribers do promise to pay for the purpose of building a stone meeting house on the ground where the house stands known by the name of Hall's Meeting House, the sums affixed to our names." This establishes approximately the date of its building.

Concerning the type of building erected by the several congregations in Rockbridge county, Rev. Mr. Twyman Williams, in a paper read before the Rockbridge Historical Society on July 22, 1940, said of Falling Spring: "The old church was on the hill 200 yards west from the bridge at Buffalo Forge, just above the corner of the garden of Mr. D. E. Brady, and on what was a public road until the church was abandoned. The first church building was of logs and was not replaced by a frame building, as stated in some accounts, but according to Mr. Brady, on the authority of his father who remembered seeing it, the original building was weather-boarded, and so continued in use until the second church was built." This second church at Falling Spring was built of stone, and stood very near the present brick edifice, on land bought in 1792 of Major Thomas Posey, to which plat of land later additions were made. This stone church was 48 by 40 feet in size.[7]

The first regular pastor of New Providence was the Reverend John Brown. His pastorate continued for 42 years, and ended by his resignation in 1795. His life was notable not only for his long and faithful service in his church, both at New Providence and at Timber Ridge, between which he divided his time for fourteen years, but also for his part as a teacher in the school which after passing through various transitions eventually became Washington and Lee University.

The year following the resignation of Rev. John Brown

7. For further information on Falling Spring Church see Mr. Twyman Williams' paper on *Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society* (Lexington, 1946), Vol. I.

his successor was installed, having the same name, but coming of a different family: the Rev. Samuel Brown. Two years after he accepted the pastorate of this church, he was united in marriage with Mary Moore, who as a little girl had had a tragic history. Her parents were killed by the Indians, she herself taken away captive, later rescued and cared for by relatives. She became the mother of ten children. Five of her sons, and twelve of her grandsons and great-grandsons entered the ministry, while twelve daughters in the family connection became the wives of ministers.

In addition to the main branch of the Presbyterian church, there is in this section of the Valley of Virginia a second distinct branch of this denomination, the Associate Reformed Presbyterians. This branch has a number of churches in Rockbridge county, and a considerable membership. Among the more prominent of these churches are Old Providence, Timber Ridge (it is called "The Brick Church" in contradistinction to "The Stone Church" of the other Presbyterians), Ebenezer and Broad Creek. The Associate Reformed Church had its origin in Scotland in 1773, when Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, Alexander Moncreiff, and James Fisher left the established church of Scotland, and formed the Associate presbytery. Finding it hard to dwell in a land that endorsed established Presbyterian doctrines and practices, they set sail for America where they could worship God according to the dictates of their consciences. These people settled in New York and Pennsylvania, and later migrated to Virginia and the Carolinas. The first Associate presbytery was formed in Pennsylvania in 1753. In 1774 the Reformed Presbyterians formed a second presbytery. In 1783 these presbyteries united, forming the Associate Reformed Synod. They still sing the metrical version of the Psalms of David in place of hymns.

Joseph Little, a thrifty Irishman, and William McClung, already settled on Timber Ridge, were the leaders in organizing a Virginia church. They gave adjoining lots, on which a log church was erected and organized between 1773 and 1778. They petitioned the presbytery in Pennsylvania on October 21, 1778, for the ordination of elders. From this date we reckon the organization of the Timber Ridge Associate Reformed Presbyterian church.

Not until the nineteenth century did the other Protestant denominations establish themselves in Rockbridge County. The oldest Baptist church, built by John Jordan, is "Neriah," which dates from 1816. Although there were members of the Established Church earlier, there was no Episcopal church until 1840. At Rapp's Mill there was built a union church in 1830, used chiefly by the Methodists. There is a tradition that the county's first Methodist sermon was preached in the home of John Burgess in 1823.

Whatever the denomination, early citizens took their religion very seriously. There was in them a sense of faith that hardened them for any emergency of a hard life. "Dear God, set our feet in the right way," began a popular prayer. "For if we start in the wrong way, there can be nae changing." Most families read through the Bible every year, and the Institutes of Calvin and Knox were the backbone of many a stern sermon. "Speak to sad hearts, you will find them everywhere," was the rule. Sabbath services began in the forenoon, and lasted until evening, with only a brief intermission for dinner. Administration of the Lord's Supper began on Friday and lasted four days.[8]

8. Henry Boley, *Lexington in Old Virginia* (Richmond, 1936), p. 22. Much additional data on early churches may be found in Chapters 4, 6, and 7 of Boley.

This then was life in colonial Rockbridge – challenging, demanding, unbending. This was the cutting edge of the frontier, and Indians conducted destructive raids (such as Cornstalk's massacre on Kerr's Creek) into the 1760's. This was a struggle for survival, and the weak fell by the wayside. But those that endured, and who built their early mills, schools, and churches, left a rich history and heritage.

6

GETTING OFF THE GREAT PATH

Most travelers, and most historians, stay on the well-traveled main roads. They take the smooth and easy path which others have prepared for them, and do not risk whatever lurks along the unchartered by-paths. For most travelers Rockbridge county is Lexington and a few other small towns strung along modern Route 11. Only what the eye can take in when one is moving a mile a minute registers with them. For most historians Rockbridge county has been the court records in that same Lexington, the main happenings in those same small towns, and the better-known people who have gone over the same Great Path that is now a national highway. The purpose of this chapter is to get off the Great Path, and into the back country of Rockbridge county; to see things as do the natives and the men of the soil.

He who reads this chapter will journey to places tourists seldom, if ever, visit — Cedar Grove, Hays' Creek, Irish Creek, Arnold's Valley, Whistle Creek, Balcony Falls, and Springfield. Each locality has its own special interests, traditions and lore. If only a fraction can be captured in this chapter, the side journey will have been amply justified.

Between Lexington and Rockbridge Baths, just beyond the point where the road to Brownsburg diverges, is a locality which was once important, although now practically nothing is left to show it. This locality is Cedar Grove, a hamlet which

embraced two country stores, a blacksmith shop, a flour mill, and a number of residences. It was a shipping-point for large amounts of freight, such as pig iron, grain and whiskey, and sometimes was spoken of as the "head of navigation on North River." Navigation was exceedingly intermittent, depending upon the amount of water in the Maury (then North) River. When the water was low the boats could not operate, and often had to wait for weeks for a fresh rise in the river. Pig iron and bar iron was shipped from the Bath Iron works in Goshen Pass, being hauled by wagons from furnace and forge to the shipping point, to wait for the boats. The same was true of whiskey, the product of neighborhood distilleries; sometimes 50 barrels of whiskey lay on the river bank for weeks at a time before shipping conditions were favorable – which speaks well for the honesty and the sobriety of the community! However, since at the time whiskey was worth only about thirty cents per gallon, maybe the temptation to purloin it was less than it now is.

The smelting of iron ore and manufacture of pig iron was what made Cedar Grove a shipping point, for the most part; but after the Civil War much richer deposits were discovered in other sections so that iron making here no longer was profitable. Consequently the old charcoal furnaces were deserted one after the other until none remained active.

The batteaux were built at boat yards along the river; they were laden with iron or other freight, and floated down the river to Lynchburg or to Richmond; the cargo was sold, the boat broken up and sold for firewood, or abandoned, and the crew walked back. Poling a boat upstream was almost never done. These boats were made about sixty feet long, and very narrow, to go through narrow channels. And narrow channels were especially prevalent in the stretch of water through

Balcony Falls, known universally to boatmen as "The Bal-*co*-ny." It was considered the supreme test of a boatman's skill when he could successfully pilot a batteau through that treacherous portion of its journey. Many a cargo lies to this day in the bottom on the river. Such a cargo might consist of sixty to seventy-five barrels of flour or of whiskey; whether the latter was lost, or possibly floated to safety, we do not learn.

At that time Cedar Grove was of sufficient importance to have a post office; called at first Cedar Grove, but later changed to Flumen. This settlement was an important trading center, and even aspired to be called the metropolis of Rockbridge county. Now every vestige of that importance has disappeared, and the locality is much as nature made it.

The Bath Iron Works was located near Goshen Pass, and consisted of a furnace, a foundry, and a forge. In the furnace the iron was smelted from the ore, and sold as pig iron, heavy billets, about two feet in length. In the foundry were moulded hollow-ware, such as iron kettles, Dutch ovens, and skillets and mouldboards for plows. In the forge the billets of iron were hammered, under a trip hammer weighing several hundred pounds and operated by water power, into bar iron for wagon tires, barrel hoops and nails. It was a large plant for that day and time, and a sizeable one even by today's standards. Many men were needed in the ore mines, in the transportation of raw materials and of finished products. Labor was supplied by hiring Negro slaves from eastern Virginia. As some sort of index to the size of this plant, an inventory was made at the beginning of each year. Some of these have been preserved in the County Record office. One such inventory shows the commissary department had on hand thirteen thousand pounds of pork, and six thousand pounds of beef. (All of this, of

course, was salted meat.) A gristmill was a part of the plant. It ground corn for bread as well as feed for horses and mules.

Not only was some of the pig iron worked into bar iron at the forge of the Bath Iron Works; there were also other forges in that vicinity, like those of William W. Davis. His "Gibraltar Forge," so called for the rocky cliff across the river from the forge, made all the backs and frames and hearths for the fireplaces in the Davis home, situated one mile south of Rockbridge Baths, as well as the nails and spikes used in its construction. The heavy trip hammer of the forge remained after the river had swept away everything else. This hammer, which had worked for the Confederate government, was contributed to the scrap drive in the World War II, and so its last use was for the benefit of the Republic.

These small charcoal furnaces were scattered throughout this region in some numbers, seven of them being located in Rockbridge county, and others in adjacent counties, wherever water power in sufficient strength might be found to operate the blast. They eventually were superceded by much larger modern furnaces, burning coke instead of charcoal, and having an output of pig iron many times that of the primitive structures. A run of ten tons per day was considered very good, but a modern furnace will turn out from fifty or more times that amount in the same time. Belonging to the outmoded handicraft tradition, the old furnaces will be heated no more.

To one interested in such records from the history of iron-making at that period, as preserved in the written testimony given in court, an exact knowledge of the various processes in vogue at that time may be obtained. Hardly a feature of these processes, however minor it might be, was not brought out by the questions and answers given in court. Just when the Bath Iron Works was built is uncertain. William Weaver

bought the plant in 1825, and as there had been three previous owners it must have been a generation old at least. Mr. Weaver ran the plant himself for a short time. Then he brought from Philadelphia a manager, James Doyle, and put him in charge. It was not many months until Weaver and Doyle had a disagreement, and Doyle was discharged. Then he went up on Bratton's Run, and built a furnace for himself, which he called Mount Hope. John Winn Jordan erected another furnace higher up the same stream, named California. However, it seems to have been the consensus of opinion of the men in the iron manufacturing business at that date, that no one could earn much with expenses and selling prices at the level which then existed.

Ten miles from Lexington, directly on the road which leads through Goshen Pass, is Rockbridge Baths, formerly a popular summer resort. At one time it was known as Jordan's Springs, and had a post office bearing this designation. The chief attraction besides the opportunity to rest and enjoy good food and excellent society of other visitors, was the pool in which one could swim in water so crystal clear that pebbles might be counted on the bottom. The temperature of the water was always pleasant. Certain hours were set aside for the men and certain other times for the women. The pool was enclosed by a building with dressing rooms attached.

The property was for some years under the ownership and management of Dr. Samuel Morrison, who operated it as a sanatorium for semi-invalids. He was the area's physician, a popular and successful practitioner. Eventually he lost his health, and sold the property to a Mr. Carter. The new proprietor at once instituted certain changes which were not agreeable to the long-time patrons of the place, who stopped summering there. This caused the resort a serious loss. After

a short time Carter sold the place to Thomas Anderson, in 1906. From Anderson, William Hutcheson bought it in 1914. Seven years later the Virginia Military Institute bought the place for a summer school. In May 1926 the buildings caught fire and were almost totally destroyed. The hotel building was never restored. Officials sold the property to Mrs. Martha Blair. Her older daughter married a French artist, Jean Alion, who wrote a book called, *They Shall Not Have Me,* after his escape from a German prison camp. Another daughter married a Spanish artist, Pierre Daura. The latter and his wife occupy from time to time a cottage on the grounds. He has painted some excellent specimens of Rockbridge mountain scenery and has instructed many of the county's children.

Few country stores can boast of almost a century's ownership in the same family. But this is true of the Anderson store at the Baths. The first general store at that point was one owned and operated by Joseph Adams, after he had closed his business at Cedar Grove. The present general store was built in 1870 by Waller Anderson, who conducted the business until his death. Then the business fell to his son, Tom Anderson, who continued until 1950, when he sold out to William Sterrett.

No one person has exerted more influence on this part of the county than Mrs. William McElwee, wife of Dr. William Meek McElwee, pastor of Bethesda Church from 1880 to 1901. In 1889 she and her family moved into the parsonage, near the church, where she conducted a school in the basement of the church, calling it Mrs. McElwee's Private School. Here she taught young people from five to twenty-four years of age. Her discipline was strict, and her personality strong, impressing itself on every child she instructed. She succeeded in a task few people would have had the courage to attempt.

A noteworthy person born in this section of the county was

Bishop William Taylor, of the Northern Methodist Church. He preached in California for a number of years, then traveled extensively preaching the gospel. He was made Bishop of Africa in 1884. He died in California in 1902 and is buried there.

Dr. John R. Sitlington Sterrett was born on Hays' Creek in 1851. After his preliminary education in this country, he went abroad and studied at Athens, Berlin, Leipzig, and Munich where he took his Ph.D. degree in 1880. He was professor of Greek at Miami University, University of Texas, Amherst College, and Cornell University. His fame rests chiefly on his archaeological expeditions in Asia Minor. About one-half the April 1919 number of the *National Geographic Magazine* is devoted to a profusely illustrated article written by him. The editor accords him a very flattering preface, published in that same issue. Sterrett died suddenly in New York and his body was brought back to Bethesda Church cemetery for burial.

Wilson Springs, one-time popular vacation spot, is located at the lower end of Goshen Pass. It takes its name from a sulphur spring situated on a tiny island in Maury River, reached by a long foot-log over the water. In Victorian days it was a custom for farming people from various sections of Rockbridge to take the last two weeks of July and the first week in August for a holiday time. Farm wagons might then be seen wending their slow way along the roads leading in that direction laden with bedding and other camping outfits, to the rough cabins built around "the Green" where the farmers and families would find crude provision for shelter and rest. Twenty-five or thirty cabins, built by the families who used them, at one time existed. A tenpin alley stood not far away, and a platform for dancing occupied the center of the Green.

Croquet had its devotees. Long walks amid the unsurpassed scenery occupied some couples; fishing interested many of the boys. Swimming attracted some others, though swimming suits had not then come into general use, and the swimmers customarily sneaked off to Blue Hole or some other remote spot where swimming was done without benefit of any garb other than what nature bestows. A neighborhood fiddler and banjo-man could always be found who would plunk and saw endlessly for the evening dances. A large farmhouse nearby called the Hotel, accommodated those who had no cabin rights, and a few city people. Altogether it resulted in a most pleasurable annual experience.

Three miles from Goshen Pass, near the junction of Hays' Creek and Walker's Creek, stood a prehistoric burial mound, from which, in the year 1901, were taken the bones of three-hundred and seventy-six men, women and children. The excavation was done under the supervision of Edward P. Valentine, of Richmond. The base was a slightly elongated circle, sixty feet in diameter in one direction and sixty-four feet in the other; altitude four and one-half feet; top level of thirty-eight to forty-two feet in diameter. The whole was covered with grass and surrounded by a field of corn. The first step in excavating was to encircle the mound by a trench, eight feet broad, two feet in depth, and extending on the outer edge four feet beyond the circumference. In this trench human skeletons in an excellent state of preservation were found one-and-a-half to two feet below the surface of the sandy subsoil.

Twelve bodies were found one-and-a-half to two feet below the surface, and a systematic and continuous burial on the surface of the subsoil was exposed. These skeletons were left in place while the mound was cautiously attacked from all sides. A burial level approximately eighteen inches above the

subsoil was exposed, and in close succession came the exposure of a fourth burial level about two-and-a-half feet above the subsoil. In a few days more than a hundred skeletons were uncovered, and carefully cleaned, and four burial levels were in view. Accurate memoranda of the location, position, nature and essential details were made and photographs were taken of the skeletons.

The bones, allowed to bleach and harden by the rays of the sun, were carefully removed, and spread upon cotton cloths to dry, after which they were packed in boxes, cushioned by crumpled newspapers. Then the work of excavation was continued toward the supposed center of the mound, keeping the excavations down well into the subsoil.

The skeletons found in the three upper levels before the stone pile covering the center was reached were well preserved. The bodies were lying on the side, right or left indiscriminately, with the arms folded on the breast. The hands were extended in front of the face and the legs drawn up in front of the breast in such close proximity as to indicate the bodies had been bound up in this compact form before burial. Several had from one to three large stones upon their heads or breast as if to protect them from disinterment by wild beasts. A small number had shell beads upon their necks, but no other objects, organic or inorganic, were found with them. The earth had displaced all other organic matter, and was clinging compactly to the bones. Where the skull had been tilted so as to admit entrance the earth had completely filled the cavity.

All the skeletons showed evidence of having been carefully and systematically buried. In addition to human remains, skeletons of eight dogs were found, some almost perfect, and all sufficiently intact to show clearly their positions. They had been carefully buried near the human bodies, and were lying

on the side, with feet drawn up together in front of their bodies.

Fifty or more skeletons were found in the stone-pile, twenty-eight of which had shell beads and pendants on their necks, the majority of those having necklaces being women and girls. One had upon the neck the tooth of a shark, perforated at the root for use as a pendant. Just who these people were, what had been their fate, and who laid them to rest, no one will ever know. These facts join countless others known only to the Rockbridge county earth.

When you mention Irish Creek to the average Rockbridge man he is apt to make some sort of gibe about moonshine liquor. Rightly or wrongly that is the reputation of that region. It is wild and rugged, yet picturesque, especially when the spring wild flowers are in bloom. Formerly difficult of access, it is reached now by a good road. Where once were more than a dozen fords are now substantial bridges.

Who named the creek, and why this name, is now lost to history. The region has been known from very early days, and the first iron furnace built west of the Blue Ridge Mountains was located there. No remnant now remains but nuggets of cast iron and lumps of ore, with fragments of charcoal scattered about to mark the spot. This furnace was called Grant's furnace.

A number of items of history pertain to this area of Rockbridge. The one which deserves most attention is the Irish Creek tin mine. The fact that tin is to be found there has elicited the interest of many. While the tin is there, in considerable quantity, it is said, the cost of getting it out has always made it a losing project. More than a half century ago a company was formed to work this vein of tin; much

equipment was bought, and considerable capital expended. Heavy machinery was hauled up the steep mountain — an old resident there states that thirty yoke of oxen in one team was used to drag the big engine up to its place — and many laborers were employed. A long shaft was driven into the side of the mountain, and tin was actually mined and smelted. After spending forty thousand dollars and getting out only twenty thousand dollars worth of tin, the company closed and left much of their machinery to rust to pieces. In recent war-times mining engineers were sent to examine and report on it, but nothing more developed. The vein was only eight inches wide and was flanked on either side by extremely hard granite. The engineers sent here were specialists in gold mining, but had been sent because no specialist in tin mining could be found in the United States. In earlier days there was not only a furnace but a foundry as well on Irish Creek. The first iron pipe used to bring water from Brushy Hill into Lexington was cast in this foundry. Cannon balls and solid shot for use in the War between the States was also cast there. Only remnants of this ironworks remain today.

The business enterprise lasting longer, and bringing to its owners more revenue than any other in that vicinity, was the South River Lumber Company. This concern owned thousands of acres of timber on the mountain sides; it operated large saw mills at Cornwall for many years, and gave employment to many hard-muscled men of Irish Creek and adjacent sections. The timber supply eventually diminished to the vanishing point and the company terminated its activities, leaving badly-skinned hills as its trademark.

This company employed, as a driver of one of its six-horse teams, a man by the name of Sam Downey. Sam was illiterate, but intensely musical. Melody flowed from Sam's soul as

naturally as water in the mountain streams of his habitat. Perhaps it was to amuse himself, as his team plodded along with great loads of lumber, that Sam would compose jingles and set them to music, if this could be said of an illiterate man, knowing nothing of musical technique. He would sing them over and over – catchy airs, and simple lines easy to remember. Some of his ditties stemmed from folk-songs. One in particular might have made for Sam more money than he ever earned by hauling lumber, had he but known how to capitalize on it. This song eventually found its way all over the country, even to the Pacific coast. It is called "Ol' Joe Clark," and is today found in books of folk-music. One day a mountaineer came to my office; and in course of conversation was asked if he ever knew Sam Downey. "Yes, I knowed him; when he got too old to work he came to live with his married daughter near our home. One day Sam took a bucket of swill to the hog-pen, he walked up on a ramp, and poured the swill into the hog-trough, and as he straightened up he fell over backwards, and when someone got to him he was plum' dead." Thus do the mighty fall.

I include a few typical verses of "Ol' Joe Clark":

"OL' JOE CLARK"

Ef you want to know my name
  Go down to number nine,
An' there you'll find me settin'
  With my coat-tails out behind

Fare you well, ol' Joe Clark,
  Fare you well, I'm gone,
Fare you well, ol' Joe Clark,
  Goodbye, Betsy Brown.

I use to live in the country,
But now I live in town,
Boardin' at the big hotel,
An' courtin' Betsy Brown.

One noteworthy landmark in the Irish Creek region has now disappeared. It was the log structure in which was born Dr. Archibald Alexander, the Presbyterian divine, who is principally remembered as the Founder of the Divinity School at Princeton University. In his autobiography he says: "The place of my birth was in Rockbridge County, on the bank of South River, almost exactly opposite the mouth of Irish Creek. At that early day it was very deep in the wilderness." He goes on to describe some of the circumstances of his early childhood there and of his having been awed by the frequently heard sounds of wolves howling in the mountain fastnesses nearby. When he was still a child his father, William Alexander, moved to what is now East Lexington, and later into the town of Lexington itself.

Several members of the Rockbridge Historical Society recently made a pilgrimage to the Irish Creek region, the writer being one of this number. With the help of a local resident who is familiar with the country we tried to locate the exact spot on which once stood Dr. Alexander's birthplace. The spot judged most likely the exact location was where numerous stones, which might once have been built into a chimney, were scattered about over the ground. But his goodness and energy have, through Princeton students, been scattered all over the earth.

That portion of Rockbridge County which forms the southernmost corner is cut off by the James River and is en-

closed on all but the river side by the Blue Ridge Mountains. This is Arnold's Valley. It is a picturesque section of thousands of acres, lying immediately under Thunder Ridge, over four thousand feet high, and unique in that it rises in one steady ascent without foothills. The highest point, 4200 feet, is named Apple Orchard. These mountains are beautiful at all times of the year. They are quite different from the Rocky Mountain range, geologically much younger than the Appalachian system, and are naked and forbidding in appearance.

James Greenlee must have had a lot of curiosity as to the country beyond the first place of settlement, because a few years after he came to what is known as Borden's Grant (which does not include this valley) he visited this spot. Being impressed, he secured a grant of 550 acres. How he managed to cross the James River is not recorded, but later he established a ferry, known until recent years as "Greenlee's Ferry." He may have acquired more than 550 acres, but at any rate he sold that much to John Poteet, as recorded in Augusta County Deed Book No. 1, p. 29. Poteet in turn sold this land to Charles Sinckler. This valley was known for some years as Sinckler's Valley. The name of John Poteet is perpetuated in Poteet's Gap. Charles Sinckler is designated in the records as "laborer," while Poteet is set down as "yeoman." The date of the sale to Sinckler from Poteet is February 6, 1746. Since white people had first appeared in this region now called Rockbridge County in 1737, these several transactions took place in the first decade of our county history.

In 1742 came a man, John Howard, who stopped at the cabin built near the mouth of North River (now Maury River) where lived John Peter Salling. Howard stated that he was on an exploring trip to the west, and induced Salling to accompany him and his son, Josiah Howard. The three

men went to the homes of Poteet and Sinckler, and persuaded them to go along. The five of them accordingly set forth on March 16, 1742, a date recorded in a diary or journal carefully kept by Salling. (A copy of this journal is now in the State Library at Madison, Wisconsin; and was published in the *Virginia Magazine of History*, April, 1922).

Their first stop was at Natural Bridge. So far as known they were the first white men ever to have a look at it, and Salling gives a good description with some measurements. They made their way westward till they came to Woods' River, which flows into the Ohio River. There they killed five buffaloes. With the hides stretched over a suitable frame they made a boat, in which they journeyed down to the Mississippi River, and then hundreds of miles down that mighty stream. Later they were captured by soldiers, taken to New Orleans, and cast into prison. Salling made his escape, and after many adventures he sailed to Charleston, South Carolina. He made his way on foot back to his cabin in the Forks of the James. Poteet and Sinckler somehow got back, for we read of them in later years. James Greenlee died in 1763 and the lands he owned here at the time of his death fell to his son, also named James.

Stephen Arnold, from whom the Valley gets its name, was also an early comer. He is mentioned in 1755 as having two tracts of land on Elk Creek. A legend concerning land-holdings in this Valley has come down to us, and has been many times retold. Whether or not there is any basis of truth in it no one knows; but it does justice to the days of coonskin hats and ring-tailed roarers. A certain man, a sort of wayfarer, came one day to the home of a resident of Arnold's Valley. He had with him a jug of liquor. After a while he made his host a proposition. Why not trade the liquor for the land? The

offer was accepted on the spot, and the resident's wife was thrown in for good measure. So, shouldering his rifle, and picking up the jug, he whistled for his dog and started out, leaving the visitor in possession.

Let us travel a little more swiftly along the pathway of the years. Very shortly after the Revolutionary War a young French nobleman, the Marquis de Chastellux, who had come with Lafayette to assist the Americans, wished to visit the Natural Bridge. So he came from Yorktown, with three friends and six servants, all on horseback. He spent several days there, and when he left, according to his entertaining book of his travels, he crossed at Greenlee's Ferry (he spells it "Greenly") and proceeded through Poteet's Gap back into Eastern Virginia. This shows that a road of some sort had been made there as early as 1783.

A decade after the Revolutionary War, a large boundary of land near Arnold's Valley was acquired by Light-Horse Harry Lee, the father of Robert E. Lee. A grant was also made to John Beale on Sept. 16, 1797. This 32,000 acre mountain land after passing through various ownership was bought after World War I by the U. S. Government, and now is embraced in the Jefferson National Forest.

As time went on and more people came into Arnold's Valley to live, the original log houses gave way to more pretentious ones. In time brick houses began to appear. One such was the residence of a man highly esteemed in his community, Captain Samuel Burks. Having lived to advanced age and earned a reputation of a high order, he died where he had been born. A eulogy written by the neighborhood doctor was published in the local paper. It tells what type of men Rockbridge has produced.

"Capt. Samuel Burks breathed his last on the 12th inst., at

his residence in Arnold's Valley, almost on the spot where, eighty-four years ago, he was first rocked in his cradle. It cannot be denied that, like most of us, Capt. Burks was a sinner, but it may be truly said of him that he served his country gallantly and faithfully in the War of 1812; that he lived for nearly forty years in the most perfect harmony and affection with the bride of his youth; and that his children were all very dear to his heart. A large hereditary slave-holder, he exhibited many of the traits of the old Virginia cavalier. He was gallant, polite, and social, fond of chat and of a joke, of a fox-chase and a deer-hunt, of a merry dance and the convivial party, of a good dinner, of a mint-julep and an apple-toddy. He had no puritanical prejudices against an innocent game of whist, with a laughing circle of friends on a winter night, when the cold wind roared without, and the piled-up hickory logs roared within on his broad hearth. He was not, however, a mere devotee of pleasure. He was a laborious man, and his hard hands attested his personal toil, even in his extreme old age. His most prominent trait was the grand old Virginia virtue of hospitality. It was the law of his hearthstone, and graven deep on the portals of his ever-open door. A broad stream of company swept through his free hotel, where he welcomed friends with a hearty shake of the hand, and made them feel at home. No man ever enjoyed the delights of his hospitality without remarking that in his own house, and at his merry fireside, Captain Burks was a prince."

Another imposing brick house stands on the river bank at the end of the bridge. It probably was built by James Greenlee II, son of the pioneer. Yet another brick structure across the road is the boyhood home and last residence of the late Senator Miles Poindexter. Its name is Elk Cliff, and

it is attractively located on the overhanging bank of Elk Creek. Senator Poindexter was exceedingly fond of his home, which was built by his grandfather, Judge Anderson; and he never tired of the extensive views to be had from his lawn. He was a collector of Indian relics, such as tomahawks and arrowheads, but only of those to be found on his own place, or in the immediate vicinity. He was convinced that the Indians came there to make these implements, by reason of the many imperfect ones to be found, and because of the outcropping of flint stone. He knew the exact spot on which was located the cabin of Stephen Arnold, immediately beneath Thunder Ridge. Though a world traveller, and for some years Ambassador to Peru, where he travelled and studied extensively, he always pined for his home in Arnold's Valley and was quite content when he returned there to spend the sunset years of his life.

One of the picturesque landmarks of the Valley is the remnant of the old Glenwood furnace, built and operated by two Botetourt County lawyers, Judge Francis T. Anderson and David Shanks. Judge Anderson acquired much mountain land, on which was to be had iron-ore of good quality. So a furnace was built; pig iron made here was shipped to Richmond, at first by batteaux and later by the canal. There it was fabricated in the Tredegar Iron Works, operated by Joseph R. Anderson, a brother of Judge Anderson. An item regarding this furnace is to be seen in the Court Order Book, when Dave, a slave, was brought to trial on charge of setting fire to the bellows-house of the furnace. He was acquitted. The bellows, so-called, consisted of two large wooden cylinders, each with a piston fitted air-tight, and connected by a walking beam operated by water-power. One cylinder drew in air, while the other expelled it, so supplying the air-blast for the furnace.

William A. Anderson, son of Judge Anderson, negotiated the sale of this large tract of mountain land to the government.

When the Boom afflicted this portion of Virginia in the 1890's, one of the many enterprises promulgated was a powder factory, to be located along the foot of Thunder Hill. This was judged a good situation for such a plant. In case of accidental explosion the mountain would sustain the shock. In furtherance of this scheme a railroad was deemed essential, and so was surveyed; cross ties were actually hauled and distributed along the right of way. I was one of the surveying party running this line, and as illustrative of the character of the surface of Arnold's Valley, I recall that at one place the man who was running the level reported he had taken a sight through the telescope on his instrument one mile long which was perfectly level. But the boom "busted," and nothing came of factory or railroad. The cross ties were gathered up and used elsewhere.

When I was about twenty years of age I was appointed to teach the Upper Arnold's Valley school. Before the date set for the opening of the school I decided to visit the place. So I mounted my horse, and by dint of much inquiring at length found the place. It was a small log building situated on a bare bleak hillside, with no possible space for a playground. When I had entered I found a very bare room, with no actual windows, but on each side an opening between the logs, ten inches in height, and forty-eight inches in length; in these openings the teacher was expected, at his own expense, to set six panes of glass, 8 x 10 inches, to let in light, and keep out cold. The ceiling, made of long split clapboards, laid shingle-fashion, was just a little over six feet from the floor. I could barely stand upright. The floor was of oak boards, unplaned, about 12 inches broad, with plenty of crack between. The

equipment consisted of a large and very rusty cast-iron stove, a very dull axe, a wornout broom, a rusty tin bucket and dipper. There were a few rickety homemade benches, no blackboards, nor anything else. I took a hasty view of this layout and fled from the scene. The next mail carried my polite note of resignation. Arnold's Valley has come a long way forward since that time.

To the left as one enters the Valley by crossing James River, may be seen a spot on the mountain-side bare of trees, where over a space of ten acres is to be found nothing but stones almost perfectly globe-shaped, large and small, designated the Devil's Marbles. He has long since ceased playing with them, probably because he has had more important projects connected with Arnold's Valley. The products of greatest commercial importance and those which furnish employment to many of the citizens of the Valley, are those of the forest: cross ties, tan-bark, pulpwood, and chestnut wood for extract, which wood is nearing extinction, though a supply of the dead timber will last a few years. Ever since the building of the Richmond and Alleghany Railroad in 1881, and the Shenandoah Valley Railroad two years later, along the siding at Greenlee Station there has been piled for shipment perhaps a million cords of wood.

In a famous lawsuit in this county, witnesses were asked how much wood was required as fuel for the old iron furnaces. The reply, made under oath, was that the weekly requirement for one was from 130 to 140 cords. That particular furnace operated about eight years, and so burned an amount of wood four feet wide, four feet high, and over fifty miles in length. There were at the time eight furnaces, besides several forges and foundries in this county, all using about that same amount. In eight years they used up a pile of cord-

wood long enough to reach from here to Philadelphia. Wood used in this way was usefully consumed, but probably even more was otherwise consumed when the pioneers in order to get cleared land for cultivating, simply cut the trees, rolled the logs into piles, and burned them. We read of the merry times they used to have at these log-rollings, when neighbors were invited in to help cut and burn. Travellers of that day state that they would sometimes travel almost all day without catching sight of the sun because of the overshadowing trees.

One readable book which has for its setting this particular locality is *Memory Days,* by Alexander Paxton. His home was on that stretch of land forming the eastern portion of Arnold's Valley, lying between James River and the mountain and jutting down toward the mouth of North River. The home of his boyhood is now no longer in existence, having been burned many years ago. He was related to Mrs. Phebe Paxton, an heroic soul, whose memory should be kept alive. In the dark days of Valley Forge, when the American Army was in winter quarters there, she got word that her husband, a soldier in Washington's Army, was suffering from cold and hunger. Thereupon, in mid-winter, she loaded two horses with provisions raised on their own farm, and with clothing made from her own wool and flax, sewed by her own hand, mounted one horse. With a trusted colored servant on the other, she rode all the way to Valley Forge and delivered them into his hand. Such devotion and such endurance are deserving of a greater tribute than words can bestow.

Shortly after World War I the Federal government established in Arnold's Valley a camp for veterans. They were employed in various pursuits connected with the forest, such as making roads, or trails. Whatever the idea of placing them here, it seems not to have been practicable, for it was discon-

tinued. Then the camp was made into a C.C.C. camp. Now this camp is used for Federal purposes in the care and training of delinquent youths. Other camps in this vicinity were the Y.M.C.A. camp, used a short time, and then given up. The Boy Scout Camp Powhatan was used a longer time, but for some years has been rarely put to use. There are some private camps, of excellent type, used regularly by the owners.

The enterprise which has acquainted more persons with this region than any other is the recreation grounds at Cave Mountain Lake. This cannot be properly said to be in Arnold's Valley, but is much a part of the Valley. The lake is attractive in appearance and arrangement, easily reached, and most pleasurable to visit. However, I shall never forget my first visit to that spot, when I went as County Coroner with other law officers at 2 o'clock of a cold winter night, to investigate a homicide. At the very bottom of what is now the lake, then stood a small cottage. A Christmas party had been in progress, a disturbance arose; a man was shot to death. With the Sheriff and Commonwealth's Attorney I spent some hours getting the brutal facts. Now young people frolic in the limpid waters or in boats on its surface, knowing nothing of the dramatic and tragic happenings of that December night a decade ago.

Alexander Paxton, resident of that prolongation of Arnold's Valley which extends down the south side of James River towards Balcony Falls, was a well-to-do bachelor, and as he neared the end of his life he made his Will. After making careful provision for his slaves, as to their welfare and comfort, and disposing of his other personal property, he added: "I direct my executor to sell my land to the highest bidder at public auction, with this express condition, however, that Joseph Glasgow is not to be the purchaser of the said land, or of any part thereof, either directly or indirectly, now or at

any further time, neither is he to have any control over it, or any interest in it as lessee or agent, or any other character whatever at any time during his life. For reasons satisfactory to me I direct that my land shall be sold upon this express condition. Alexander Paxton."[1] It would begin to look as if Alexander Paxton was not on very good terms with his neighbor, Joseph Glasgow.

The name Whistle Creek dates from a very early day, and mention of the creek by name is to be found in the 1740's. There is a hazy tradition that the name originally was "No Whistle Creek" because the first white man who explored the little stream could not whistle. The stream is of not great volume, nor is it a long one, but from the beginning has been a landmark in the county. What was probably the second mill ever built in the county for grinding grain was operated by its water-power. This was James Young's mill, which stood on the bank of Whistle Creek, a few hundred yards above its confluence with North River. Remnants of this mill are yet to be seen. Part of the foundation and the mill-dam are intact.

Another important structure stood very near the bank of Whistle Creek, the early church called at different periods of its history Forks-of-James, Hall's Meeting House and Monmouth. The exact date of its organization cannot be stated, but it is a matter of public record that Richard Woods reported its existence to the Court in 1752. The first meeting house was of logs, as were all the pioneer churches. The second building was also of wood, but built of sawed timber, and probably stood where later was erected the third structure, a stone building, of which a remnant of wall remains.

1. Rockbridge County Will Book 10, page 376.

In early days Whistle Creek was "hard by" an important road for the people of that day. It was laid out without aid of engineer or surveyor, simply by native common sense and a discerning eye. It was direct, without many curves or turns, and was on almost a water grade for the most of its extent, stretching from about the forks of Buffalo along Buffalo Creek to Colliers Creek, up that stream to Todd Run (also called Toad Run), thence up that stream, and across the divide to watershed of Whistle Creek, which it followed to the mouth of the Creek. There by means of Allison's Ferry it crossed North River and wended its way across the hills to join the Great Path near Timber Ridge Church. Monmouth is the mother-church of the Lexington Congregation. Lexingtonians attended there for many years before the Lexington church was organized. A large stone from the walls of the parent church is embedded in the wall of the daughter church in commemoration of this item of her history.

At a somewhat later date than the establishment of Young's mill, a second mill was built. It is in active operation today, known as Beatty's Mill. The first mill on this site, of which a portion still forms part of the present day structure, was erected by Samuel Todd. Todd applied to the court for leave to build his mill, but as Young's mill was operated by the same stream and was near by, he first applied for a writ of court, technically known as a writ "ad quod damnum," which was an order from the court to the Sheriff to make careful inquiry as to whether or not anyone would be damaged by another mill. Apparently no objection was raised, as Todd's Mill was a landmark frequently mentioned in the records for many years.

Samuel Todd was the father of a daughter whose name is familiar to Kentuckians, as well as being a celebrated one in

medical literature and history. Jane Todd was born within a very short distance of this mill, of which her father was owner. When she was a grown woman she married, in Rockbridge County, Thomas Crawford, the Reverend Samuel Houston being the officiating minister. Later the young couple moved to Kentucky, and lived within sixty miles of Danville. In later life Jane Crawford needed surgical treatment for the removal of a large abdominal tumor. What was more natural than she would apply to a Rockbridge born doctor, Ephraim McDowell, then practicing in Danville? Abdominal surgery in that early day was unknown in America. Dr. McDowell had been trained in Edinburgh, Scotland, the center at that time of medical training. Dr. McDowell visited her, and finally told her that he would attempt the operation if she was willing. She agreed, and rode on horseback the sixty miles to his home, where on Christmas Day, 1809, he strapped her down on a table, and without anesthetics (as yet not known), he worked for twenty-five minutes to remove a twenty-two pound tumor. She was given a drink of whiskey and a large dose of laudanum, the best pain-reliever known in that day. Twenty-five days later she got on her horse and rode home, a well woman. Dr. McDowell's birthplace was on the land his grandfather, Captain John McDowell, selected when Benjamin Borden allotted him one thousand acres for finding and surveying Borden's Grant. There is today a monument to him in Danville, Kentucky; his life-size statue stands in the "Hall of Fame" in Washington; his famous patient's fame is commemorated by the "Jane Todd Crawford Highway," one of Kentucky's most important roads. On occasions ladies from the region where her fame is greatest, have made visits to this community, to see the place of her birth in Rockbridge County.

At a time something more than a half-century ago, on the banks of Whistle Creek stood a structure housing an enterprise now practically unknown. This was a neighborhood carding factory. Here was taken wool, shorn from the flocks of Rockbridge farmers, to be cleaned and made up into rolls, ready for spinning into woolen threads. From such they knitted homemade woolen socks and jackets, or dyed and wove bed spreads or "kivvers." The carding machines, operated by water-power, would turn out fluffy white rolls of pure wool, about three-quarters of an inch in diameter and a yard in length. In spring many farm wagons might be seen on their way with big sacks of wool to Brown's Factory.

Just below the site of this factory, and on the opposite side of the road, is a most attractive and picturesque stone house of Dr. R. P. Cooke. A very modest man, he seldom refers to one of the more important events of his career. This was his part in the yellow fever investigation made in Cuba at about the time of the Spanish-American War, by Dr. Walter Reed. Dr. Robert P. Cooke volunteered to act the part of a "human guinea-pig," not knowing whether his life might be the forfeit, as indeed was the case with one of his fellow-workers. After long and efficient service as Health Officer to the County of Rockbridge, Dr. Cooke has now resigned office, and devotes himself to reading and to study in his leisure years.

A line in a familiar hymn begins "Where streams of living waters flow." For the inspiration of this line the writer might well have stood on the slope of the mountain at Balcony Falls, and viewed the spot where the James and the Maury Rivers flow together, and then go gushing and tumbling through the gap in the Blue Ridge. When one regards the power in these waters he will readily concede they are very much alive — powerful enough to tear down a mountain and carry it into

the sea. For a distance of six miles ranges of mountains line the river-bank, so not one mountain but several were channelled through by the mighty river. Nature has healed most of the scars of this stupendous operation, spreading soil and causing foliage and plant life to spring up and cover raw surfaces. The Balcony Falls water-gap is known far and wide for its beauty. The channel of the river is strewn with immense boulders, some as large as a house, between or around which the waters forever madly flow in their frantic haste to reach the ocean. In another time and to other people it was far from being beautiful or joyous. In the early days when the river was the main artery of freight traffic, before even the James River canal had come into being, its aspect was always grim. Many a cargo has been lost there, and not a few lives. One instance of such occurrence may be here related.

About Christmas time long ago, a large boat, heavily laden with men, became unmanageable in the raging waters of a freshet; it was dashed against a rock, and broken to pieces. Most of the men were drowned, but half-a-dozen managed to gain a foothold on a large boulder, locally known as Velvet Rock. Their cries and shouts aroused men who lived along the river bank, and a number gathered on the riverside across from the rock. They were unable to render assistance, but they built a large bonfire, and encouraged the wretched men, huddled on the boulder, by their words, begging them to hold on till daybreak when help would come to them. Finally a small canoe was obtained, only large enough to carry three men. A Negro slave, Frank Padgett by name, who was a skilled boatman, volunteered to attempt the rescue. He pushed off into the wild muddy waters, and made two trips in safety, bringing two men each time. As he landed the second load he was asked: "Are you not mighty tired?" To which he said:

"Yes, but I cannot stop till I get the others." Again he pushed off. Whether he was too fatigued to hold the boat against the current or whatever it was, we know that his boat was dashed against a great boulder, and went down. So he perished, and his body was never recovered.

So impressed was one of the group of witnesses, General Echols, that shortly thereafter he had erected, at his own expense, on the river-bank near the spot, a neat marble shaft. It read: "That a man lay down his life for a friend," followed by the name of Frank Padgett, with the circumstances of his death. In later years, when the railroad was built along that way, a clause was entered into the contract to the effect that this monument should be preserved for all time. The railroad company has faithfully carried out this obligation. Frank Padgett was one of the real men in Rockbridge County history. No man deserves more than Padgett a place in our brief survey.

In the extreme southwest border of Rockbridge county lies the hamlet of Springfield. In the County record office we learn that the plan of the Town of Springfield was laid off from John McConkey's land to the Great Road leading from Lexington to Pattonsburg (Buchanan). The lots were sixty feet in front, and extended that wideness back one hundred and seventy feet. The main street was sixty feet wide; the cross streets thirty feet wide; two cross alleys and the back alley were each 15 feet wide. At a court held in Rockbridge county September 5, 1797, the plan of the town of Springfield was produced in court by John McConkey, and on his motion recorded.[2]

John McConkey lived in a stone house in Springfield, built by Captain Audley Paul, who was a fellow-lieutenant with George Washington at Braddock's Defeat, and who escaped

2. Rockbridge County Will Book 2, page 35.

with his life on that tragic occasion by swimming the Alleghany river. He was an ancestor of William Taylor, Methodist bishop of Africa, and the sword worn by Captain Paul is still treasured by the Taylor descendants.

The Cloyd Family near Springfield owned vast acreage, extending perhaps several miles along the public road. The name, like others at one time prominent, has disappeared from this county, though it was then borne by numerous influential people. Some of the family moved down into southwest Virginia; a mountain there has that name. More than one stately and handsome home was built and owned by them, one of which was named "Springfield." A daughter of the family in Rockbridge was a generous contributor to foreign missions, at one time giving five hundred dollars in money and five shares of stock in the Bank of the Valley to this cause. The large and comfortable brick house situated just off of Lee Highway half-a-mile north of Highbridge Church, later the home of Dr. David C. Houston, was built by one of the Cloyds. They intermarried with the Houston family, Patsy Cloyd having married Mathew Houston of Rockbridge and her sister, Peggy, becoming the wife of Mathew Houston of Kentucky.

In 1804 Mathew Houston built the house in which he resided, named "Vine Forest," later changed to "Oak Forest" and then to "Forest Oaks." After extensive additions it became "Forest Tavern" and is known today by that name.

Another Houston home originally had the name "Sunny Knoll," but was changed by a subsequent owner, a Scottish gentleman, to "Glendover." Like many of the old-time homes, it was for a while an overnight stop for the stagecoach passengers of that day. Scratched in the white plaster between the red bricks of its walls might once be seen the names of

those who were sheltered beneath its rooftree. Now, however, more's the pity, the names have been painted over.

An interesting legend is told by a citizen of Springfield, who says: "Three of my great-uncles who once lived here in Springfield, made up their minds to migrate. They hitched up their teams and loaded the wagons with all they could carry, and took their way toward the west. In the course of time they arrived at a certain spot in the State of Ohio; they liked the looks of that locality, so there they fixed an abiding-place and there they remained. And they named the place in honor of their former Virginia home, Springfield."

Highbridge Church stands on the hill at the northern extremity of Springfield proper. Not one of the oldest of the Presbyterian churches of Rockbridge, it nevertheless has a history running back considerably over a century, and embracing many events and personages. The church was organized in 1770, in Hanover Presbytery, and was first grouped with Oxford and Falling Spring. Afterward it became, with these churches, a part of the Lexington Presbytery, and still later of Montgomery Presbytery. The present brick building, the third erected, was built in 1904, dedicated the same year. and enlarged in 1922. A notable early minister was the Reverend Samuel Houston, who as a young man fought through the entire Revolutionary War without misadventure.

In the adjacent churchyard lie the dust of many men and women notable in their day and generation in the affairs of the county and nation. This cemetery is unlike many, too many, both here and elsewhere, in that it is not neglected, but well-cared for. A record of those sleeping here was compiled some years ago by the officers of the church, and printed copies were made available — a most praiseworthy undertaking which others in Rockbridge might imitate.

Some distance down the road until recently stood the gunsmith shop, in which it is said Daniel Boone once had a rifle made for him. The making required some weeks; so pending the completion of the gun he had ordered made, Boone borrowed a rifle from the gunsmith, and carried it on one of his trips to the Scioto Valley and beyond. This interesting weapon is still in possession of a gentleman living in Springfield. When one tries to raise the gun to position of aim he realizes what sinews of steel the old scout must have had, to shoulder and carry this ponderous firearm through hundreds of miles of trackless wilderness. Leaden bullets which were shot by the gunsmith into a certain old hardwood tree, as he tested out the product of his handicraft, might be dug out of the stump up until comparatively recent days.

At a later period the shop was used as a wagon-maker's shop, where handmade wheels and axles and the various other portions of wagons were produced with drawshave and broad-axe. Only a few years ago a stranger stopped his automobile and inquired the location of this shop saying, "I have at my home in Iowa a wagon which was used to carry a family from Virginia to California, and later back to Iowa. It was made in a shop in Springfield near Natural Bridge, in Rockbridge County. I have always wanted to visit the spot. I have the old wagon safely housed, and value it greatly as an heirloom of the family." No shoddy came from Springfield shops.

It is quite possible that General George Washington once visited in Springfield. As above mentioned, Captain Audley Paul lived in this hamlet, and it is known that General Washington was once at Buchanan. So it is quite plausible that, being within a couple of hours ride of the home of his former fellow-soldier, he would take the opportunity of visiting him.

7

NATURAL BRIDGE AND ROCKBRIDGE ALUM SPRINGS

NATURE LAVISHED BEAUTY and wonder on Rockbridge county as a mother lavishes love and affection on a favorite child. Into the hills and valleys went colors, shapes and energies that are not to be explained, but only admired.

The best-known of these gifts of nature is the Natural Bridge, carved out of solid stone over millions of years by the everlasting vitality of little Cedar Creek. Ever since it was first viewed by the pioneer John Sallings in 1734 the Bridge has swept up the imagination of those who have seen it. Our very county name is a tribute to its majestic presence.

Long after Borden's grant was opened the Bridge remained unappropriated. The gentleman who in 1774 finally applied for and received a grant for the property was destined to play an important role in the early days of our Republic. His name was Thomas Jefferson, whose interest in the arch was attested to in a number of his letters and actions.

At one time during Thomas Jefferson's ownership the Bridge was used as a shot-tower. Molten lead was poured from the top of the Bridge, and allowed to fall into a pool or tank of water below. In passing through the air the particles of lead would assume a globular form, and when they fell into the water would harden into shot, perfectly round, of various sizes, to be sorted out at a later time. Two men had an idea

of using the Bridge in this way, about the same time; for Jefferson wrote to one of them (William Caruthers of Lexington) and said to him in reply: "Your letter came yesterday, and I regret that it had not been a single day earlier. Dr. Thornton came and proposed to lease the Bridge for a shot manufactory, and we agreed." He added: "He went to the mines, and contracted for the whole lead which could be furnished there in a year."

This writer's first acquaintance with the Bridge came when, as a small boy, he was sent on horseback the three miles from his home to the Post Office once or twice a week. The animal carried a pair of huge leather saddlepockets, which were usually crammed full on the return trip, with letters, newspapers and magazines. At that time the hotel, a long, rambling, frame structure, called Forest Inn, stood on the eastern side of the road, near a limestone spring. Later, when the Pavillion and Appledore were built on the hill opposite, a bridge, or causeway over the public road afforded a walkway between the buildings. This was after Colonel Henry Chester Parsons had bought the property, and had begun the many improvements which he made to it. In 1898 Forest Inn was consumed by fire.

The thing that makes the Natural Bridge more interesting than otherwise would be the case, is the fact that it is still a bridge. There are other natural bridges in the world, one in Utah of greater height, and immensely wider than the Natural Bridge of Virginia; but this bridge is far off the beaten track. It carries no road, nor serves any useful purpose. There is not another natural bridge, except perhaps some insignificant one a few feet only in height, which actually serves to carry a road or highway. For almost two centuries, this Bridge has afforded a passage-way over the gorge of Cedar Creek. Not

for two miles either up or down this creek, can one find another means of crossing. Just when the road over the Bridge was first opened is not very clearly shown in the records. The main thoroughfare traversing the Valley of Virginia, which was travelled by the pioneers going to southwest Virginia, to Kentucky, or to western North Carolina was referred to as the Great Path or Indian Road. It did not cross by way of Natural Bridge, as at present; but crossed Cedar Creek some two miles up-stream, at the Red Mill. Red Mill was built by Hugh Barclay, and his residence immediately adjacent was at an early day known as Barclay's Tavern.

A number of families lived in this vicinity, referred to as the Cedar Creek settlement. In November, 1746, the Augusta County Court ordered a road cleared from the North Fork of James River at Gilbert Campbell's ford (now East Lexington), to Looney's ford at Cherry Tree Bottom, a short distance south of Buchanan. This order was supplemental to one issued by the Orange County Court on May 23, 1745, with reference to clearing a road through almost the entire length of the Great Valley, from Frederick County on the north, to Woods' River on the south. The order states that "the same is already Blazed, and laid off with Two Knotches and a Cross."

The first road over Natural Bridge was constructed only sixteen years after the first white men came into the country; for in 1753 John Mathews directed the workmen who accomplished this feat. The people of southwest Virginia used the road for well over a century before the coming of a man who turned it from a country road base to one of the greatest tourist attractions in the United States.

Colonel Parsons acquired the Bridge, and several hundreds of acres surrounding it, in May 1881. His attention was first directed to this section of Virginia by the fact that he was the

chief promoter of the Richmond and Alleghany Railroad, which was built along the James River from Richmond to Clifton Forge. This railroad company was later bought out by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company and is today called the James River division of the C. and O. The railroad was built on the tow-path of the James River and Kanawha Canal, whose title to the right of way was purchased by the R. and A. Railroad Company.

When Parsons bought the Natural Bridge the old rambling two-story frame building known as Forest Inn was the only accommodations for visitors who came. Sightseers to the Bridge were relatively small in number then; but when better accommodations were supplied, and when better travel was supplied by the building of the Richmond and Alleghany road, and by the Shenandoah Valley Railroad, all this was altered. Now the Bridge was visited and admired by many who came to enjoy a stay of some days at the hotels; for as soon as possible Parsons built a large three-story hotel named Appledore, with a ballroom or dancing-hall. In the summer season the two railroads operated excursion trains at intervals bringing hundreds for a day, who paid the Bridge owner admission to see the attraction, and for transportation from the railroad station and back. Many of them had dinner at the hotel.

Families found the hotel and the surroundings pleasant for the vacation season, and came from all quarters of the United States, but especially from the south, in order to escape the hot weather in the summer months. In all seasons, except winter, people came in increasing numbers. In some summers the accommodations were taxed to hold the crowds. In those years only horse-drawn vehicles were in use. The management had a great variety of these: surreys, dog-carts, big tally-ho coaches, Troy wagons, top-buggies, phaetons, sulkies, buck-

boards, and plenty of good horses for harness work and saddle riding. These were hired to guests for pleasure driving or for rambles on horseback through the hills and the forests. Drives were laid out through the estate to Lincoln Heights, over Mount Jefferson, and to other portions of the large grounds; for Parsons added to his acreage from time to time, and gave attractive sounding titles to various portions of it. His three young daughters were accomplished horsewomen and had their saddle-horses out almost daily. Guests of the hotel, who realized that the outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man (or woman), joined them in these rides, or went in larger groups.

Colonel Parsons was a benefactor in his community. The activities centering around the Bridge gave employment to numbers of neighboring people, both white and colored, in various capacities, such as dining room waiters, cooks, maids, porters, drivers, and craftsmen such as carpenters, stonemasons, painters and plasterers. Much of the money attached to this spot, and spent by tourists and visitors, found its way into the pockets of local people. The farmers and produce raisers profited too, as those who came must be fed. The Colonel also employed numbers of men to plant and gather from large gardens, or to attend the dairy herd kept on the place. But he came to a tragic end, when he was shot to death by a distinguished employee of the very railroad he had been instrumental in bringing into existence. This event took place at Gladys Inn, a hotel owned by the railroad in Clifton Forge, and the perpetrator was a passenger conductor of the Richmond and Alleghany Railroad. The murderer was tried and sentenced to a long term in the penitentiary.

Colonel Parsons was a New Englander from Vermont. Mrs. Parsons, whose maiden name was Nellie Loomis, came from

Massachusetts. For his own residence Colonel Parsons built a commodious dwelling, very near the arch of the Bridge and over the small cabin erected by Thomas Jefferson for his colored caretaker, a slave known as Patrick Henry. This domicile was in a style of Victorian architecture popular at that period. It was given the name of Jefferson Cottage and remains to be used in rush seasons as an overflow supplement to the main hotel.

Mrs. Parsons was of a retiring nature, and was not much seen in society, though the family became members of Highbridge Church, and attended services there on occasion. When the time came for them to leave this mortal life, in Highbridge cemetery their bodies were laid to rest. In token of appreciation of Colonel Parsons as a citizen of the community, Captain Greenlee Letcher presented a large photograph of him to Rockbridge County. It was accepted by the Board of Supervisors, and is in the County Court House, which contains a gallery of notable men of the county.

The Natural Bridge, in common with other business enterprises, has had its seasons of flush and of hard times. After the death of Colonel Parsons the ownership of the property remained in his family for some years, and was then sold. It has had several types of ownership, and has been under numerous sorts of managers. At one time it was the property of a group of Richmond men of whom Mr. George W. Stevens, President of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, was one. The manager during a part of this time was Mr. Charles Paxton. At an earlier time Mr. Warren Hamilton had charge; at a later period Mr. and Mrs. John Clothier operated the hotel. At the time this is written it is owned by a company of which James N. Hunter is manager.

The coming of hard-surfaced roads has proved a tremendous boon to Natural Bridge. The first bit of paved highway in Rockbridge county was laid between the railroad station and hotel there. In a few years a modern highway connected the Bridge with the rest of the nation, and tourists have been stopping to see this natural wonder in ever increasing numbers over the years. At almost any time cars from a dozen states may be seen in the parking lot. The improvement of facilities has been continuous, and the present facilities are among the best in the South. There are some who resent the commercialization of this work of nature, but their voices are drowned out by the clang of the incoming coins.

ROCKBRIDGE ALUM SPRINGS

In 1790 Alexander Campbell was the Rockbridge County surveyor, duly appointed to run boundary lines of land. Unappropriated acres still existed in the county, and his office naturally afforded the surveyor excellent opportunities to learn about such lands. The authorities evidently must have thought this would give the surveyor too good a chance to get possession of choice lands. So they made a ruling that no county surveyor could "patent" land, or be granted any public lands. In the course of his tramping through the woods Mr. Campbell one day observed a well-patronized spot where deer came to lick a salty deposit off the rocks. Someone else had likewise noticed it, for a rough hunters' cabin had been built nearby, obviously for the purpose of stalking the deer when they came to the lick.

Mr. Campbell noted the sluggish trickle of water adjacent to the lick, and he had the curiosity to taste the waters. They were decidedly astringent and puckered his mouth. He decided that these odd-tasting waters must have some medicinal

value – perhaps on the same principle as was in the mind of the farmer who tasted an olive for the first time. He asked, "What is that good for?" And when told only as a relish, he strongly dissented saying, "You can't tell me that a thing that tastes that bad is not good for curing something." Mr. Campbell thought this might turn out to be a good find. He knew that it was on ground which as yet had not been taken up. But then there was the ruling that a county surveyor could not take up land. He continued to cogitate over this matter, and finally hit on a scheme for getting around this law. He went to his friend, John Dunlap, and discussed the subject with him, finally proposing that he take up the land in Dunlap's name, and the two then sign a contract, or covenant, that when the patent had been obtained they would sell the land, and divide the money. Dunlap agreed. The patent was secured, and the contract was drawn up and signed. The tract granted them was two thousand and eight acres. This contract is alluded to in later dealings as a bond.

Time went on, and no sale of the land was made. Perhaps it was not possible to interest anyone else in the spring, or men thought the land too rough and too remote to be worth paying taxes on. Campbell and Dunlap grew older and older, and still no sale. Finally, having lived out their allotted days, both men died. Their heirs apparently paid scant attention to the grant. Someone must have paid the taxes, or probably no one was interested enough to care whether or not taxes were paid. So much vacant land existed everywhere that a couple of thousand acres was not worth considering, either on the part of the owners or the tax authorities. In 1846 a son of Alexander Campbell, James, decided to see what might be done with the property. He owned, however, only a half-interest; the other half was owned by Dunlap heirs, who by

this time had emigrated to other states, and were widely scattered. But that fact did not balk James Campbell. How he ever learned their names and where they might be found does not appear in the formal records. But he succeeded in locating them in three different states where they were then living, and bought them out, one by one. Probably some or all of them had never even heard they had an interest in a tract of land away off somewhere in the woods, which their grandfather had taken up before they were born. It was like finding money in the road when James Campbell made them an offer, and they seized upon it. Campbell realized that he was taking chances; he did not know whether he would ever come out ahead or lose what he was putting into it. But he was willing to risk something, and so made his modest offers. His faith was fully justified. Eventually he sold his 2,008 acres for $12,000.

This once unused land was destined in the nineteenth century to become one of the Old Dominion's favorite watering places, and to be the summer vacation spot of as many as 1,800 guests from near and far. Still in existence is a plat of The Alum, as drawn by an early surveyor named Jed Hotchkiss. Drawn in 1869, it shows a complicated and elaborate establishment with hotel, cottages, music stand, walkways and gardens. Only White Sulphur Springs was more popular in its day.

The curative properties of the alum water were greatly praised by many who went there. Ante-bellum slave owners not only went there themselves when they "were ailing"; they even sent slaves afflicted with skin diseases there to work gratis, and to be cured before the fall season. Many who could not get to Virginia used the bottled water, which was shipped out

in great quantities. Not only a social venture, but an economic one, The Alum was a huge success.

A letter by a lady whose memory goes back to those days, gives a vivid picture of The Alum. She says, "He who planned the grounds and buildings and made a lovely place. The attractive Spring House at the foot of the alum bank; the graceful Band Stand in the center of the lawn; the semi-circle of red brick cottages with white porches on each side of the lawn; the hotel, flanked on one side by the family residence, and a similar building on the other side — these stood at the upper end of the lawn; and at the other end stood "The Gothic Building," the Post Office, store and ballroom building. The band played daily at noon for an hour and again for an hour just before the evening meal. Each night there was informal dancing in the Ball Room. For daytime sports there was croquet, archery and ten-pins. The clientele came from all over the South, with quite a number from the North. The old colored mammies, with their bright turbans, made a picturesque appearance on the lawn, as they looked after their attractive little tots. They were always a source of great interest to the Northern guests.

"In those days there were always outstanding belles in Virginia. I recall, amongst others, the beautiful Mary Triplett of Richmond, as a frequent guest. I can see her now as she danced so gracefully in the ballroom at night, and as she sat on the lawn with a crowd of admirers around her, while the band discoursed music as she and her friends sipped tasty drinks.

"Two large balls were always considered the outstanding events of the season: the full dress ball, and the masquerade ball. For the latter the guests, with the help of their maids, were busy for some time in advance making their own cos-

tumes for the occasion. This was done in great secrecy. When they appeared in these costumes great credit was due to their originality, ingenuity and workmanship.

"Before the War many families from the South came in their own carriages, and kept them throughout the season. Most of the well-known men in public life visited the Rockbridge Alum from time to time. The most celebrated was General Lee, who was a frequent guest there together with his family. He, himself, often rode out from Lexington, on his fine horse, at any and all seasons, to consult my father, who was then a member of the Legislature. This was when General Lee was getting ready to open Washington College."

A story is told of a Lexington man who was sojourning at The Alum for a brief vacation one summer. At that time meals were served on long tables in the dining room, and guests were seated more or less indiscriminately, as they chanced to enter the room. At one long table one morning was seated a very high-and -mighty English lord, who was for the time taking the waters. Behind the lord's chair stood his man, very dignified, very proper in every respect. The Lexington gentleman, as it happened, was seated just across the table. His lordship might say, "James, pass me the toast." The toast would be passed. From across the table would come a crisp order: "James, pass me the toast." James would place his hand beside his mouth, lean forward somewhat, and in a stage whisper say, "Private dish, sir!" His lordship would then draw out a monocle fastened to a slender gold chain, adjust it to his eye, and glare across the table, apparently overwhelmed by such audacity. A few moments later perhaps his lordship would ask that the peaches be passed to him. Immediately after the platter had been returned to its place, would come the command from across the table, "James, pass *me* the peaches."

With the same preternatural gravity of manner, his hand beside his mouth and in the same sort of whisper, James would say, "Private dish, sir." Again the monocle would come forth; again the lordly stare. Breakfast having been finished, the local gentleman strolled down to the livery stable, where he borrowed a halter-chain; with his pen-knife he whittled a ring from a piece of sole leather, and attached it to the chain; he looped the latter about his neck and stuck the leathern ring in his pocket. Then he proceeded along the narrow board walk back toward the hotel. The distinguished Britisher had chosen that particular time to enjoy a morning stroll, and was sauntering along the walk in the other direction. Presently the two approached each other; the walk was not wide enough to pass; neither would yield the way. They came face to face, and both stopped, within arm's-length. The Englishman drew forth his monacle, placed it to his eye, and stared ferociously at the other man. Not to be outdone, this man, with a wide flourish, drew forth his halter chain and leather ring, placed it before his eye and glared just as ferociously at the Englishman. His lordship stepped back one pace, bowed low, and said, "Lord Buckingham, at your service, Sir." With equally low bow the other man replied, "Lord Houghawout, Sir, at your service."

The story goes on to say that the high-and-mighty foreigner was not quite so top-lofty as he appeared; he realized the humor in the situation. He smilingly extended his hand, which was grasped by Mr. Houghawout, and the two became very good friends while their stay at The Alum continued.

Another incident pertaining to The Alum is worthy of telling. It has to do with an organization known to former students scattered over a wide area. No student who has attended the University of Virginia within the last half-a-century has not known of the Eli Banana Society. The madcap

doings of this organization are legion. It had its inception at the Rockbridge Alum Springs. Founded by a group of University of Virginia students, reinforced by a few cadets from V.M.I., summering there that year, the rollicking assemblage was not greatly esteemed by the more sedate guests. The Elis paraded over the lawn singing very robust ditties, and accompanied by bass drum and a fife. This galaxy of gay young gallants founded their club on some such sentiment penned by Thackeray in his couplet:

> Who loves not women, wine and song
> He is a fool his whole life long.

Reminiscences concerning The Alum are to be had from some of the older men of Rockbridge county. Here is one: "My father used to be around The Alum a lot, and he would repeat this about a day when when things were going strong. Some of the young fellows there got together and decided to have a horse-race. These young bloods each had a fine saddle horse, and they wanted to find out which had the fastest. Every fellow was willing to risk some money on his horse's speed. There was a good track for this down in the meadow, so they talked up the race for some days in advance.

"When the day came around an old Irishman, who had a cart and an old horse, with which he was accustomed to peddle huckleberries and such, appeared and said to the managers he would like to enter a horse in the race. The managers were, of course, a little surprised. They asked if he had the money to pay the entrance fee, twenty-five dollars. He pulled out a roll, peeled off some bills, and paid it on the spot. Then they asked what horse he wished to enter. He turned to the old nag standing near, hitched to the cart, and said, 'I'm aimin' to run ol' Racky, here. We call him Racky for short. His full

name is Hat-rack." As he spoke he took off his hat and hung it on the old horse's hip. And the old nag stood with his head hanging down, and an old blind-bridle, patched and worn, on his head. The young men took the money, and they winked at each other in anticipation, and they grinned to think of that old stack of bones racing. The Irishman stripped the harness off, and put a saddle on him, and a riding bridle. Then he lifted a boy into the saddle, and the old horse lifted his head, and seemed to come to life as a change came over him. Presently when the pistol gave the signal he went right out in front of the other horses and stayed there. They ran three heats, and old Racky came in ahead every heat. The young fellows had a different sort of look on their faces when the managers paid over all the money to the Irishman. He stuffed it in his pocket, and put the harness on old Racky, whose head now drooped again, and drove away, old Racky's pace slow and mournful-like."

Summer resorts, like empires and dynasties, have their rise and decline. Gradually the Rockbridge Alum Springs began to fade. The change was gradual, brought about in part by the invention of the automobile. Visitors would formerly come and stay for weeks or months. After horseless carriages appeared, people had vehicles which could take them hundreds of miles in a short time. They found themselves mounted on wheels and desired to keep the wheels turning. Now when one spoke of "change and rest" he apparently meant daily change and not much rest. Consequently visitors no longer spent the whole summer in one spot. They moved from one to another seeking the tranquility that had in earlier days been common property.

The Alum afforded suitable facilities for a summer school, as was noted by the authorities of the Virginia Military Insti-

tute. Such an enterprise was conducted there in the second decade of the century from about 1910 to nearly 1920. Colonel B. D. Mayo was in charge of the school most of this time. The hotel during the first years of the school had several hundred guests, but the number kept on diminishing year by year, until it was no longer profitable to keep the hotel open.

After this the place went from bad to worse. Buildings fell into decay; roofs rotted and rain penetrated the interiors to their destruction. Plaster fell from the walls. Floors sagged, and rotted away; porches disintegrated and fell off; gaunt rafters stood out for awhile against the sky, until they too rotted and disappeared, leaving the stark brick walls naked and valueless. Rank weeds grew where once were well-kept lawns. Covered walkways between the buildings decayed to pieces. Driveways, once kept spruce and neat, became rutted with gulleys. Only the magnificent trees underwent no great change. They flourished as before, except that now and then a limb perished, and was not removed. And the water continued to flow from the springs, but no dainty feet walked on the edge, and no night music joined the gurgle of the water. Timid hares padded softly here and there. Foxes found they could come up to the very doors through which so many people had once passed. Squirrels chatted in the trees, but no human ears were reddened by the chastisement. Even the graceful white-tailed deer could come coyly forward and not risk the harshness that sometimes flows from the human heart. For another chapter in Rockbridge county life, full of ephemeral beauty and joy, had come to an end.

8

THE FRANKLIN SOCIETY

BEING from colonial days a seat of learning, Rockbridge county has had a number of intellectual clubs and debating societies in its long history. One of the most noteworthy of these was the Franklin Society, a short version of its full title, "Franklin Society and Library Company." Actually this was a legal organization, owning real estate, and incorporated by the state of Virginia. The library it accumulated was one of the best in the whole region. Such libraries in connection with debating societies were not unknown, however, for we learn that between the years 1800 and 1816 five bills were passed by the Virginia Legislature, incorporating libraries, in two instances in connection with debating societies.

The Franklin Society was incorporated in 1816. The exact date of its birth is a disputed question. The Lexington *Gazette* of March 23, 1848, says the society started in 1795. The *Valley Star* of 1856 says it was begun in 1800. Colonel J. T. L. Preston — long a member of the Society, and one exceedingly interested in it — says the latter date was the more likely one. But even before that time, a few leading citizens of the community were in all probability accustomed to gathering in some friend's house from week to week, and discussing questions of interest.

However, early in 1800 a few influential men of Lexington and vicinity formally organized an association for intellectual

improvement by weekly discussions of selected questions. This organization had at first the name: "Belles Lettres Society." This name was not descriptive and little understood. Even the French adjective was spelled in the record book "Bell." (Perhaps they thought it was a tinkling cymbal.) It retained this name four years, then in 1804 it was changed to "Union Society." The meetings were well attended; they met at some member's house "at early candle-light."

In February of the next year the name was changed again to "Republican Society," and a number of new members came into the group. In August, 1808, it was again changed, this time to "The Lexington Literary Society," and from then on meetings were held at the court house.

There is a mistaken notion that the library was begun in 1813. The record refutes this. The members gave books, as perhaps did also friends of the society. These books were kept in the hatter's shop of Mr. John Ruff, who was an enthusiastic member. There was about this time another organization, "The Lexington Library Company." The earliest evidence of this shows there was a meeting on April, 1801, at which were present J. Gold, Andrew Alexander, J. Patton, Wm. Willson, E. Graham, A. Walkup, J. Leyburn, A. Trimble, William Lyle, S. L. Campbell (Dr. Samuel L. Campbell, Rockbridge's early physician), and W. Caruthers. S. L. Campbell was librarian, at a salary of ten dollars a year, which sum he accepted only on condition he be allowed to spend it for books for the company. They bought $150.00 worth of books the first year.

Strange to say, none of the Franklin Society members belonged to the Library Company, and they seem to have had no communication one with the other. The Lexington Library Company kept up the good work for twenty years, each year

adding to its number of books. Eventually it died. The books were sold at auction, and the Franklin Society bought some of them, paying thirty cents on the dollar of their first cost.

The year 1813 marks the real beginning of the Franklin Society's library. That year they purchased their first lot of books. Prior to that, books were donated by members and friends. Their first purchase of books was thirty-eight volumes, mainly of a historical nature, but as general as so short a list could be.

"The Lexington Library" served as a title only three years. In August, 1811, by overwhelming vote the members adopted the name of America's greatest diplomat, Benjamin Franklin. The name suggests usefulness, seriousness, intellectuality, and above all, patriotism. Benjamin Franklin did not belong to a state, but to all the people. The loose methods in vogue up to 1815 did not conduce to stability, so the Legislature was petitioned for a charter of incorporation. The act was passed January 30, 1816, incorporating the "Franklin Society and Library Company of Lexington."

The meeting to organize under the charter was held in the hall of Washington College, and Samuel McDowell Reid was elected the first charter president, with a Board of Directors composed of William Taylor, Andrew Hays, Valentine M. Mason, and Andrew Herron. A little later the Society began to hold meetings weekly in the hatter's shop of Mr. Ruff.

The early success of the organization was due largely to the effort of two men — Ruff and Mason. As usual in that day, the librarian was the most important officer, and in this case it was due chiefly to the personality of the man, Mr. John W. Fuller. He was the only salaried officer, and he served the society for nearly fifty years.

Fines were assessed for failure to attend meetings. There were two kinds of members — stockholders and debating members. If a debating member, after being elected for a term of five years, did not by the end of that time become a stockholder, he had to give up his membership. In 1820 a share of stock cost twelve dollars. Initiation was at first one dollar, but by 1829 it was five dollars.

After its incorporation the Franklin Society grew by leaps and bounds. The character of its membership, and the interest in its debates, drew wide-spread attention in the community. At that time, as well as in later years, very frequent mention is made in the press of the meetings and the questions discussed. Not only were there news items, but sometimes editorials as well. For instance, there appeared in the *Gazette* in 1862, in the editorial columns — at a time when it might be thought all minds in the state would have been concentrated on the bloody contest between the States — the following account:

"The Franklin Society has often adjusted grave questions long before they could be settled by the political tribunes of the country. Light shed in the hall of this institution has on many occasions been seen reflected in the legislative halls of the State. The sentiments of this venerable institution are generally a good index to the sentiment of the community. It has amongst its membership representatives of almost every occupation in town and country — the farmer, the mechanic, the doctor, the lawyer — all mingle in one common brotherhood. The debates are generally upon matters of practical importance. The subject of Extortion is now absorbing the attention of the society."

The variety of subjects brought up for debate was exceedingly wide. In January, 1856, we read: "Professor John L. Campbell's lecture on the telegraph has been postponed, as his

telegraph apparatus has not come to hand. . . . Three successive meetings have been given over to a discussion of Prohibition, without even then exhausting interest in this subject."

In the year 1874 Colonel W. B. Blair presented his beaver hat to the faithful librarian, John W. Fuller, as a token of esteem. Moreover, he set down for the minutes the history of the hat, and it has such a fine style that we can do no better, in catching the spirit of the Franklin Society, than to set forth Blair's letter just as it appears in the minutes.

Lexington, Va.
Feby. 14, 1874

"Mr. Fuller,

"The Franklin Society has done me the honor to request that I shall tell you "A Tale of a Hat."

"In the winter of the years 1863 & 64, and west of the River Mississippi, were to be found tens of thousands of gallant earnest men, united to battle for what they believed to be their inherent rights, political and other. These men came forward from all classes of Society and from all sections of the country, theretofore known as the United States of America. They were chiefly from the states of Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, but among them were to be found representatives from every state of the then Old Union, Northern States as well as Southern, and the states of Kentucky and of Maryland may be said to have had the largest numbers of any that were not strictly of the "Confederate States." These men were stretched over a region of country that in round numbers may be called one thousand five hundred miles broad.

"Its population was sparse; it had no system of manufactures; it had no railroads of sensible usefulness, the few steam

boats it had possessed had become worn out and there were no machine shops at which their works could be repaired. The difficulties of maintaining these men under all these disadvantages may be conceived; it can hardly be described.

"Cut off from the eastern bank of the Mississippi, and from the home government, because the river was held by the Enemy, it was thrown upon its own resources for support.

"Ammunition, arms, food, and clothing of all kinds, had to be obtained as best they could be.

"And now comes the story:

"The manufacture of hats like every other was improvised and the factory workmen had to be found among the troops. A hattery was established at the Town of Camden on the river Ouachita in which every available material from scraps of leather through hair of cattle and smaller animals to feathers was worked up. The workmen were Confederate Soldiers. There came to this factory three skins of beavers taken upon the head waters of the Ouachita near the western boundary of the state of Arkansas. These would make two hats which the "boss" determined to have made up for two friends and for reasons that satisfied him. One of these hats came direct to him who now addresses you and was worn by him with pride as evidence of how difficulties might be overcome by diligence and patience.

"Alas! Time passed and these tens of thousands of men overcome by the logic of events being forced to give up the cause to them sacred for which they battled, were scattered to their respective homes.

"The hat however, was cherished by its possessor and he determined to wear it as long as they both should exist. He has done so until recently. Is it necessary to say that he, too, was a Confederate Soldier? Need it be added that his interest

in the hat was now based upon affection, it being a memento of the cause and People for which he had suffered?

"But at the last meeting of the Franklin Society, January 17, 1874, this poor Confederate Soldier heard read, as of record that you, Mr. Fuller, had been the constant Librarian of the Society for over fifty years, and he knew that you possessed the love of every one of its members as he himself had come to love you. Touched by this record, believing you faithful to the sentiments of your earlier years, and taking the liberty to think that the antecedents of this hat would not injure its value in your eyes; desiring to make a feeble recognition of your long service in the interests of a Society of which he is a member, he proposed to the Society that the hat should be a medium through which a further testimonial of its appreciation of your services should be offered to you. The proposal was unanimously approved.

"But now the hat became old, needed renovation; there again, as if its origin were attractive, it fell into the hands of an Ex-Confederate who made it up afresh.

"Finally, that it might carry upon itself the evidence of the donors and of the sentiment that animated them, an inscribed plate was prepared and this work, too, was done by an Ex-Confederate Soldier.

"Upon a shield attached to the hat are inscribed these words.

"Franklin Society
Lexington, Virginia
John W. Fuller
Librarian since 1822
A token of esteem from
The Society
January 1874"

"This hat, permeated as it were with associations connected with the Confederate cause, I now hold in my hand and by virtue of a formal resolution of the "Society" I beg to present it to you in its name.

"A few final words on behalf of the society I beg to add.

"John Fuller, John my Joe, John,
When we were first acquaint
Your locks were like the raven
Your brow was bonny brent,
But now your head's turned grey John,
Your locks are like the snow
Yet blessings on your frosty brow,
John Fuller, John my Joe!"

OUT OF TRAGEDY, A TRADITION

THE GREATEST social disaster that ever struck Rockbridge county or the South was the bloody War Between the States. It turned Virginia into the Flanders of America; but it also created overnight, as it were, a tradition. Out of the bloodshed and destruction came a fortitude and cohesion that few other states of the Union can match.

Rockbridge County's contribution to the Southern cause was large. In human terms, she supplied Virginia's war governor, John Letcher; General Lee's "right arm," Thomas J. Jackson; and hundreds of officers and men for the Confederate army. Graduates from Lexington's Virginia Military Institute performed with the highest distinction, and the cadets' charge at the battle of New Market was one of the most romantic episodes of the whole struggle. In physical terms, she supplied all the food, equipment, and money that could be raised. As the war drew to a close the county was raided and occupied a short while by Union forces under General David Hunter. After Appomattox, General Lee rode Traveller to war-torn Lexington to finish out his life as president of Washington College.

Rockbridge county contained many people who were opposed to the split that would make a major war inevitable. In the 1860 election the Lexington *Gazette* and such leaders as Samuel McDowell Reid, James A. Davidson, and Samuel

M. Moore backed the Constitutional Union candidate, John Bell. When the county had voted, the final tabulation of presidential votes showed: Bell 1,214, Douglas 630, and Breckenridge 352. A letter from James B. Dorman to Governor Letcher described Union meetings in Lexington and discussions in the Franklin Society, and stated that most county residents thought South Carolina's stand was too extreme. A later letter to the Governor came from James D. Davidson, who had been to Washington and conversed with Lincoln in a crowd at Willard's. Lincoln had said there would be no war, and that Virginia had saved the Union.

Meanwhile, tempers were running high at Washington College, where many Southern students were in attendance. Dr. George Junkin, president from 1848 to 1861, did everything within his power to keep the North and South together; and when in the spring of 1861 a Southern flag appeared over "Old George" on top of Washington Hall, President Junkin promptly ordered that it be taken down. The students drafted a long statement to the faculty, with sixty-one signatures. "It is our unanimous desire that this flag may continue to float, and we therefore respectfully request that you will not suffer it to be taken down. There can be no opposition to it from any quarter now, except from the enemies of Virginia; and we know that the people of this vicinity are loyal to the old Mother State." In a faculty meeting held April 17, 1861, a resolution that the flag be permitted to remain at the "discretion of the faculty" was passed. Dr. Junkin, who construed the raising of the Confederate flag as a personal insult, resigned the next day. He bought a carriage and drove his own horses 350 miles to Chester County, Pennsylvania. The thirty-five miles from Winchester to the Potomac he drove without stopping to feed his horses, and tradition has it that when he

crossed the river he carefully wiped the Southern dust from his horses' feet.

Only two days before the faculty had met and sanctioned the raising of the Confederate flag over Washington Hall, President Lincoln had called for 75,000 volunteers. Most of the unionists quickly changed to the secession side, with only John Minor Botts and Dr. George Junkin among the leaders maintaining their earlier position. On May 23 the county ratified the Ordinance of Secession by a vote of 1,728 to 1. Samuel Reid and Francis Anderson were elected to the House of Delegates, and Rockbridge County prepared to throw its whole weight behind a cause it believed justified and in keeping with the principles on which the Republic had been founded.

The military phases of the War in Virginia have been so well covered elsewhere that we shall not review them here. This "first modern war" had a great impact upon all phases of the county's life. Lexington is advertised today as "the Shrine of the South," and visitors frequently say we are "living in the past." If by that they mean that we are still concerned with our past, live under the shadow of a cataclysmic civil war, and refuse to feel that principles which were of such vital concern to our ancestors are meaningless today, they are right. The struggle of the 1860's drained the county of its wealth and its blood. By 1862 Rockbridge County families were drinking "Confederate coffee," half wheat and half coffee. In the months that followed the price of sorghum reached $30.00 a gallon, calico $12.00 a yard, and tallow candles $6.00 a pound. The diary of Margaret Junkin Preston gives a vivid picture of the war years in Lexington, and the fortitude of the people. "It is astonishing how coolly we talk about the probability of having to relinquish the Valley, and

how our plans take in the probability," wrote Mrs. Preston in 1864. "Oh, but we are growing weary of this horrid war!" After the Yankee raid in 1864 she set down this passage:

"As after a storm has passed, we go out and look abroad to see the extent of the damage done, so now, having been swept with the besom of destruction, we look around, as soon as the calm has come, and try to collect our scattered remnants of property, and to see whether we have anything to live on."

The end of hostilities was not far off. When a Confederate column passed through Rockbridge County, Mrs. Preston noted a grim incongruity in their appearance. "It was a melancholy thing to see them, with the bouquets with which the ladies had saluted them, in their hands. Such a mockery in the fresh, brilliant-looking flowers, and their soiled, jaded appearances." On April 10, 1865, news of Lee's surrender reached Lexington. On April 20, the *Gazette* published an order from Major General Winfield S. Hancock, containing directions for Confederate soldiers who had not obtained paroles. Virginia was about to be turned into Military District Number One — to be reconstructed.

For better or for worse, the heroic years were over. They would be, by the very nature of things, long remembered. For out of such far-reaching tragedy a tradition had been born.

10

ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY WILLS

As HUMAN INTEREST documents wills take high rank—particularly if your name appears in them. But even if you are not so fortunate, you can find, in so varied an assortment of wills as those which have been recorded in Rockbridge County, many revealing and interesting things. They provide much insight into the nature of the people and their mores. Many of them drift to the limbo of forgotten things. The people concerned with their provisions live out their little lives, and face with quiet desperation the necessity of making a will themselves. Others are contested, quoted, and displayed. All of them are concerned with the stuff out of which daily life is made.

The corridors of time seem to shrink as we turn the yellowing paper of wills made over two centuries ago. The early Rockbridge wills are formal documents, and usually begin something like this:

In the name of God, Amen: I, (name), of the County of Rockbridge and State of Virginia, being in a good state of health, thanks to Almighty God, of sound mind and memory, and considering the uncertainty of life and that it is appointed unto all men once to die, I therefore make this my last Will and Testament." This was usually followed by, "I resign my soul unto Almighty God who did give it to me, and my body at my decease to be decently and in a Christian manner buried

at the discretion of my executors hereinafter named, doubting nothing but that I shall receive the same at the resurrection of the just. As touching my worldly effects with which it has pleased God to bless me, I dispose of them in the manner following . . . " In some of the early wills one clause is in this form: "As for my body I *recommend*[1] it to the earth, to be decently buried."

A certain form is frequently found in the closing paragraph of such Wills, like this: "This my last Will and Testament, *dis-annulling* and revoking all Wills by me heretofore made, etc." Why "disannul" was considered stronger or better than merely "annul" does not appear, but it is certainly more generally used. Mr. Noah Webster places the word "disannul" in his dictionary, but disposes of it in a single haughty definition: "An improper word."

While we are quibbling with words we might mention the word "testament" as used in this connection. Always when used it is as "Will and Testament"; and this would appear to be tautological, for the word *testament* is defined by our same friend Mr. Webster as: "A solemn, authentic instrument in writing, by which a person declares his will as to the disposition of his estate and effects after his death. This is otherwise called a Will." And he adds: "A testament to be valid must be made when the testator is of sound mind, and it must be subscribed, witnessed, and published in such manner as the law directs."

When I spoke of this to my friend the law professor, he set me straight with this: "A Will conveys real estate, a Testament conveys personal property. One 'bequeaths' his personal property, he 'devises' his lands. A 'Will and Testament' conveys title to both real estate and personal property." "Will" is from

1. All italics in this chapter are the author's.

the Saxon, while "Testament" is from the Latin. Perhaps the mingling of Norman-French and Saxons in England in early times gave rise to using the two words together.

Let us be a little more specific, and examine some individual examples of these quaint documents, though for propriety's sake we will omit names. Here is one that does not follow the accepted phraseology:

"To as many as it may concern." (An unusual beginning.) "Know ye that on the 10th day of April, 1805, I, H..... P....., of the County of Rockbridge, State of Virginia, being in good health, thanks to God, but being sensible of human frailty and infirmity coming on which will end in death, and willing to leave such worldly substance as I have in an easy manner to be understood, do make this my last Will and Testament in form following, viz: First, I give and bequeathe unto my wife, Martha, one horse known by the name of Spark, with her saddle and bridle, with all the monies she has, or may earn in future by attending on sick women, with all the estate real and personal she was possessed of when she married me, upon her close adherence to our marriage contract, which I here enclose in this Will, allowing as far as relates to be a part of this Will. I likewise leave her a corner cupboard, and what is usually in the same, to her and her heirs forever; and any one of the cows, etc."

Note that he wills her her own property, "*her* saddle and bridle, and all monies she has"; and more particularly that he even goes further in his extreme generosity, for he wills her "all that she may earn in the future." This is extreme, of course, and strikes us as quite ridiculous; yet when we remember the status of women before the law in those early days, it then was probably not thought of as out of keeping. In his *Commentaries,* Blackstone makes it plain that by marriage

the husband and wife are one person in law, that is the very being or legal existence of the woman was suspended during the marriage. In other words, as some commentator on the *Commentaries* very drily observes: "Marriages made them one, and *he* was that one." No wonder then that the women of some decades later arose and fought mightily for Women's Rights.

It may come as a shock to some, but even so recently as about one hundred years ago a married woman could not own personal property. As a single woman, a *femme sole* in legal wording, she might have thousands of dollars, even millions, of personal property; but when the minister finished saying· "I pronounce you man and wife," at that moment her fortune automatically passed over to her husband – *provided,* she did not have a Marriage Contract, as it was called (more properly an ante-nuptial contract), that is a formal instrument in writing, in proper form, duly witnessed and under seal, setting forth that neither of the contracting parties was to have ownership or interest in any property belonging to the other; or if any, then specifying what or how much.

If a woman of wealth had no such contract, when entering into marriage with the man of her choice, then her husband could do as he pleased with her fortune. He might even will it to someone else, and cut his wife off with a single dollar. Numerous cases like this one appear in these records: "To my son – Tom, Dick, or Harry – five shillings and no more." It seems to be accepted in custom at least, that if a relative is remembered in a Will by even a small bequest, he has no recourse against the estate.

Another slant on the state of mind of the testator appears when these words occur in the Will: "To my wife, so-and-so, as long as she remains a widow." Even though dead and gone

the testator disliked to have some other man owning his acres, or spending the means he had striven to accumulate.

Perhaps it is because our county has always been largely rural and agricultural, but it is to be noted that in most of the old Wills horses came in for great consideration. Horses were the chief and almost the only means of transportation. Some writer of early days mentions attending a country church where more than three hundred riding horses were haltered in the church grove. And to be bequeathed a horse of one's own meant more or less freedom of movement — independence to go and come at pleasure. It was much as if in the present time a son or daughter were given a car.

Horses were often mentioned next after land in ante-bellum wills. Such lines as "To my son John a horse," or "a saddle-horse to the young wench, Sukey, in the discretion of the executors," appear frequently. Another choice possession was a feather bed. When there was no bedroom heat, it was an easy thing to prize one highly. Other household articles were usually enumerated, and the list would have the average city-bred person guessing. Do you know what a "sett of dog-irons," a "pair of cards and hackles," a "pair of steel-yards," a "big wheel," and a "dough chist" would be? The first in the list were andirons for the fireplace, the second, tools used in flax preparation, and the third, scales for weighing. A "big wheel" was used to spin wool, and a "little wheel" for flax. The "dough chist" was a chest for rising dough for bread. And so it goes.

Certain provisions set one to wondering about local conditions in by-gone days. Take this one. "It is my will that after my decease there would be no females hired or brought inmates among my sons and that whatever spinning or weaving is needed the same be done and paid for *out* of the house."

In many ante-bellum wills one notes striking solicitude for

slaves, and a concern for their welfare. A typical example from the Rockbridge County will books, is this one:

"At my wife's decease it is my will that, if the law will permit, Betsy with all her children shall be emancipated, and if said freedom can be given them I will and bequeath to said Betsy 50 acres of land off the lower end of my farm, in case she thinks it proper to live thereon."

One of the best-known of the Rockbridge wills is that of General Robert E. Lee. Taking up only half a page, it is dated 1846. Lee left everything to his wife, for her life time, then to be divided among his children. Commodore Mathew Fontaine Maury's will, on the other hand, is a lengthy document, divided into many sections. One of them lists in detail the many honors and medals accorded him by European rulers. Almost as detailed is the lists of hides and tannery equipment in the will of Mathew Hanna, whose place of business once occupied a corner of the Washington and Lee University campus.

A term frequently used in nineteenth century wills is "my barn furniture." Lest this whet the appetite of a modern antique searcher, let it be pointed out that such furniture consisted of pitchforks, feed cutters, rakes, and the like. While there was a formal will styled adhered to by most of the county lawyers, we frequently find a document recorded as a will which is informal in structure but perfectly legal. One such will, really a letter, was penned by a Rockbridge soldier serving in General Washington's army:

"Nov. ye 11th 1777. This minute I march to Headquarters and be well in health, thank God. Let W. Walker know that his son John hath bin sick but is able to marche now. You may spin my flax if you can and watch after the little bay mayer. I may return or I may not, but if I dont come back you may

have my part of her breed for the time I left her with Edw. Ferris. No more at present. Remains your friend, John Taylor. N.B. Remember my love to Ann Law. To Elizabeth Lamb."

The will was presented and proven in court on August 4, 1779, as a notation by the clerk, Andrew Reid, makes clear. John Taylor's estate included "one mare and coalt, value 105 pounds sterling," and one pound ten shillings to Elizabeth Lamb, "for spinning." As to whether there existed some romantic attachment between the soldier boy and the Elizabeth to whom he willed "the little bay mayer" or merely a business relationship, the silent pages of the will book will never divulge.

A famous character out of Rockbridge's past was "Jockey" Robinson, whose will makes interesting reading. He gave his substantial fortune to Washington College, as his elegantly worded will makes clear. James McDowell, one time governor of Virginia, wrote it for him. There is both a wistful and a noble note in the line which reads, "Though a foreigner by birth, and without a child to provide for, I rejoice in the trust that I have done something to confirm the political institutions of this country by enlightening the public will upon which they rest." Robinson rests today under a monument on the University campus.

As one thumbs through these ponderous books of doom he cannot but admire the pioneers and citizens whose last wishes are recorded here. There were people who spun and wove their own flax and wool, built their own wagons, and fought their own battles. Many times they did not win. But they never lost faith in themselves, and the land to which they were attached.

Seen in this light, the wills are not mere humdrum lists of possessions, but records of achievement and attachment. The dust of forgetfulness has settled upon many of their names.

Often their graves too have been neglected. But they have left us a heritage. Their essential achievement is indelibly impressed upon the record, here and elsewhere, for all who have an understanding heart to read.

11

BRAG, BOOM AND BUST

In 1889 a very extraordinary sociological occurrence took place in this county which affected not only Rockbridge county, but adjoining territory. "The Boom" came. Everybody expected to become rich by profits in land speculation. A few came out at the end with some profits, but the majority could count only its losses. In this region the chief center of activity was at Buena Vista, though Glasgow and Goshen, as well as Natural Bridge, also participated. The moving spirit in the beginning was D. C. Moomaw, a preacher of the Dunkard sect, a man of vision and of intellect. Some years prior to this he had bought the old Glasgow home, Green Forest, near North River, about three miles above Loch Laird. Here he made his home, and here he decided to start a little town, although there was then nothing to base it upon except a tannery. Between Loch Laird and Green Forest was a level stretch of excellent farming land, known as Hart's Bottom, which some decades before had been owned by "Jockey" Robinson, the benefactor of Ann Smith Academy and Washington College.

Moomaw conceived the idea of buying up land, laying it off in lots with streets, alleys and roads, and selling the lots. Just how much of this he himself carried out is not known, but soon a company was organized, and stock in the concern offered for sale. Flaming prospectuses were gotten out, stating

that a large city would be built here, manufacturing plants would be secured of various kinds, and that in a short while real estate would increase in value many fold. As this matter is looked back upon it seems chimerical and almost unbelievable. But the infection gripped all sorts of people, who invested their money, expecting fabulous returns. Some even mortgaged their homes to get money to invest in lots. Farmers sold their farms at acreage prices, then invested in a block of lots laid out on this very land, at city lot prices. This was the end of the rainbow.

Hart's Bottom was a tract of almost a thousand acres, and the Company paid for his land $42,000 in cash, to obtain which their agents had sold stock in the Company. Next the Company bought from Mr. Moomaw the Green Forest estate of three hundred and seventy acres, paying him $22,500. He reserved the mansion with certain lands adjacent. About the same time, in April, 1889, the S. F. Jordan lands, embracing some eleven thousand acres, much of which was mountain land, extending some four miles, and almost to Riverside station, was bought for $135,000. The total outlay then was $199,500 for something over thirteen thousand acres, which was normally worth perhaps fifty to seventy-five thousand dollars.

The cleared portions of this land were laid off in lots, with streets, roads, alleys, parks and public places, including much of the foothills of the mountain. The wooded portions were laid off in one acre parcels, designated "Villa Sites," which would one day be sold to the very wealthy and the great who would there establish their homes. (In later years these tracts were alluded to as "Villainous Sites.") According to their location the lots had a frontage on the street of either twenty-

five feet or fifty feet, and all had a uniform depth of a hundred and twenty-five feet.

The streets of the city of Buena Vista which extended north and south, some twenty-six in number, were given names of trees indigenous to this region; while those running crosswise were simply given numbers, from first street to forty-first street. The plat was over two miles in length, and nearly a mile in breadth. This writer, then quite a young man, carried rod and chain helping to lay out the "City."

The attraction to the city of Buena Vista was iron ore which was supposed to exist in abundance in the foothills of the mountains. The Company decided to build a furnace and open the old mine which had been used many years ago by John Jordan. This furnace was operated for a number of years but the local ore lasted only for a short while, and had to be fed by ores transported from a distance; it continued operations for twenty-five years, and at times made money. Buena Vista Company built a handsome brick building for its offices, and set about to obtain industries, in which it partially succeeded. In addition to the iron mines and iron furnaces, it acquired a fertilizer factory, a glass plant, woolen mills, an egg-crate factory, wagon factory, a firebrick factory and a foundry. Most of these were carried on for a time and then failed when the crash came.

The activity in the sale of town lots was intense. The town was like some of the western mining towns. People drifted in from everywhere and the real estate agents grabbed them. Lots sold so rapidly that a large bulletin board was erected in a public place, as the lots were in all the real estate agents' hands for sale. When a sale was made the number of the lot was written on this board, so that other agents might take notice. When it was announced by the president of the Com-

pany, Mr. A. T. Barclay, that a contract had been made for the removal to Buena Vista from Columbus, Ohio, of a large foundry known as the Rarig Works, pandemonium reigned; and the bulletin board was not sufficient to hold the sales. Within the space of half a day more than one hundred thousand dollars of property changed hands, of which at least one-third was paid in cash. Lots sold and changed hands so fast that often several purchasers had become involved before the sale could be closed. The last purchaser would simply take the deed, and jump the intervening purchasers.

The Clerk of the Court of Rockbridge County (Buena Vista was not yet incorporated and all deeds had to be recorded in the Court House in Lexington) was so overwhelmed with the numbers of deeds being brought in to be recorded, that he had to employ, at the height of the boom, ten assistants to get the deeds spread on the record. Mr. A. Terry Shields, recalling his experiences at that time, said, "Captain J. P. Moore was then Clerk of Court, and I was deputy-clerk. Up to that time I had been doing all the recording of deeds with my own hand. When the Buena Vista deeds began pouring in, Captain Moore employed more and more assistant recorders, until there were eleven, including myself. We had to arrange a room upstairs for them. We hardly had room enough anywhere. Then one day Captain Moore said to me: 'You will have to let the recording be done by these others. I want you to take over the correspondence.' People from all over were writing him about matters concerned with the boom. In one month we had fifteen hundred deeds to record, or an average of more than fifty a day. Finally we had the manufacturers make up several record books with the substance of the deeds printed on the pages, which were then filled in as would be a blank form. This relieved the recorder of a lot of work."

All of the land laid off by the original company was not deemed enough to satisfy the great metropolis that was to be built. Other lands were purchased, and laid off into lots and streets, either adjoining Buena Vista or across North River. The first of these new companies was known as East Enderly, adjoining Buena Vista on the south and covering one hundred acres. Other boomers bought land across North River and organized West Enderly. Another organized what was known as the Clarkton Land Company which purchased the Krebs farm southwest of Buena Vista. There was also the West Buena Vista Company, which bought the old Elisha Paxton farm. They built a long high bridge below the Norfolk and Western Railway station, going over both railroads and the river. The Waverly Company purchased lands owned by Colonel James H. Paxton. Other companies bought land north of Buena Vista located as far up the river as the mouth of South River, and owned by Squire Alex Glasgow. The company paid him twenty thousand dollars in cash, but the boom burst before the land was actually laid off into lots and streets; Mr. Glasgow had to take his land back. Colonel John C. Shields sold a part of his lands, and received two thousand dollars to bind the bargain; but like Squire Glasgow he had to take back his land.

The first thing these companies did when they had made good their title to the land was to utilize the money from the sale of stock to build large and handsome hotels. The first one which the Company built at Buena Vista was burned in 1890. Shortly after it burned the second was built in 1890, and is now the home of Southern Seminary. Buena Vista got its name from Old Buena Vista about five miles away, where an iron furnace operated by the Jordans had been named after the battle of Buena Vista in the Mexican War.

With all the lands including Buena Vista laid off and platted, there were enough lots and lands reserved for factory and furnace purposes to accommodate New York and a part of London. With the factories which Buena Vista succeeded in getting to locate there, the town actually prospered until the bubble burst in 1892. Meanwhile this town aspired to be a city, with independent and separate government and court. Money flowed like water, and there must have been a large accumulation of savings since everybody threw it around.

A man bought a lot of twenty-five feet front for five thousand dollars. But the seller refused to comply with his contract of sale and to give a deed. The purchaser brought suit to get a deed, but the seller resisted all he could, and the matter remained on the docket during several terms of court; in the meantime the boom collapsed, and the purchaser was then eager to get out of the sale, but now the seller who had refused to carry out his contract was anxious to force the buyer to pay for the lot. In substance they wanted to swap places. The plaintiff would become the defendant, and the defendant to be the plaintiff. However, both parties became insolvent before the litigation ended, and nothing came of it.

One of the first buildings in Buena Vista was a long two-story building, divided above and below into offices. This building cost five thousand dollars, and the rentals per annum amounted to five hundred dollars more than the entire cost of the building. It was almost impossible to obtain either office space or sleeping quarters in the town. The real estate agents all used handsome two-horse surreys with which they met the suckers and drove them about the city. On one occasion an agent was busy in his office, having his team and shiny surrey standing nearby. Someone rushed in and yelled, "Your team is running away. They are tearing down the

street." He hardly looked up as he replied, "Let them go; I am making a horse a minute now."

One of the most prosperous and permanent factories obtained at Buena Vista was the Columbian Paper Company, which has operated steadily. That factory and the tannery have been the source of considerable wealth and means of livelihood in the use of various kinds of wood for paper and of tanbark. The present extract works bought out the foundry after it failed, and that too has continued successfully, using quantities of chestnut wood.

The next "get rich quick" boom in Rockbridge was at Glasgow. This was the largest and most pretentious of all the companies, but it never got past the organization and the selling of lots. The company booming Glasgow was named the Rockbridge Company. It purchased a large farm from Colonel J. D. H. Ross and another from Mrs. E. G. Johns. The plat extended up James River toward Greenlee, and was far larger than the present town of Glasgow. This plat was recorded in April, 1891. Shortly thereafter the West End Glasgow Company platted land extending to Natural Bridge Station, so that the City of Glasgow was at least three and a half miles long. How mighty are men's dreams!

Prospectuses and advertisements were very enticing. Unfortunately there was nothing to offer in the way of minerals or other natural resources. True, it was at the junction of the Norfolk and Western, and the Chesapeake and Ohio railways, which gave fine transportation facilities. Nevertheless, the company sold an enormous amount of stock, and immediately constructed a large and handsome hotel on a beautiful eminence just south of the present town of Glasgow, designed to be near the center of the large city that was to be built. This hotel was never opened or occupied, and its ruins

may be seen today. It was sold for the lumber, plumbing and glass, but money was lost even in dismantling and selling the place. From start to finish it seemed cursed.

The "Rockbridge Company" got in touch with English capitalists and interested them in building the City of Glasgow. Negotiations were carried on with a view of obtaining English capital for establishing factories. A representative was sent to England to clinch the matter by making a deal for a million dollars. While he was in England he communicated by cable with the management of the Rockbridge Company. His cablegram was construed to mean that the money had been gotten, and the factories would be built. Upon this representation lots sold like wildfire for a while. A great public sale was held, and General Fitzhugh Lee, a nephew of General Robert E. Lee, and president of the company, was much in evidence. General Lee announced, with great dignity and confidence, the sale of "Lots Nos. 35 and 37 in Block 153 on Rockbridge Road, to Her Grace the Duchess of Marlborough." Then with great pride he called off: "Lots Nos. 1 and 2 in Block 151, fronting on Washington Place, to George Charles Spencer Churchill, Duke of Marlborough." This last mentioned sale amounted to $2,475.00, of which His Highness paid down one-third, and gave notes for the remainder; the deed is recorded in the Rockbridge Record Office in Deed Book 72, at page 216.

These lots sold to the nobility at a large figure. Looking back on it now it is almost ludicrous that in the terms of sale there was a provision that, in addition to the price of the lots, which were 30 by 125 feet, the purchaser should erect on the lots, which were located on a barren field, a handsome three-story brick building to be begun within ninety days, and completed within twelve months. Neither the Duke nor the

Duchess of Marlborough ever began any buildings on the lots, and presumably never made the deferred payments of purchase money. For the boom at Glasgow turned out to be a mere pop. No manufacturing plants were obtained at Glasgow and the field crows were never disturbed. On account of the misconstruction of the cablegram from England, real estate agents represented that the money had actually been obtained when it had not. Some litigation grew out of these misrepresentations of fact, though they were honestly made. Our Supreme Court of Appeals let it be known that those who were foolish enough to put their money into schemes of this sort, based solely on expectations, could not recover anything from those of whom they bought, because they were sold on mere trade talk, and not on any misrepresentation of fact.

Captain Robert E. Lee, son of General Lee, figured more or less in the attempted development of this part of Virginia. He was interested in the tin mine at the head of Irish Creek. The company built a large hotel some distance above the mouth of Irish Creek, which was completed but never occupied, and sold it for the material. The station of Cornwall on the Norfolk and Western Railway at the mouth of Irish Creek was named for the mines of Cornwall in England. Captain Robert E. Lee was not a boomer, but a quiet, unobtrusive, pleasant, and affable gentleman. He had his office across the street from the court house in Lexington. The development of commercial tin failed, and there was never a big sale of lots connected with the mines.

In November, 1891, the town of Goshen aspired to build a city, and the Goshen Land and Improvement Company was organized for that purpose. In some of the prospectuses of Goshen it was praised on the ground that, according to the scriptures, Goshen was the land of milk and honey. This

company built a large and elegant hotel, called Allegheny Inn, on top of a beautiful hill. A furnace was started again, and operated many years by a Chicago firm.

Unfortunately the large hotel at Goshen burned just after it had been purchased by prominent New York physicians who expected to use it as a sanitarium to which they could send patients from the city. The town of Goshen remains about as it was fifty or more years ago, except for the Stillwater Woolen Mills and the sand plant.

Even Lexington got boom fever. Leading citizens promoted a company known as the Lexington Development Company, and bought up a lot of land west of Woods' Creek, including Mulberry Hill. They laid it off in lots and sold stock. The loss was very heavy to all who went into this scheme. Still the company sold stock enough to build a large and handsome hotel on the hill just west of Lexington, across Woods' Creek opposite the railroad station. It was never opened as a hotel, for the new city to be built around it never materialized. Passing through several hands, it was operated successfully as a resort for visitors to spend summers in Lexington. Finally it was sold to a gentleman who was to open a boys' school, but again misfortune overtook a boom hotel. Before it could be opened as a school it took fire and burned to the ground. This was the last of the boom hotels. The one at Glasgow was never opened, and rotted to the ground. That at Goshen was burned; that at Irish Creek was never opened, and was dismantled; while that at Buena Vista has survived as a prosperous girls' school. An effort was made at the junction of the Chesapeake and Ohio and the Norfolk and Western Railways at Waynesboro to build a metropolis called Basic City. Inevitably the large hotel was built, but the bubble burst and this hotel fortunately also was sold for a young ladies' school.

Think of such things happening in this rock-ribbed Scotch-Irish community of Rockbridge and adjoining counties! They all fell for it, and many had to live in want and poverty after the boom was over. But human nature is gullible. The Humbert case is a good illustration of how people anywhere can be robbed by the desire to get rich quick. Madame Humbert of France borrowed from the gullible French people $12,500,000 on an empty safe, by pretending there was a Will in the safe, and that it could not be opened until her daughter had attained her majority. After twenty years the fraud was exposed in 1902. Or take the tulip mania in Holland which swept over England in the 17th century when the first tulip bulbs were brought from Vienna. Fabulous [illegible] were paid for them, and a single bulb would sometimes have many share-holders. Finally this obsession passed away, but many had squandered their savings, and were financially ruined. The "South Sea Bubble" was a scheme formed in England, to exploit the gold and silver mines of Peru and Mexico in 1711. It was quite similar to the "Mississippi Bubble." The object may have been very honestly entertained but the entire British public succumbed to the craze, and the bubble burst in 1720, leaving many wiser but much poorer. People in Rockbridge County, like those throughout the world, have had to put their fingers into the fire before they could be convinced it was hot.

12

TO SEE OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US

For ages men have lamented their ability to see with objective eyes the things which they hold dear for subjective reasons. If only we could see ourselves as others see us, how wiser and saner we might be! Yet try as we may we can never stand outside ourselves and our environment. This inability is surely one reason most people are so fascinated with the remarks of visitors or outsiders. This is the closest thing to an impartial evaluation they can ever hope to have. To listen to an outsider is not only to be amused, but to be judged.

Many persons have recorded their views of Rockbridge over the past two centuries, with the result that a whole body of outside opinion is available for the historian. The people who came were of many different professions, motives, backgrounds, and points of view. Hence the value of their reports varies considerably. In this chapter we shall sample only a few of the accounts which seem especially perceptive.

Shortly after the Revolution a Presbyterian minister from England travelled through the South. One of his stops was the newly-established town of Lexington. Being a visitor, he sat in the congregation on Sunday, later recording his impression of the visit. This is what he reported :

"On the morning of the Sabbath I attended a very interesting service in my friend's church. The church was placed at the head of the town, on elevated ground, commanding a

This remarkable picture, a composite of many portraits of Rockbridge County personalities, was made by Michael Miley. While it has been impossible to identify all the faces, the key below, in which the identification numbers match those on the print, lists most of them.

1. Dr. Archibald Graham
2. General T. J. Jackson
3. General R. E. Lee
4. Mrs. R. E. Lee
5. Mrs. Molly Maury Werth
6. General Custis Lee
7. Mr. William Dold
8. John W. Barclay
9. Mrs. Bell Bruce
10. Dr. G. B. Strickler
11. J. Hammond Campbell
12. Mrs. F. H. Smith, Jr.
13. Mrs. E. H. Nichols
14. Mrs. Maria Pratt
15. Mrs. Harry Estill
16. Mrs. S. J. Campbell
17. Mrs. William Patton
18. General J. Breckinridge
19. Mrs. Flora Miller
20. Mrs. Nannie Waller
21. Miss Blanche Kahle
22. Miss Maggie Campbell
23. Rev. W. S. White
24. Murray Phillips
25. "Commodore McNutt," dwarf
26. Mrs. Gallaway
27. Mrs. Esther Wilson
28. Col. William Allan
29. Mr. W. C. Stuart
30. Col. Donald Allan
31. Mrs. Rachel Fuller
32. Mrs. Kahle
33. Mrs. Kate McCoy
34. Mrs. Blanche Wright
35. Mrs. Elizabeth Lacy
36. Dr. W. Rogers
37. Mr. J. D. Davidson
38. Mr. Calvin McCorkle
39. Judge J. W. Brockenbrough
40. General T. H. Williamson
41. Mrs. Wishner
42. Mrs. Julia Christian
43. Miss Mildred Lee
44. Mr. John Calhoun
45. Rev. J. W. Jones
46. Mrs. Lucy Dabney
47. Mr. S. J. Campbell
48. Mrs. Houston Leech
49. Mr. John Campbell
50. Col. Donald Allan
51. Col. W. B. Blair
52. General Jubal Early
53. General George Washington
54. Dr. Brown
55. Mr. John Greenlee
56. Unidentified
57. Mr. James D. Davidson
58. Mrs. Elizabeth Harrison
59. Professor J. J. White
60. Mr. Joe White
61. Unidentified
62. Mrs. Fanny Prather
63. Governor John Letcher
64. Mrs. Rachel Baker
65. Professor E. S. Joynes
66. Mrs. Alexander Bruce
67. Mr. Andrew Heneberger
68. Mrs. Aggie Prather
69. Miss Janie Venable
70. Mr. W. A. McCorkle
71. Captain J. C. Boude
72. Mrs. M. J. Preston
73. Mr. J. W. Massie
74. Mr. J. L. Ford
75. Mayor J. W. Houghawout
76. Mr. A. T. Barclay
77. Mr. Vanderslice
78. Mr. Will Campbell
79. Mrs. Ellen Bloom
80. Mr. John W. Hamilton
81. Miss Mary Lee
82. Mr. John Carter
83. Mrs. Ella Gold
84. Unidentified
85. Unidentified
86. Mrs. Elizabeth Lacy
87. Miss Argyle Tutwiler
88. Miss Ella Hamilton
89. Mrs. Betty Witt
90. Dr. Edward Gibbs
91. Mrs. Jennie Hopkins
92. Mr. Joe White
93. Unidentified
94. Mr. Martin Palmer
95. Mrs. Cocke
96. Mr. John Hamilton
97. Mrs. Sallie Railey
98. Mr. Robert Barton
99. Mrs. Elizabeth Allan
100. Miss Annie White
101. Mr. Rob Waller
102. Mrs. Col. T. M. Semmes
103. Mrs. Frank Brockenbrough
104. Mr. John Calhoun
105. Mrs. Virginia Bartholomew
106. Miss Trigg McElwee
107. Mr. J. W. Fuller
108. Mrs. J. L. Campbell
109. Mr. J. Postal
110. Rev. A. H. Hamilton
111. Mrs. W. A. Ruff
112. Mr. W. A. Ruff
113. Mr. Ned Houston
121. Mrs. Rev. W. S. White
122. Mrs. Laura Morrison

LETTER DESIGNATIONS

A. Mr. E. D. Campbell
B. Professor Wilson
C. Mrs. E. J. Leyburn
D. Mrs. Wilson
E. Professor C. J. Harris
F. Miss Martha Waddell
G. General J. E. B. Stuart
H. Mr. John Miller
J. Miss Nancy Kazee
K. Mrs. Julia Forrester
L. Mrs. Lella Gadsden

pretty view of it, and of the blue mountains in the distance. It had a paddock attached to it, for the use of the horses at the time of worship, and there were from forty to fifty now occupying it. All the persons who came in from the vicinity came on horseback. The horses were nearly as numerous as the people of these parts. The church has five doors, and these and all the windows were open in consequence of the heat. This created some distraction to the congregation. Besides there were fans in motion everywhere, and small kegs of water, with ladles, were placed in the window-seats and beneath the pulpit, which were used by the children, not only before but during the service. This caught the attention of a stranger, but did not seem to much discompose the congregation. The galleries were mostly occupied by blacks. The general attendance was good. The congregation wore a serious complexion; but there was not wanting some instances of negligence and irreverence.

"I learned that in the afternoon there would be worship at the African church, and I resolved to go. My obliging friend, Mr. Carruthers, attended me. By the laws of the State no colored persons are permitted to assemble for worship unless a white person be present and preside. On this account the elders of Mr. Douglas' church attend in turn so that the poor people may not lose the privilege they prize. At this time two whites and two blacks were in the pulpit. One of the blacks, addressing me as "strange marster" begged that I would take charge of the service, but I declined. He gave out Dr. Watts' beautiful psalm, "Show pity, Lord, O Lord forgive." They all arose immediately. They had no books, for they cannot read; but it was printed on their memories, and they sang it off with freedom and feeling. There is much melody in their voices; and when they enjoy a hymn there is a raised expression on

their faces, and an undulating motion of their bodies, keeping time with the music, which is very touching.

"One of the elders then prayed; the other followed by a reading and exposition of the Scripture. They sang again, "Come ye that love the Lord," with equal freedom and pleasure. The senior black then offered prayer and preached. His prayer was humble and devotional. He took for his text, "The Spirit sayeth, Come." It was indeed a very earnest and efficient appeal. The other man of colour followed with an address meant to sustain the impression. They sang again, and he called on those who were really concerned to come to the Saviour to show it by occupying the anxious seats. About twelve persons knelt at them with great seriousness of manner. One of the elders now offered prayer; then they arose and sang, and separated.

"The town as a settlement has many attractions. It is surrounded with beauty and stands at the head of a valley flowing with milk and honey. House rent is low, provisions are cheap and abundant and of the best variety. Flowers and gardens are prized here more than in most places; and by consequence the hummingbird is found in great numbers. This beautiful little creature has much the appearance and the habits of a bee; and the trumpet-honeysuckle seems to be its favorite plant, on account of its cells being enriched with honey."

The following was written ten years after the pioneers began coming to the Valley of Virginia. A clergyman, Rev. Joseph Doddridge, recorded some of the things he observed.

"For a long time after the first settlement of the county the inhabitants generally married young. There was no distinction of rank, and very little of fortune. On these accounts the first impressions of love resulted in marriage; and a family estab-

lishment cost but little labor, and nothing else. A description of a wedding from beginning to end will serve to show the manners of our forefathers, and mark the grade of civilization which has succeeded to their rude state of society in the course of but a few years.

"A wedding engaged the attention of the whole neighborhood; and the frolic was anticipated by old and young with eager expectation. This is not to be wondered at, for a wedding was almost the only gathering which was not accompanied by the labor of reaping, log-rolling, building a cabin or planning some scout or campaign.

"In the morning of the wedding the groom and his attendants assembled at the house of his father, for the purpose of reaching the home of the bride by noon. This was the usual hour for celebrating the nuptials, which for certain must take place before dinner. Let the reader imagine an assemblage of people without a store, a tailor, or dressmaker within a hundred miles; and an assemblage of horses without a blacksmith or saddler within an equal distance. The gentlemen dressed in shoe-packs, moccasins, leggings, and linsey hunting-shirts, all homemade. The ladies dressed in linsey petticoats, or linsey and woolen bed-gowns, coarse shoes, stockings, handkerchiefs, and buckskin gloves, if any. If there were any buckles, buttons, ruffles, or rings they were old family pieces, relics of old times, from parents or grandparents. The horses were fitted out with old saddles, old bridles or halters, and pack-saddles with a bag or blanket thrown over them. A piece of string as often furnished a girth as did leather.

"The march in double-file was often interrupted by the narrowness and obstructions of our horse-paths, as we called them, for we had no roads. These difficulties were increased by neighbors felling trees across the way, tied together with

grapevines. Sometimes an ambuscade was formed by the wayside, and the sudden discharge of guns covered the company with smoke, and caused a sudden spring of the horses, shrieks from the girls, and an effort on the part of their partners to prevent them being thrown from their mounts. Sometimes, in spite of all, an ankle or elbow was sprained, but it was tied up with a handkerchief, and nothing more thought about it.

"Another ceremony commonly took place before the party reached the home of the bride. After the practice of making whiskey was begun, which was at an early period, when the party was about a mile from their destination two young men would single out to run for the bottle; the worse the path, the more logs, brush, and deep hollows the better, as these obstacles afforded an excellent opportunity for display of horsemanship. The start was announced with an Indian yell; logs, brush, steep hollows all were passed speedily by the rival ponies. The bottle was always filled for the occasion, so there was no need for judges. The first who reached the door was presented with the prize, with which he returned to the company in triumph. On approaching them he announced his victory over his rival with a shrill blood-curdling whoop. At the head of the troup he gave the bottle first to the groom and his attendants, and then to each pair in succession to the end of the line, giving each a dram. Then putting the bottle in the bosom of his hunting shirt he took his station in the company.

"The ceremony of the marriage preceded the dinner, which was substantial backwoods feast of beef and pork, of fowls and sometimes venison and bear-meat roasted or boiled, with plenty of vegetables, potatoes, cabbage and others. During the dinner the greatest hilarity always prevailed. The table might be a large slab of wood hewed out with broadaxe, sup-

ported by four sticks set in auger-holes; and the furnishings some old pewter plates and dishes, the rest wooden trenchers and bowls; a few pewter spoons, much battered about the edges, might be seen at some tables, and the rest were made of horn. If knives were scarce it was made up by using their scalping-knives, which were carried in a leather sheath suspended from the belt of the hunting shirt.

"After dinner dancing commenced, and generally lasted till next morning — reels, jigs, square sets. The beginning was always a square set, followed by jigging it off. The jigs were often accompanied by what was called cutting out. When either partner became tired of the dance, on intimation the place was supplied by some other of the company without interruption of the dance. Toward the latter part of the night if anyone attempted, through weariness, to conceal himself for sleeping, he was hunted out, dragged forth, paraded on the floor, and the fiddler ordered to play 'Hang out till morning.'

"About nine or ten o'clock a deputation of the young women stole the bride away, and put her to bed. The ladder ascending to the upper floor was commonly hung with hunting-shirts, petticoats and other articles of clothing, so that the exit of the bride was noticed by but few. This done, the young men likewise stole off the groom, and placed him snugly beside his bride. The dance still continued, and if seats were scarce, as was often the case, every young man when not engaged in the dance was obliged to offer his lap as a seat for one of the girls, and the offer was sure to be accepted. In the midst of the hilarity the bride and groom were not forgotten. Pretty late in the night someone would remind the company that the new couple must stand in need of some refreshment; Black Betty, which was the name for the bottle, was called for, and sent up the ladder; sometimes Black Betty did not go

alone; for I have seen as much beef, pork, and cabbage sent up as would afford a meal for half-a-dozen men. The young people were compelled to eat and drink whatever was offered them.

"On returning the order of the procession, and the race for the bottle was the same as the day before. The feasting and the dancing often went on for several days, at the end of which the whole company was so exhausted for lack of sleep that several days rest was needed to fit them for their ordinary occupations.

"I have here depicted a state of society and manners which are fast vanishing, with a view of giving to the youth of our county a knowledge of the advantages of civilization, and to give contentment to the aged, by preventing them from saying, 'The former times were better than the present!' "

During the early years Rockbridge was in the main culturally isolated from the rest of the state and nation. This bred a degree of independence and local resourcefulness, but it also caused loneliness, provincialism, and a degree of crudeness. Philip Fithian, who travelled about the Valley in 1775-76, complained of the crudeness of life and manners there. While being held a prisoner of war in Augusta County during the Revolution, a Hessian officer complained in a letter that "We do not have good neighbors here, for there is hardly a gentleman living within forty miles of Staunton."[1]

Moving into the nineteenth century, we find one of the most arresting accounts of Victorian Lexington in John S. Wise's *The End of an Era* (Boston, 1899). In this moving account of the South of the Civil War years one finds a chapter on "Presbyterian Lexington." The people in Rock-

1. R. W. Pettengill, *Letters from America* (New York, 1936), p. 149; quoted in Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

bridge county Wise found "simple in their lives to the point of severity, sometimes severe to the point of simplicity; intense in their religious fervor, yet strangely lacking, as it seems to us, in that quality of mercy which is the greatest attribute of religion; loving and possessing education, yet often narrow-minded; of dogged obstinacy, pertinacity, and courage; dominant forces in all things wherein they take a part."[2] The keenly observant visitor went on to describe the manners and atmosphere of the county seat, which seemed to him "as cold as a dog's nose." The sad lot of the outsider who took to courting a local lass is described in one of the most human passages on Lexington which has yet been written:

"As nine o'clock approaches, the sweet little Presbyterian girl you are visiting will begin to fidget; and when the hour strikes, the family will file into the room with military silence and precision. Before you know it, the head of the house will occupy that chair by the table, and open that Bible, and give you the benefit of at least twenty minutes of Christian comfort. Then, if you have not the good sense to leave, he will proceed to fasten the window-blinds."[3]

The comments of students and faculty members at Washington and Lee and Virginia Military Institute makes up a literature of its own. Two student accounts, one from each college, will serve to represent this phase of evaluation. In the early Depression a young man from Danville named Julian Meade came to V.M.I., and in his *I Live in Virginia* he devoted a long chapter to Rockbridge. One thing that impressed him deeply was the hold of the past on the town of Lexington:

2. John S. Wise, *The End of an Era* (Boston, 1899), p. 239.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 241.

"At Lexington one really lived in a Museum. Everywhere stood statues and trophies of wars from 1776 to 1918 and there was space awaiting future keepsakes. The cadets were learning modern methods of military science from the government instructors; this was only an interim of peace which we must use to prepare for the next encounter. There was room for names of many more heroes on the walls of the stately Memorial Garden between barracks and the stadium."[4]

One of the outstanding literary students of a generation at Washington and Lee was Thomas Sugrue, whose *Stranger in the Earth* gave a sensitive and sharp picture of the college and county during his years there. It is hard to find a single passage from the long chronicle that represents the whole; but a general description of the people he met in Rockbridge will do as well as any:

"In Virginia they were friendly; they were soft of speech; they had time for each other. They had time also for what God had put about them, in the valleys and on the hills. They regarded each man as a creature dear to his God, and they had reverence for the power which moved him. Their manners flowed from this; they were thoughtful, courteous, and left judgment to heaven."[5]

4. Julian Meade, *I Live in Virginia* (New York, 1935), p. 169.
5. Thomas Sugrue, *Stranger in the Earth* (New York, 1948), p. 200.

13

MIGHTY GOOD MEN

FEW IF ANY counties in America have produced such a full list of historically significant sons as Rockbridge County. Most of them have been handled fully by the biographers, so that we need not retrace that ground in this short volume. But we must at least pay our respects to some of the figures who have gone out from or come to Rockbridge to help shape the destiny of the Republic and even the world.

Although he only lived here five years, Robert E. Lee probably left as great an imprint on the county as any resident. In a way those last years of his life, when he was helping to rebuild not only Washington College but by his example and pronouncements the whole South, were Lee's greatest. They showed his true stature, and humility, and love of native land more clearly than did his brilliant military career. The Lee Chapel on the Washington and Lee campus, in which the General and his family are buried, is certainly the most revered spot of soil in the county.

Only slightly less famous was Lee's "right arm," as he himself called the dashing "Stonewall" Jackson, who lived in Lexington, owned a home here, taught in the Virginia Military Institute, and is buried in the Lexington Presbyterian Cemetery. Although he was closely associated with Rockbridge County, his fame is world-wide, and his Valley Campaign is still the basis of instruction for the English army.

While we are dealing with the Virginia Military Institute, we must mention three other great men associated with the school. Commodore Mathew Fontaine Maury was one of them. His work in charting ocean currents and trade winds entitled him to be called "The Pathfinder of the Seas." His fame is commemorated by the tribute erected in beautiful Goshen Pass, forever linked with his name and memory. The Pilots' Association placed there a large anchor and chain cable with appropriate bronze tablet on a granite shaft. Maury was instrumental in establishing the Weather Bureau. He was knighted by the Czar of Russia, and by the King of Denmark; nominated to the Legion of Honor by the Emperor of France; decorated by Maximillian of Mexico; and made a member of a scientific society in Batavia, Dutch East Indies. The Pope bestowed medals upon him; he had the degree of LL.D. from Columbia University and from Cambridge, England; and numerous other honors throughout the world.

Another professor at this school was Captain John Mercer Brooke, scientist and inventor. In conjunction with John L. Porter he changed naval warfare throughout the world when they invented the iron-clad *Virginia,* made from the hull of the old *Merrimac,* which fought to a draw with Ericsson's *Monitor.* "He was," says Thomas Huxley, "the first scientist to make deep-sea soundings, and his preliminary work made possible the laying of the first Atlantic cable." He invented a device which allowed him to secure materials from the ocean's floor, five miles deep. In the field of education the name of General Francis H. Smith, "Father of the Virginia Military Institute," stands high. For fifty years he was its superintendent, and his monument is the institution he built from almost nothing to national pre-eminence.

At Timber Ridge was the birthplace of General Sam

Houston, to whom came honors and fame, as governor of Tennessee, as governor of Texas, as President of Texas when that republic was for a short time a new nation, and as United States senator in Washington. Him the state of Texas holds in honored memory, and in particular does the city of Houston revere his name and reputation. A few years ago the Kiwanis club of Houston, in conjunction with Kiwanians of Rockbridge, erected a handsome marker at his birthplace.

Another memorial in the county has been erected to a different type of man, also a benefactor of mankind in another way. It is a birthplace marker, at the spot where first drew breath Dr. Ephraim McDowell, "Father of Abdominal Surgery." To him every individual who has to undergo this sort of surgery is indebted for showing the way to others.

In a log cabin on the foothills of Hogback Mountain was born a man whose name is familiar in many countries of the world. He was William Taylor, who became a Methodist minister, and eventually Bishop of the whole continent of Africa. Before this he preached widely — in more countries, it is said, than any other man who ever lived: India, the East Indies, Switzerland, Great Britain, Palestine, and in various countries of South America. *The Story of My Life,* his autobiography, was "written during about one hundred ocean voyages." For seven years, about the time of the Gold Rush to California, he preached on the streets of San Francisco. In that city stands a 20-story building, which cost $3,500,000, named the William Taylor Hotel. This name it bore until 1942, when it was taken over by the Government; now the name has been changed. A portion of the ground floor was a church, seating two thousand people.

A bronze tablet has been placed to indicate the birthplace of "Big-foot" Wallace, Indian fighter, scout, mail-carrier, and

folklore hero in Texas history. So valuable did the State of Texas consider his services that the Legislature awarded him a grant of land embracing twelve hundred acres on Galveston Bay. Many books on American folklore carry Big-foot's story.

Another son of Rockbridge was General Sam Dale, scout, soldier, legislator of both Alabama and of Mississippi. He rode horseback five hundred miles in seven days, carrying military orders for General Jackson from Fort Thomas, Georgia, to New Orleans at the time of the Battle of New Orleans. General Dale also served on the reception committee to welcome the Marquis Lafayette on the occasion of the latter's visit to America, 40 years after the Revolutionary War.

A man whose name and fame is a household word in the agricultural world, Cyrus McCormick, was born and grew to manhood here. In a crude workshop still maintained as a shrine, and marked with a bronze tablet, he invented and built the first reaper — a mighty factor in feeding a starving world. He later removed to Chicago, to be nearer the wheat-growing region, and there won renown and amassed a fortune. His life-sized statue adorns the campus of Washington and Lee University in Lexington, and the main library bears his name.

Nor should we forget the caliber of the Rockbridge county women when we are counting the stars in our heaven. Consider Mrs. Mary Greenlee, whom we met in an earlier chapter. Her deposition, made when she was 95, is the "Cornerstone of Rockbridge County History." The house owned by her son, David, in which she died, was my boyhood home. She is buried within sight of the house, on land once a part of the farm. Facts of her long and amazing life have passed over into the realm of legend. Or consider Mrs. Phoebe Paxton, wife of Captain John Paxton, whose home was on the James River near the present town of Glasgow. If ever a woman

displayed heroism and devotion, she did. In the cold of winter, when word came that her husband was suffering at Valley Forge, she loaded two horses and made the long trip from her home to the Continental army with only a Negro servant to assist her. She was the type of woman Ellen Glasgow had in mind when she wrote her famous novel about this end of the Valley, *Vein of Iron.*

In the arts, too, Rockbridge County has produced people of real distinction. Appreciation for the architectural style of John Jordan (1777-1854) who combined the Georgian and the Greek Revival forms in his own unique way, has grown steadily in the twentieth century. In designing and building Washington Hall, he set the pattern which has been followed so successfully at Washington and Lee University. His own imposing home, built at Jordan's point, is now called "Stono." Jordan served as an officer during the War of 1812, after which he returned to Rockbridge County. With "Stono" Colonel Jordan introduced Greek revival into the neighborhood. In the true Greek mode, Jordan's buildings do not depend upon mere size or impressiveness, but rather on a carefully conceived relationship between height, breadth, and length: between that which supports and that which is supported. In 1822 he began work on his masterpiece, Washington Hall. Among his other later outstanding buildings are the Reid White house, the Episcopal rectory, and the Ann Smith Academy. He also supplied many bricks during the construction of Jefferson's University of Virginia.

Although his stay in Rockbridge was short, William D. Washington, Virginia's first artist in residence, left a strong impression. He was selected after the War between the States to inaugurate a fine arts program at the Virginia Military Institute. He came there in 1869, but died tragically the next

year, before his fortieth birthday. His accomplishments in that short time were remarkable. Fourteen portraits were completed. His subjects were Generals Lee, Jackson, Smith, Rodes, and Garland; Colonels Allen, Crutchfield, the Pattons (George S. and W. T.) and Strange; Majors Latimer and Chenoweth; and Captains Marr and Otey. To these he added a series of landscapes and a group of Tennyson-inspired portraits, including "Elaine," "Maud," and "Lady Clare." Who knows what Washington might have accomplished had he been granted longer life? In 1951 the Rockbridge Historical Society placed on his Lexington grave a bronze plaque, commemorating his memory.

In 1866 an ex-Confederate soldier came to Lexington to open up a photography studio. His name was Michael Miley, and he was to become one of America's pioneers in color photography and portraits. Of Pennsylvania Dutch descent, he was born on a farm in the Valley of Virginia. He grew up near the Great Path which buffalo, Indian, and settler had long used as a main artery to the west. Three miles from Fairfield on the road to Brownsburg in Rockbridge County, another farm was Miley's home until he enlisted in the Stonewall Brigade at the outbreak of the War between the States. Like many farm boys in the 1840's, Miley had little formal education, but picked up what "book learning" he could at the hearth and the Old Field School. His great interest in nature, landscapes, and the outdoors undoubtedly commenced in these boyhood years; he often threshed wheat to earn extra money. Michael always spoke of the farm years as happy ones, and his interest in flowers and gardening continued throughout his life. This feeling for the mystery, the balance, and the symmetry in nature he managed to infuse into some of his greatest photographs in later years.

Hardly twenty at the time of his enlistment, Michael Miley served throughout the war in the Confederate infantry. His first two years were spent in the famous Stonewall Brigade under General Thomas J. Jackson, whom he greatly admired. Miley always regretted that Jackson was killed before he had the opportunity to photograph him; he carefully copied Jackson portraits, and photographed groups in mourning at the General's grave. After every battle in which he participated Miley took colored pencils and drew maps of the battlefield and its surroundings. The mountains, the clouds, and the valleys interested the young Virginian more than military matters. But his career as both sketcher and soldier was cut short at Chancellorsville, where the Brigade's beloved and irreplacable "Stonewall" Jackson was mortally wounded. Miley was captured during the bloody fighting and taken to a Yankee prison at Fort Delaware, an island off the New Jersey coast. Here he stayed until after the surrender subjected to a much more harrowing experience than that he had faced as a soldier.

From 1866 until his death in 1917 Miley devoted his life to recording Rockbridge life and personality on glass. His camera was a delicate instrument, sensitive to things which he felt but never expressed verbally. He infused an individuality into his pictures, and made landscapes that have never been surpassed by more modern equipment or techniques. The Miley Collection of some 15,000 negatives is now housed in the State Library at Richmond, Virginia.

This list by no means exhausts the men and women from our county who deserve, and have won, wide recognition and acclaim. But it does suggest the variety of their talents and interests, and the type of character that has made the county a seed-bed of greatness.

PLAIN EVERY-DAY PEOPLE OF ROCKBRIDGE

WHEN WE BEGIN thinking about the people who make up the county's population, those of the present time as well as those who lived out their lives and passed on, we are prone to focus our attention on men and women who stand out above the general run of people. We revere those whose quality of mind or opportunity has enabled them to accomplish things in various lines of endeavor which has brought them fame. We are apt to overlook more modest folk; those who go along the even tenor of their way with but little thought of becoming noted people; who live useful and happy lives; who really are the bone and sinew of society; who bring up their children to be worthy citizens; and who contribute of their means and of their direct personal effort in civic affairs to make this country of ours what it is today.

Some day the scholars who collect ballads, folk tales, and colloquialisms will "discover" Rockbridge County, as they have other parts of the state and nation. For the county is full of many types of folklore. As county doctor I found that the everyday people, particularly those far back in the hills, had over the years devised a medical folklore of their own. Once I called on a patient with a serious post-partum hemorrhage. An old woman stood before the patient with an axe, holding the sharp edge towards the patient, which she said would stop the blood. I have heard that a lock of hair will cure

A group of Confederate veterans pose for their picture in Lexington, around the turn of the century. The Negro in the front row, "Uncle" Jeff Shields, claimed to be "Stonewall" Jackson's body servant.

asthma, a raw potato will cure a boil, and a nutmeg hung around the neck a tooth ache. To relieve a victim of croup you rub his throat with pole cat's grease. There are a dozen Rockbridge solutions to removing a wart. One is to steal your neighbor's dish-cloth, rub it on the wart, then bury it. When the rag rots the wart will disappear. Another is to cut an onion into four pieces, prick the wart until it bleeds, then wet each piece of onion with the blood. Later the pieces are buried in the "dreep" (drip) of the roof. When it rains the wart will be gone. A woman on House Mountain once gave me a sure-fire method of relieving vomiting. "Scrape the inside bark of a dogwood tree, mix it with cow's tallow, put it on a cloth, and hang it 'round your throat. You'll have to be powerful sick if anything comes up past that!"

In order to give some picture of the people who don't make the pages of the history books, but live full lives on the land, I'm going to sketch the saga of one typical Rockbridge farmer and his family. It does not deal with a particular man, but could apply to a number in the county. This little story is the composite of several that could be told from real life. The ancestors of our subject came to America in the eighteenth century. They were sturdy, hard-working, liberty-loving people who came to take up virgin land in the new world. The family is still living on the land their ancestors broke with a wooden plow. Theirs is not a large holding, about 100 acres, only a part of which is tillable. The soil being largely clay is not naturally a fertile one, but requires very careful farming to maintain in any state of tilth. The history of the farm is largely the history of the man.

The early history of the family in this generation was tragic. Our man was one of a family of six children, four girls and two boys. When he was small the whole family of six con-

tracted diphtheria. In less than a week all four of his sisters died, while he and his older brother recovered. Some years later, however, his brother was taken sick with smallpox. He also died, leaving this one son the only survivor. At the death of the parents he inherited the farm. It has been more than half a century since he followed the last one to the cemetery, and came back to a lonely home. Only last year he and his wife celebrated their golden wedding. Being mindful of the scriptural admonition: "It is not good for man to live alone," he married a wife who has been to him all these years a devoted and able helper. And around this couple have grown up a sizable family.

Going back a little in time, I will endeavor to give a picture of his boyhood home. The house itself was a comfortable log structure, set on level ground seventy-five yards from the public road, and near a never-failing bold spring. Life in that household, in those days, partook decidedly of the primitive, measured by present day standards of living. The principal room of this house was a rather large one, which was living room, dining room, and kitchen combined. At one end was an immense fireplace, with stone hearth, on which always burned a cheerful fire. When I say always I mean exactly what the word indicates. Here all the cooking was done, in kettles suspended from a crane, or in "dutch ovens" placed upon the embers. Every day in the year smoke ascended from the wide throat of the chimney, at least three times a day. Never by intention was the fire permitted to go entirely out. When it did die out for lack of attention it was a minor calamity, for someone must be sent to the nearest neighbor to fetch a burning brand by which to rekindle. From this habit of "borrowing" fire came the slightly derisive and wholly hospitable quip: "What's your hurry — did you just come to get a chunk o' fire?"

whenever a visitor showed inclination to shorten his call. Before the days of friction matches, which we use so constantly and so heedlessly today, it behooved the householder to preserve his embers or a smoldering brand covered in the ashes — else rekindling might be tedious. From this habit or custom amongst people of the olden time came the word "curfew" — a bell which was sounded every night at nine o'clock to indicate the fire must be covered (in the French *"couvrir feu"*).

As a boy I used to delight to visit in such a home, and the cheerful serenity of the household. The spinning-wheel on one side was not there as an antique ornament, but was for actual use; and sometimes as one approached the house he heard the soft hum which told it was going. How pleasurable to sit and watch the soft rolls of wool lengthen into a long strand in the hands of the spinster, as she walked back and forth, one hand holding the end of the roll, the other holding the small wooden pin with which she rotated the wheel. "Spinster" took its original meaning from the art of spinning; and in this particular instance either its original or its later meaning might apply, for the one doing the spinning in this family often was an elderly maiden aunt. "Aunt Ann," she was known to all the neighbors, and for many years she made her home with the family.

Besides the interest in spinning, other attractions to a small boy may be mentioned. Aunt Ann knew a small boy's likings. Usually ginger cakes would somehow appear, or a basket of luscious apples, with the friendly advice: "Pick for a good one." Another thing often on hand was persimmon beer. It was always forthcoming should one's visit be in the late fall or winter months. To me it was not an appetizing drink, but many people seemed to find it so. Wool was spun on the "big wheel" in contradistinction to that done with the "little

wheel," which was used only for spinning flax. After the wool had been spun the yarn was dyed with walnut bark, either black walnut which produced a dark brown, or white walnut, which gave a dark yellow shade. Then it was taken to the loom-house, a separate small building standing in the yard, and there woven into linsey-woolsey for the women's clothing, or into butternut jeans for the men's.

Money as a medium of exchange in those years was little in evidence. This family was one of independence, or rather self-dependence. They raised on their own land practically all their food. Their wheat was taken to the neighborhood mill and ground into flour for their bread, their corn likewise into meal for spoon-bread or corn-pone. Their garden gave an abundance and a plentiful variety of vegetables. Their live-stock grazed on their own hills and furnished all the meat required; sausage, ham, spare-ribs, and side meat for cooking with greens, cabbage and snap-beans. It was dressed and cured, salted, dried, or corned, a whole year's supply at one time. For fresh meat they had chickens and ducks, with an occasional lamb slaughtered and divided among the neighbors, who later would return the favor in like kind. Comparatively little money was in circulation, or was required. Barter at the neighboring country store of butter and eggs, a few bushels of potatoes over and above what was required at home, sometimes a bushel of dried beans — these articles served in lieu of currency to exchange for sugar and coffee. With them, as with most other agricultural folks, the chief use for actual currency was to pay taxes. Each year as the taxes fell due provision must be made for them. It was no easy task to get together the requisite amount. Occasionally a promising colt was parted with, or an extra milk cow sacrificed for this purpose. But

usually by some means or other, the full sum was ready before any penalty accrued.

In such an atmosphere the man of our story grew up. His education so far as books are concerned was limited, but his knowledge of farming and good husbandry was rapidly acquired through day-by-day experience in the fields. This is the more remarkable because of the fact that his father was not what would be today called a good farmer, nor a man to learn much from others. He had been accustomed to farm as his own father before him had farmed, and that was really a poor way. He had no farm machinery. It is hardly fair to hold that against him, because very little farm machinery had in that day been invented. He plowed very shallow. His horses were not heavy nor powerful enough to draw a plow set deeply in the ground. He used no fertilizer. As a matter of fact chemical fertilizers were as yet not on the market. He did not rotate his crops, nor sow grass seed to improve the soil. Shallow plowing and no cover crops permitted much of his soil to wash away in rainy seasons. So his yield from the land grew less year by year, until his average total crop of wheat was not more than sixty bushels.

When the man of this recital inherited the land he had poor land, poorly fenced with ancient zig-zag rail fences. Some fields were badly eroded. His plain log house through age was needing much repair. His chief capital lay in his ability and his willingness to work. He had youth and strength. He was a Rockbridge farmer by inheritance and by experience as well. He knew his own land.

The wife whom he presently brought to his home was likewise a worker, a woman of energy and determination, who was as capable in her house as was her husband in the fields of their farm. They lived in the log house for many years.

It was comfortable, and it sufficed for their needs. Not only did she take care of the house itself, but she also milked the cows, churned the butter, tended the poultry, and fed calves and pigs, so that when their livestock went to market, the proceeds brought back were as much hers as his. He recognized fully his wife's part in their livelihood, and always shared equitably with her, to her perfect satisfaction; she never lacked for anything she desired and which she regarded as consistent with their earnings.

So they lived full and profitable years. The family increased in size as one after another of their children were born, and their cares and responsibilities increased. They met these as parents should, and brought up their children in a proper way, admonishing them and training them all through the years of childhood in assuming their rightful part in the family life. The boys, as they came to adolescence, learned to take care of the livestock, and were given small tasks to do. They learned to feed the pigs and calves and poultry, to ride the work horses to water, and to carry into the house firewood for cooking and for warming the house. They unconsciously absorbed knowledge from their father, from the conversations which took place around the fireside, or from neighbors who came to discuss farming matters. As they became older they gradually took on more and more of their share of the labor building fences, chopping firewood, or planting and reaping the crops. The girls were in no degree behind their brothers in learning. The mother taught them not only by word of mouth but by example the various household tasks. They gradually came to assume the larger share of this burden, and the mother assigned to one or the other of her half-dozen daughters much of the work which she had carried through so many years. But she was not one to sit down and merely direct her daugh-

ters. Her abundant energy drove her on. Her small, wiry body never seemed to tire.

By frugality and hard work they forged ahead financially. When money was needed to improve the place, they did not hesitate to spend what was wise. No money went for fanciful things which they could do without for the time being. Year by year the fund laid by for the rainy day grew in size. None of them ever heard of Dickens' pronouncement which he puts into the mouth of Micawber in *David Copperfield*: "Annual income 20 pounds, annual expenditure, 19 pounds 6 shillings, result: happiness. Annual income 20 pounds, annual expenditure, 20 pounds 6 pence, result: misery." Nevertheless, this was their basic economic theory, which stood them in good stead.

This man and his wife are God-fearing, church-going folk. They have ever been mindful of spiritual laws, and strive to live their lives in accordance with Biblical injunction. They have been all their years members of the church. Though some may consider them narrow-minded and sectarian, their philosophy of life has much to commend it. Their example of being law-abiding and self-respecting members of society is one which their fellow men might well follow. They have all their lives worked long hours during the week but scrupulously refrained from all but purely necessary work (such as feeding and caring for livestock) on Sundays. The temptation to do otherwise is sometimes almost irresistible, as for instance when circumstances of weather threaten to ruin a crop which represents many months of care and labor if left over till Monday. When one sees on every hand practically no observance of the Sabbath by businesses, who assert that the labor of their employees on Sundays is necessary, and when one is surrounded by those who look upon Sunday merely as a holiday in which

to "have fun," to work as hard in the effort "to have a good time" as they ordinarily work during the week, the tendency to criticize the rural folk diminishes. This man and his family have abided strictly by the scriptural injunction: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work, and rest the seventh day." Who can say that they have lost by so doing?

As the years slipped away the farm came to look better, as in truth it became better. Taking away rail fences may have robbed it of some picturesqueness; but to a farmer straight fence rows, with the undergrowth abolished and the land cultivated up close to the fence, is a far lovelier sight than is the other. Where once had been erosion, and gullies to wash away the soil, were now good cover crops. Needful ditches were kept open, and the banks of them kept free of outlaw growth. Instead of the log house there is now a neat, well-painted frame house, with porches and basement. The other buildings have been reroofed with more durable material than the old wooden shingles. A telephone connects the family with their neighbors and a radio brings messages and news from distant cities. Electricity from a rural electrification system lights the house. A car sits in the garage. They enjoy some of the luxuries of life, and much of life's happiness has been theirs all through the unfolding years.

Yet they have not been without deep sorrow. The oldest of their three sons had a strong desire to acquire a higher education. He was sent to college. Here he studied for three years, doing well and making a good record for himself. In his senior year tragedy befell: he was stricken with typhoid fever, and lost his life. It was a grievous blow to his parents and the family. They overcame their grief as best they could, and continued to carry on. None of the other children desired educa

tion beyond grammar school or high school. At any rate, the others did not attend any school of higher learning.

The daughters married. Not all the marriages proved successful. If a daughter found the man of her choice unbearable she simply came back, found her old niche in the family circle, taking up her life as much as possible where she had left off when she stood with a man and heard the minister pronounce them husband and wife. So far as any outside the family circle knew, or could judge by what they saw of the family, no difference was ever made as between those who had constantly remained beneath the parental roof, and those who returned to it after an interval away. And there was sometimes an extra child when the daughter, its mother, came back home.

Summing up what this man has accomplished in a little more than half a century of living, we find that he started out with a small acreage of poor land, and no farm machinery. His "book learning" was only nominal; the buildings were in need of repair, and the old log house outmoded. As the family increased in size, it was entirely outgrown. His father's average wheat crop had been only about sixty bushels per year. With no additional acreage he has increased his total yield of wheat to six hundred bushels per year. He has fed and clothed and, so far as they desired, educated his children. He has now good and adequate buildings. His farm is in excellent state of cultivation, and is free of undesirable plant growth. He is a respected citizen of his community, an officer in his church, and a director in a small neighborhood bank. Also he is looked upon as one of the most expert tobacco growers in Rockbridge county, and nearly always receives top prices on the tobacco market. His tobacco crops are the chief source of his financial

independence, and he holds the record for the highest price ever paid for a crop on the Lynchburg dark tobacco market.

This is the story of one of the plain, every-day families of Rockbridge County. Little in it would attract the journalist or historian. In phase with the natural laws of their earth and the spiritual laws of their God, the folks we have described live a good life. Henry Thoreau once accused many of his fellow Americans of "living mean and petty lives, lives of quiet desperation." The accusations would not apply to the careers we have sketched. They were, instead, lives of quiet fulfillment.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

ANYONE INTERESTED in studying Virginia history might well begin with two fine bibliographies: Earl G. Swem's two-volume *Virginia Historical Index* (1934-36) and Lester J. Cappon's *Bibliography of Virginia History Since 1865* (1930). *Virginia, A Guide to the Old Dominion* (1940), compiled by the Writers' Program of the Works Project Administration, remains the best single volume for general information, and Matthew Page Andrews' *Virginia, the Old Dominion* (1937) the best one-volume history. Though outdated, John Esten Cooke's *Virginia, A History of the People* (1884) and Thomas Nelson Page's *The Old Dominion, Her Making and Her Manners* (1908) are provocative. Privately supported, the Virginia Historical Society serves as the official historical group in the state, representing a 1946 merger of the Virginia Historical Society (1832) and the Confederate Memorial Association (1896). It maintains a magazine, library, and portrait collection in Richmond. There is also a state Division of History functioning in the State Library.

The largest manuscript collection in Virginia, comprising over 1,500,000 items, is in the State Library at Richmond. The Alderman Library at Charlottesville and the McCormick Library at Lexington also have significant collections. The newspaper center of the state is Richmond. The Richmond *News Leader* (a 1903 consolidation of the *Evening News* and

the *Evening Leader*) and the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* (a 1903 consolidation of the *Times* and the *Dispatch*) are outstanding. See Lester J. Cappon's *Virginia Newspapers, 1821-1935* (1936) for earlier newspapers.

As for Rockbridge County, Henry Boley's *Lexington in Old Virginia* (1936) has a charm which puts it in a class by itself. Oren F. Morton's *A History of Rockbridge County, Virginia* (1920) and James W. McClung's *Historical Significance of Rockbridge County, Virginia* (1939) are of limited value. The three published volumes of the *Proceedings* of the Rockbridge Historical Society from 1939 to 1949 contain a variety of information.

Three institutions in the county collect important manuscript and printed material on the region: The McCormick Library at Washington and Lee University, the Preston Library at V.M.I., and the library of the Rockbridge Historical Society in Lexington. The newspaper files of the Lexington *Gazette,* which has had a number of names in its long history extending back to 1801, and of the Rockbridge *County News,* are of primary importance. Colonel William Couper at V.M.I. and Professor Ollinger Crenshaw at Washington and Lee have prepared detailed accounts of their respective institutions, and are authorities on their histories.

Because of the pioneer work of Michael Miley (1840-1917) and his son Henry, Rockbridge County is one of the best documented areas in nineteenth century America, so far as photography is concerned. The 15,000 glass plates in the Miley Collection, owned by the Virginia Historical Society and housed in the State Library, is perhaps the best place to go and study the county's past. A volume of Miley prints is being assembled by the Virginia Historical Society.

Of the many volumes which deal with a larger portion of the state than Rockbridge County, but contain much about it, a few must be mentioned. The Virginia Academy of Science issued its superb volume on *The James River Basin, Past, Present, and Future* in 1950; it surpasses all earlier publications in the scientific field. F. B. Kegley's *Virginia Frontier* (1938) remains the best volume on documents and settlement of southwest Virginia, and Lyman Chalkley's 3-volume *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia* (1912) of the Valley of Virginia. The county court houses are, of course, centers of interest for the historian, and in them the student will find courteous assistance and suggestions. Virginians are justly proud of their history, and one has only to travel or live among them to sense the fascination and drama of their past.