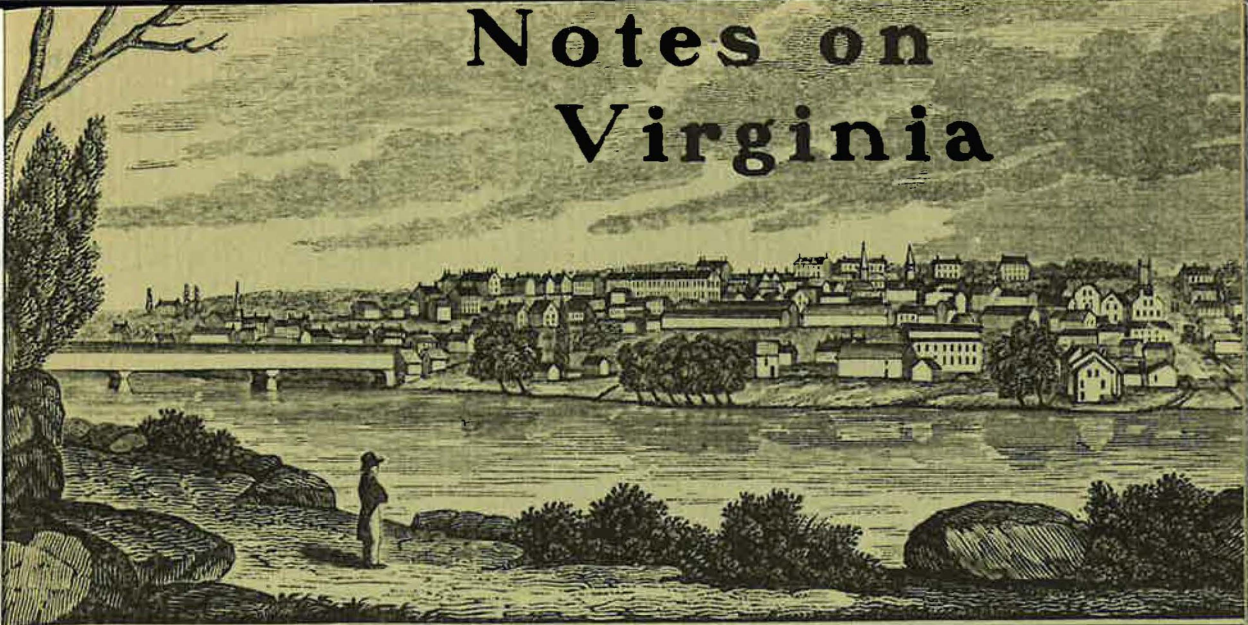


Notes on Virginia



PUBLICATION OF THE VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Number 1

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NOTES ON THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Established by the General Assembly in 1966, the Historic Landmarks Commission was given a mandate to serve the public welfare through "the perpetuation of those structures and areas which have a close and immediate relationship to the values upon which this State and the nation were founded, and which serve as a means of illustrating to present and future generations the inherent worth of such values and the unchangeable truths thereby demonstrated."

In carrying out this mandate, the staff--with the assistance of many persons dedicated to the history and antiquities of the Old Dominion-- is engaged in a continuing survey of structures and sites of historical, architectural, and archaeological significance. An archive, which includes photographs, site maps, and measured drawings, is being assembled as a consequence of this survey.

The Landmarks Commission draws on these materials when considering nominations to the Virginia Landmarks Register, or texts appearing on highway or other historical markers. The gradual development of an archive illustrates the educational nature or effect of many staff functions. As this collection grows, and is adapted to cumulative or comparative research, it will become an invaluable source for students of history, architecture, preservation and planning.

The Commission has a duty to assist in well-conceived efforts to preserve physical reminders of the Commonwealth's heritage. Members of the staff advise public and private groups concerned with the maintenance, rehabilitation, use, or adaptive re-use of historic structures. Specific instances of this--often highly satisfying activity will be discussed in future numbers of Notes on Virginia.

--continued on p.2

The historic districts of many Virginia communities are threatened by economic and demographic pressures. The rationale for preserving intact these historically-important or aesthetically-pleasing districts is, unfortunately, not self-evident. Lack of imagination in the resolution of conflicting demands on a community's space and resources is, tragically, the norm. The Commission is pleased to work with local authorities and concerned citizens in defining and developing preservation districts.

The Landmarks Commission services the Open-Space Easements program as it relates to historic properties; is responsible for the Virginia Highway historical marker system; and maintains the Virginia Landmarks Register. The purpose and effect of historic easements are discussed in the issue for December 1970 of The Commonwealth Magazine and also in the Commission's publication, "Open-Space Easements." In this issue of Notes there are two features on the Virginia Landmarks Register, as well as the editor's rhetorical ruminations on historic districts.


Notes on Virginia, as a publication of the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, shares in the general interests of most Virginia preservationists. Matters of concern to the Commission, and to the great, diverse community of historic preservationists, are to be discussed in successive issues of this occasional newsletter. Notes on Virginia is available to any interested party upon request.

HISTORICAL MAGAZINES

The editor of The Bulletin of the Fluvanna County Historical Society (Box 132, Palmyra, Va.) has a fine sense of the bardic tradition in Virginia--and of its passing: "one can only listen and marvel" at the vividness of "the inherited memory handed down from generation to generation... It is not that these people 'live in the past;' it is just that the past and present blend to make a larger existence for today.

"But the chain of memory has broken... For today's families are more mobile and the old homeplace is no longer the family center." No longer do the youngsters sit "listening to the old folks spin yarns from 'the good old days,' when they, too, were young" (Bulletin, Oct. 1970, p. 1970).

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VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
 Edward P. Alexander, Chairman
 John M. Jennings, Vice Chairman
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Notes on Virginia
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Frontispiece of Howe's Historical Collection of Virginia, 1845.
 Engraving from Historical Collection of Virginia, 1845.

2 Courtesy VIRGINIA STATE LIBRARY.

The General Assembly has directed the Commission to prepare a register of historic landmarks which are of State-wide or national significance. Before a building or site is included in this list, it is subject to an exact -- and exacting -- process of nomination and review.

An installment of the Virginia Landmarks Register was published during the summer of 1970. The Commission is pleased to note that this publication was the "Best of Show" selection in the 1970 Fine Printing Awards Competition conducted for the Printing Industries of the Virginias. The Register contains a brief statement on each of the then 213 register properties.

There are presently (May 1971) 265 historic landmarks included on the Virginia Register. Those added since July 1970 are listed below.

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| Abingdon Church, Gloucester Co. | Lexington Preservation Zone, Rockbridge County |
| Abingdon Glebe House, Gloucester Co. | Little England, Gloucester County |
| Alexander-Withrow House, Lexington | Lowland Cottage, Gloucester County |
| Allmand-Archer House, Norfolk | Lunenburg Court House Preservation Zone |
| Amphill, Cumberland County | Main Street Station, Richmond |
| Belle Isle, Lancaster County | Morrison House, Harrisonburg |
| Bellona Arsenal, Chesterfield Co. | Pinewoods, James City County |
| Bolling Hall, Goochland County | Pope-Leighey House, Fairfax Co. |
| Botetourt County Court House | Powhatan, James City County |
| Chantilly Site, Westmoreland Co. | Reynolds Homestead, Patrick County |
| Chester, Sussex County | Rippon Lodge, Prince William Co. |
| Christ Church, Norfolk | Ripshin, Grayson County |
| Christ Church Glendower, Albemarle Co. | Rock Castle, Goochland County |
| Farmington, Albemarle County | St. Paul's Church, Norfolk |
| Flood Marker of 1771, Henrico Co. | Site of Great Bridge Battle, Chesapeake (archaeological site) |
| Fluvanna Court House Preservation District, Palmyra | Sully, Fairfax County |
| Fort Chiswell Mansion, Wythe Co. | Sweet Briar House, Amherst County |
| Four Mile Tree, Surry County | Three Otters, Bedford County |
| Fredericksburg Preservation Zone | Tunker House, Rockingham County |
| Freemason Street Baptist Church, Norfolk | Tredegar Iron Works, Richmond |
| Goochland County Court Square | University of Virginia Preservation Zone, Charlottesville |
| Hampstead, New Kent County | Washington & Lee University Preservation Zone, Rockbridge County |
| Hawkwood, Louisa County | Westend, Louisa County |
| Hebron Lutheran Church, Madison Co. | Whittle House, Norfolk |
| Hillsborough, King & Queen County | Willoughby-Baylor House, Norfolk |
| Hungars Church, Northampton County | --Related Feature on p.8. |
| Kent-Valentine House, Richmond | |

The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission conducted its April meeting in the Board Room of the Norfolk Public Library, having met for December in the Board of Visitors' Room at the University of Virginia. The Commission appreciates the courtesy extended to its members by the officials of both cities and institutions. It would like to continue this practise of holding several of its monthly meetings outside of Richmond.

The Landmarks Commission toured the Green Springs area of Louisa County on route to the December meeting in Charlottesville. Members of the Commission and staff have supported the property owners of that section in efforts to prevent the construction of State facilities which would be incompatible additions to the environment.

The Landmarks Commission--along with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and many other concerned organizations and eminent architectural authorities--devoted much time and energy to assisting local citizens in efforts to preserve the old commercial district along Main Street in Richmond. The demolition of the buildings in the 1100 block was the subject of unfavorable comment in the national press.

There have been other, hopefully more successful activities. An associate of the Commission, Mrs. John Peters, has developed a pilot project for teaching architectural appreciation to children in the primary schools. The program has been enthusiastically received by

parents and educators. From time to time members of the staff meet with civic, professional or educational groups concerned with history, architecture, preservation or other matters relating to landmarks and the Commission. During the past several weeks:

J.R.Fishburne, VHLC historian and Asst. Director, addressed a meeting of citizens in Upperville concerning with the future preservation of the village.

Tucker Hill, staff architectural historian, addressed graduate students of architecture and architectural history at Charlottesville and Blacksburg. The VPI students are to undertake a survey of structures and sites in Newbern, Pulaski County.

VHLC Executive Director James W. Moody, Jr. addressed VPI students on their proposed survey of Newbern. While in Southwest Virginia, Mr. Moody visited the preservation-minded Tazewell County community of Pocahontas.

Mr. Moody has represented the VHLC at the several State Art Commission meetings dealing with the development program of Virginia Commonwealth University. The physical expansion of the University effects many old Richmond buildings.

The Messrs. Fishburne and Hill visited the Ritchie House at Tappahannock to assist the local Women's Club in efforts to preserve the birthplace of Thomas Ritchie, one of the great editors in the history of American journalism.

Commission Member Frederick Herman and staff member Calder Loth made an architectural inspection of the Eastville Inn, on the Eastern Shore, and

The Bulletin for October 1970 is given over to the old mills of Fluvanna. The October 1969 number sketches Fluvanna's history from the petition for separation from Albemarle (1777) through the State census of 1782 (printed summary) and the information given in several 19th-century directories and gazetteers.

The Journal of the Roanoke Historical Society is a semi-annual publication of the Society, Box 1904 Roanoke, Va., 24098. This attractive magazine serves "to chronicle the past and present of that part of the state west of the Blue Ridge." This "chronicle" of the region's natural, family, social and institutional history includes contemporary accounts (from diaries, letters, reminiscences) as well as modern studies.

Eight sketches of the Roanoke River Valley and Old Botetourt (in 1853) drawn by the Pennsylvania-folk artist, Lewis Miller, are handsomely reproduced with commentary in the Summer 1969 issue (Vol.6, No.1). Klaus Wust reports on "The Great Flood of 1749," and Mary B. Kegley writes of the settlement and growth of "The Town of Newbern," in the Summer 1970 Journal. Portions of Miss Alice I. Hohenberg's senior thesis, "The Mennonites and Brethren of Rockingham County, Virginia during the Civil War" are reprinted in the same issue.

The special Botetourt Bicentennial number (Winter 1970) is a fine expression of piety from a daughter county. The issue includes one piece, unhappily timely, which begins: "In Botetourt's two centuries, fire has destroyed some of

its most interesting landmarks." The recent loss of the Botetourt court house at Fincastle is a tragic reminder that fire and the elements remain potent threats to historic structures.

The Iron Worker has been published since 1919 by the Lynchburg Foundry Company, Lynchburg, Va. 24505. Begun as the house organ for an old-style family business, the quarterly continues to impart a personal quality to what is now a large modern corporation.

The Iron Worker has a unique format: each issue features a significant article on Virginia history along with stories of the industry, plant and personnel. One may turn from a feature on quality control to Robert Douthat Meade's latest piece on Patrick Henry. Recent issues include Howard Hildreth on John Sevier, and J. Paul Hudson's, "Green Springs Plantation," together with articles by and about company employees.

GAZETTE--cont'd from p.4 concluded that the threatened 18th-century structure is worthy of preservation.

Architectural historian Loth addressed an enthusiastic audience of more than 100 people on subjects relating to Warrenton and historic preservation. The lecture--sponsored by the Warrenton Improvement League and thirteen other civic, patriotic and business organizations--was arranged to coincide with the staff survey of historic Warrenton.

Mr. Elie Weeks of Manakin-Sabot has long been a benefactor of the VHLC. The Commission files are the richer for the documentary histories and measured floor plans of Goochland Co. houses donated by this dedicated local historian and antiquarian.

--cont'd from p.8

TREDEGAR IRON WORKS, RICHMOND: In ruins the old Tredegar represents not merely a 19th-century industrial complex, but also the rise and decline of Richmond as the center of Southern industry. Tredegar, the "Ironmaker to the Confederacy," thrived from the 1840s through the immediate post-bellum period.

FORT CHISWELL MANSION, WYTHE CO.: The original Fort Chiswell, a late-colonial frontier post, achieved prosperity as an important stopping place on the Great Wilderness Road to the West. The present house is an outstanding ante-bellum classical revival structure set on a small promontory that affords a splendid panoramic prospect.

LOWLAND COTTAGE, GLOUCESTER CO.: Originally built for Robert Bristow, who prospered here as a merchant and planter prior to 1677, Lowland was architecturally similar to the farm houses of contemporary New England. Although the house has been altered and enlarged, the site remains essentially undisturbed.

FREDERICKSBURG PRESERVATION DISTRICT: This important concentration of colonial, federal and ante-bellum buildings, in the downtown river-front area of the city has endured several disastrous fires, the Battle of Fredericksburg, and modern encroachments.

BELLE ISLE, LANCASTER CO.: This excellent example of a small, formal plantation complex includes a classical Tidewater-Georgian residence, outbuildings, and terraced gardens.

BOLLING HALL, GOOCHLAND CO.: Organized education for the deaf had its American origins in this, the earliest Bolling residence to survive in Virginia. Bolling Hall is one of the few remaining colonial plantation houses of the upper James River region.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, NORFOLK: Although much changed by war, neglect, and later additions, St. Paul's survives as the oldest building in the city of Norfolk and a fine example of colonial ecclesiastical architecture.

ALEXANDER-WITHROW HOUSE, LEXINGTON: Built, with four corner chimneys and diaper-patterned brick walls, around 1790, this is one of the oldest and architecturally most interesting dwellings in Lexington.

BOTETOURT COURT HOUSE, BOTETOURT CO.: Greek Revival in style, this ante-bellum building post-dates two earlier court houses. Until it was gutted by fire in December 1970, the court house with its imposing portico, belfry and spire, was the architectural focal point for Fincastle.

--J. Everett Fauber, Jr., restoration architect for Point of Honor in Lynchburg and Fancy Farm in Bedford Co. has donated a set of measured drawings for the latter. He has also permitted the Commission to make a copy of his research report for this Federal house. The Commission appreciates this generosity on the part of Mr. Fauber, and solicits similar materials for its reference library.

"The time has come
to talk of many things:
Of shoes--and ships--and sealing-wax
of cabbages--and kings--"

How comes John Randolph to be buried in Richmond? There is a stone in Charlotte County--which bears the simple inscription: "John Randolph of Roanoke, May 31, 1833: He Chose This Stone and This Site." Few men have been so closely identified with place as Randolph was with Roanoke Plantation and Southside. Long after his death, Southsiders of every class and description remarked on the continuing sense of his presence.

In death, he chose "the unornamented grave. . . the tall, unbroken forest. . . the silence and gloom that reigned undisturbed amidst that deserted place," as an ante-bellum visitor described the grave-site on Roanoke Plantation. The setting was proper, the location appropriate. He chose this site; but a kinsman knew better. Randolph's physical remains were removed to Richmond in 1879: to Hollywood, the most fashionable and sophisticated cemetery in Virginia. The impiety of the act, the incongruity of the setting, wrought by men intending to render homage!

The destruction of irreplaceable signs of Virginian community and continuity is a continuing tragedy. Good men have confused the assertion of their own historical and aesthetic judgment with devotion to tradition and the physical manifestations of tradition. In the last-third of the twentieth century, equally good men confuse remaking the face of the

community with revitalizing its soul. Business and political leaders concerned with reversing the decline of county village or central city have failed to recognize or appreciate the value to the community of its identifying symbols.

Historical preservation is imperative precisely because of the economic and population growth, mobility and cultural flux which appear to make inevitable the destruction of historically-important and architecturally-pleasing structures. Richmond and Roanoke, Fredericksburg and Lynchburg, Portsmouth and Danville can ill afford to become merely great, unassimilated collections of people interchangeable with, and indistinguishable from, any other city of their size.

Fincastle and Palmyra, Lexington and Yorktown, Buckingham Court House and Heathsville, Abingdon and Winchester cannot afford the loss of those old and pleasing public and private buildings which continue to mean "home" to successive generations of sons and daughters. Historic buildings and sites, imaginatively adapted to changed and changing conditions and uses, can make an indispensable contribution to the artistic and cultural, the spiritual and the mundane, life of the community. Evidences of the past, wisely conceived, constitute a moral counter-weight to the more brutal aspects of incessant change.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219
NTH STREET STATE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 1116

COMMISSION
NIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS



VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER :
SOME RECENT ADDITIONS

SITE OF THE GREAT BRIDGE BATTLE, CHESAPEAKE: The first pitched battle of the Revolution in Virginia was fought on December 9, 1775, at the Great Bridge across the South Branch of the Elizabeth River. The British abandoned their stronghold about Norfolk soon after this brief, but-- for Governor Dunmore's supporters-- sanguinary and demoralizing engagement.

LUNENBURG COURT HOUSE PRESERVATION ZONE: The two-story brick temple-form court house still visually dominates this tiny community as it has for nearly a century and a half. Lunenburg, with its sprinkling of 19th-century buildings and out-buildings, remains one of the most

picturesque and best preserved of Virginia's old court house communities.

RIPSHIN, GRAYSON CO.: Built in the late 1920s by the noted author, Sherwood Anderson, this two-story random-laid stone house overlooks picturesque Laurel Creek in the Valley of Virginia.

HEBRON LUTHERAN CHURCH, MADISON CO.: Built in 1740 by the South's first Lutheran congregation, Hebron is the oldest house of worship in continuous use by Lutherans in America. It is also one of the few surviving colonial frame churches in Virginia.