

## Website in progress to chronicle history of Buckland that began in 1774

By **TERRY KARNES**  
Observer staff

While Buckland was chartered in 1798, its history began more than a half-century earlier.

Samuel Love purchased the land, where the 48-lots became the Town of Buckland, in 1774. On it were already a mill and other structures.

In 1774, Love requested Fauquier County for the old private road to be opened and made public and in 1779 he petitioned Fauquier County to make public an old private road leading from the Carolina Road "that had been much used by the inhabitants of the neighborhood on their public and private business ever since our first knowledge of the place, which for some us is upwards of 30 years."

"That is much earlier than I every imagined," said David Blake, president of the Buckland Preservation Society and owner of Buckland Farm.

Love built a main house, a single pile stone residence commonly attributed to architect William Buckland but not documented as such, Buckland Hall.

He and his sons, Samuel, John, Charles and Augustine, transformed Buckland into a "vibrant mercantile center" after the Revolutionary War, according to Blake.

In addition to the existing mill, Love's Mill, they built an assortment of secondary structures for the production of farm goods at the base of the lane leading to the main house. A distillery, stone quarry, smithy, tannery, and several stores were being frequented by travelers. A second mill, called Kingsley Mill, was built by John and Charles Love in 1794 and by 1796 John Love had built and begun operating a manufacturing mill for the production of wool.

Gen. Lafayette, who was involved in the Revolutionary War, visited Buckland and was invited into the tavern, which still stands today.

John Love inherited the main house, when Samuel Love died, and laid out the grid of lots for the petition to the General Assembly for the chartering of the Town of Buckland. In his petition he recommended "Buckland as a proper place for establishing a town."

Buckland's horse history, which is strong today, goes back to before Buckland was a chartered town, as well. In the 1780s John and Samuel Love Jr. began to import Arabian and European horses to breed. The blood lines of their stallions Mahomet and Spread Eagle are listed among the origins of the modern thoroughbred, Blake said.

In 1789, George Washington purchased a horse from the Loves, and introduced them to James McHenry, secretary of War under President John Adams. He requested "a number of horses for the U.S. Army" in 1799. Letters between Washington and the Loves were discovered, as well as letters between them and Presidents Madison and Jefferson.

Buckland had its own post office in 1800 - the building is still there to-



Richard Bland Lee II - lived at Buckland Hall.  
Courtesy photo

day and on the front door you can see the holes where Wanted posters and other notices were tacked up for the public.

A relative of George Washington bought Buckland Farm in 1822, and in the sales ad the property contained about 800 acres and "is so well known that any further description is deemed unnecessary." A relative of Robert E. Lee, Maj. Richard Bland Lee II, received the land in 1853 when it was conveyed by Temple Mason Washington. Lee was the son of Congressman Richard Bland Lee of Sully and first cousin to Robert E. Lee.

Buckland was a prime target during the Civil War due to the mills and proximity to the Warrenton Turnpike. Buckland was occupied by both Union and Confederate troops at different times throughout the war.

The first shots of Second Manassas were fired on the Crozet Bridge when Pope's troops engaged in August 1862.

On Oct. 19, 1863, the Confederate Cavalry enjoyed its final southern victory at Buckland when it defeated Gen. Kilpatrick and George

Armstrong Custer. Custer lost this "first stand" as well and his wagons and personal belongings were captured that day. Letters to several of his female companions were published, along with those to his fiancé, in the Richmond Times to humiliate him. Custer wrote to his fiancée, Nettie Humphrey, the following day, "Yesterday, October 19 was the most disastrous this division ever passed through ... I cannot but regret the loss of so many brave men."

A letter from Lt. Robert E. Lee Jr. to his mother said, "We met separately and collectively the three Yankee Divisions of Cavalry, Bedford's Regulars, Gregg's and Kilpatrick's and whipt them every time!"

Gen. Robert E. Lee wrote to Gen. Stuart on the day of the battle at Buckland, "I congratulate you and your officers and your men on this handsome success. The plan was well conceived and skillfully executed." There were 230 Union casualties and the Buckland Tavern and Church were used as hospitals.

Blake said the victory was "concealed" by the Union in newspapers such as Harper's Weekly where it was referred to as a "skirmish" because "news of Confederate victory after Gettysburg would have been devastating."

Recognized as the best of the Civil War Sketch artists, Alfred Waud documented the battle at Buckland in two sketches, "Buckland from Mr. Hunton's House, scene of cavalry engagement with Stewart" which was engraved for Harper's Magazine on Nov. 14, 1863, and "Custer's Advance on Buckland."

The Lees lived at Buckland until 1935. A descendant of the Lees - Richard Bland Lee V - is the chairman of the Buckland Preservation Society today.

The property was later sold to

Thomas Mellon Evans, who spent the next 40 years developing a state-of-the-art thoroughbred farm at Buckland, the first in Virginia to be laid out in the Kentucky style. His championship horses included Pleasant Colony, winner of the 1981 Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes, who died on New Year's Eve 2002 and is buried at Buckland in the center of the modern Point-to-Point race track.

The Buckland Preservation Society has begun the task of creating an online, public website for the amount of historical data/records that have survived at Buckland. Alfredo Maul, of the Montpelier Foundation, is the director of the project. The website will include the ongoing research by William Kelso, director of Archaeology for the Buckland Preservation Society, and others.

Only four of the original 48 lots have been lost and that was during the expansion of US 29, Blake said.

"Many of the earliest buildings stand amongst the 18th Century stone foundations and artifacts associated with each parcel," said Blake. "In preserving this site we have perhaps the best chance at demonstrating everyday life in old Virginia, as modest places such as this have disappeared long ago."

Blake formed the Buckland Preservation Society as a non-profit organization for the purpose of conducting a state-of-the-art "interdisciplinary investigation and study of the archaeology, architecture, industrialization, transportation, cultural landscape and historical record of the Town of Buckland, as well as the earlier Manohac Indian Settlement."

The group has asked the Civil War Preservation Trust to consider Buckland as an endangered battlefield. They have also sought help from numerous scholars, as well as the National Trust for Historic Preservation's

11 Most Endangered Sites list for 2005.

The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities will develop a long-range plan for the preservation of Buckland and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has approved the Buckland Historic District for the National Register of Historic Places and has approved an expanded Historic District that includes more than 1,000 acres surrounding the existing district as eligible for the National Register. The Department of Historic Resources also granted the society two grants.

Blake said it will take years to figure out the full story of Buckland; what they know now is "just the bare bones."

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