

BUCKLAND, VIRGINIA

Visited by Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Lafayette, Stuart and Lee, the town plan of Buckland is a rare example in America of the familiar Axial, English village pattern. The main house and the town below, extending outward from its gate, stand on land that was originally part of the Broad Run Tract owned by Robert Brent in 1737 and later Robert (King) Carter. The Carter family operated a mill on the property in the early 1770's and conveyed the land to Samuel Love in 1774. During the late eighteenth century, Love and his four sons Samuel, John, Charles and Augustine transformed the property into a vibrant mercantile center.

The Love's development of Buckland began with the construction of the main house in 1774. The single-pile stone residence is commonly attributed to architect William Buckland but has not been documented. Beside the existing mill, Love built an assortment of secondary structures for production of farm goods at the base of the lane leading to the main house. In 1775, he petitioned the General Assembly to re-route the Old Carolina Road so it would run directly to these outbuildings and another beyond, to Thoroughfare gap. Soon, the distillery, blacksmith, tannery, store and a second mill were being frequented by travelers. Outside merchants arrived, leased adjoining parcels, and built stores of their own. By the end of the eighteenth century there were shopkeepers, a tailor, saddle maker, wheelwright, boot/shoe manufacturer, cooper, two taverns, an apothecary, church and a woolen factory--the essentials of a small town.

When Samuel Love died in 1787, John Love inherited the main house. In 1797, by petition to the General Assembly, he laid out a grid of lots around the irregular clusters of shops and outbuildings described in this document as "upwards of twenty good houses occupied by tradesmen and merchants." The Virginia General Assembly established the "forty-eight lott plan of the Town of Buckland in 1798." At the same time, John Love and his brothers bred horses, operated a stone quarry, farmed on an extensive scale and experimented with several varieties of wheat for grinding in their mills. They were growing a strand of wheat called the Lawler, which had a natural resistance to the Hessian Fly, an insect that devastated the U.S. wheat crop during the early nineteenth century. In a letter from John Love to President Madison, Love stated that President Monroe who had visited Buckland "and who being satisfied from the appearance of the Lawler wheat contrasted with the common kinds, that it was not injured by the Hessian Fly, engaged with me (John Love) for 200 bushels for himself and would also reserve the same quantity for" Presidents Madison and Jefferson. John Love also corresponded with Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Patrick Henry, James Cabell and other notables about agricultural and political issues of the day.

Buckland was also known for its horses. Beginning in the 1780's, John and Samuel Love began to import Arabian and fine European horses to breed. The blood-lines of their stallions Mohamet and Spread Eagle are listed among the origins of the modern Thoroughbred. This operation turned into one of the first large-scale breeding farms in Virginia. In 1789, General George Washington bought one of these horses "for his own use." He corresponded with and introduced the Loves to James McHenry, Secretary of War under President John Adams. The Loves furnished McHenry with a large number of horses for the U.S. Army in 1799.

Buckland continued to prosper through the first part of the nineteenth century. In 1806, newly elected Congressman John Love formed the Fauquier-Alexandria Turnpike Company and built a road from the Little River Turnpike at Fairfax C.H. to Buckland. The company was re-organized in 1821 as the Alexandria-Warrenton Turnpike Company and it was decided at that time, to extend the road from Buckland to Warrenton. Notable French engineer Claudius Crozet was engaged to design the new thoroughfare. The Town Trustees and Crozet also determined that Buckland would be improved by building the new turnpike through the center of town rather than at the north end where Bridge street, Love street and the old wooden bridge over Broad Run had accommodated through travelers since 1775. The project would require an area of land from the original Plan of the Town the width of one lot wide from east to west. Lots 31,5,14 and 28 were condemned in 1823 and Crozet constructed the new road using a revolutionary process of paving

invented by John Loudon McAdam. It was the first road of its type in Virginia. Crozet also designed Buckland's stone bridge, the first of its type in America, on "the Pike", as it was locally known. The abutments of this bridge at Buckland still stand and are visible today from Route 29. Several new buildings and stores including the Stage Coach Inn, were built beside the "new paved road."

Between the time of its construction and the time of the Civil War a number of famous figures visited Buckland on the Pike. In 1825 General Lafayette traveled the road on the last leg of his triumphant tour and was received by local citizens at the Buckland Tavern. In 1830, Mrs. Anne Royall, a notoriously critical travel writer, followed the road to Buckland. In her book, "Mrs. Royall's Southern Tour", she described the town as "a romantic, lively, business-doing village, situated on a rapid, rolling stream...several manufactories are propelled by this stream which adds much to the scenery. Buckland owns the largest distillery I have seen in my travels. The buildings, vats, and vessels are quite a show. There is also flour manufactory here on a very extensive scale-this stream is a fund of wealth to the citizens...encompassed with rising grounds and rocks, the roaring of the water-falls, and the town stretching up and scattering from the stream to the top of the hills, was truly picturesque." She further described Buckland as "a real Yankee town for business"--one of her kinder reviews. Constant traffic brought new enterprises, such as the Pony Express and William Smith's stagecoach line. By 1835, Buckland was a thriving stagecoach town complete with its own Post office and Stagecoach Inn. The local population consisted of one hundred thirty whites and fifty blacks, some of whom were freed slaves. The African American citizens of Buckland, from the beginning, were skilled laborers who, in the late eighteenth century, owned land and slaves of their own. Rather than assuming the name of another, one former slave who must have been proud of his work in the Buckland Distillery, called himself "Ned Distiller" and is listed on the 1810 census as freed. Samuel King of Buckland, freeman of colour, emancipated his wife Celia and others in 1811.

In 1840, John Love sold Buckland to George Washington's first cousin and followed his friend Andrew Jackson west to Tennessee, with whom he had been involved in Kentucky and Tennessee land speculation. Eppa Hunton, of Ball's Bluff fame built a school in Buckland in 1841 and instructed law to the sons of Judge John Webb Tyler and others. In 1853, Temple Mason Washington conveyed Buckland Farm to Richard Bland Lee II, son of Congressman Richard Bland Lee of Sully, nephew of "Lighthorse Harry" and first cousin of General Robert E. Lee. Lee obtained the rank of Major in the U.S. Army and was appointed the same rank in the Confederate States Army.

During the Civil War, Buckland became a prime target due to its mills and its proximity to the Warrenton Turnpike which had become a primary route for east-west travel. The first shots of the Battle of 2nd Manassas were fired from Crozet's stone bridge in August 1862. Then, on 19 October 1863 the Confederate cavalry enjoyed its final southern victory at Buckland where it defeated Generals Kilpatrick, and General George Armstrong Custer. Sometimes referred to as "Custer's First Stand," it was Custer's most serious defeat prior to the Battle of Little Big Horn. After the Confederates recaptured Crozet's Bridge, they sent the Yankees scrambling on a five-mile steeplechase along the Warrenton Turnpike. General J.E.B. Stuart humorously called the victory "The Buckland Races" as if it had been a glorious foxhunt and later, in his official report stated "I am justified in declaring the rout of the enemy at Buckland the most single and complete that any cavalry has suffered during the war." 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 Stuart" was engraved for use on the front page of Harper's Magazine in November 1863. Forbes and other artists documented the events at Buckland by sketch and engraving. General Robert E. Lee wrote General 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." On 21 October 1863, General Lee must have been pleased to write to his mother with news of victory at Buckland so late in the war, "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. Stuart retreated designedly before them toward Warrenton and Our Divisions, under Gen. Fitz Lee came up perpendicular to the Pike

and cut their column in two. The surprise was complete and we ran them as far as we could see them. Captured half their ambulances, one wagon loaded with ammunitions, one loaded with medical stores and 800 prisoners." The Union Army suffered 230 casualties and the Buckland Tavern and Church were used as hospitals.

Richard Bland Lee and his descendants lived at Buckland until 1935. Mrs. R.B.Lee's first cousin, painter John Singer Sargent, visited Buckland Hall on several occasions during the late nineteenth century and painted a rare watercolor of the house in 1887. He also painted three large oil landscapes of various views of the farm. In 1935 the property was sold to Mitchell Harrison, who hired architect Irwin Fleming for the restoration of the main house.

The property was later sold to Thomas Mellon Evans, a noted Wall Street financier, philanthropist, and horse breeder. Mr. Evans spent the next four decades 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. Pleasant Colony died on New Years Eve 2002 and was buried at Buckland within sight of the barn where he was foaled.

The Town of Buckland, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, remains a rare example of a vernacular stagecoach town that represents the early industrialization of America with its mills, factories, merchants and tradesmen rather than the grand or high style, which has been preserved elsewhere, in places like Williamsburg. The pony express, stagecoach line and the McAdam turnpike road, that exemplified the early transportation system in this country, all converged at Buckland and made it the vibrant place of business described by all accounts. The railroads, steam power and Civil War reconstruction changed this way of life in America forever, but bypassed Buckland completely. Much of the little town that grew from the eighteenth century farm secondary structures survives, remarkably undisturbed by the development and change experienced in other places. An archeological study of the 48 lot Plan of the Town of Buckland is especially exciting, as Buckland has lost only four of its original lots to the expansion of Route 29. The condemnation of those parcels was made in 1824, when the road was extended to Warrenton. This unusual circumstance has left the stratigraphy and archeology associated with the remaining 92% of the Town, little disturbed since the eighteenth century. Like a time capsule, many of the eighteenth century stone foundations remain in place along with the artifacts associated with each parcel. In preserving this site we have perhaps, the best chance at demonstrating everyday life in old Virginia, as most of these more modest places have disappeared long ago. The present owner of Buckland Hall has formed a non-profit foundation (Buckland Preservation Society) for the purpose of conducting a state-of-the-art investigation and study of the archeology, architecture, cultural landscape and historical record of the Town of Buckland. Our board of directors is devoted to preserving this site for the Commonwealth.

David William Blake