

Buckland History

Prior to the establishment of Buckland Towne in 1798, this same site, on the banks of Broad Run, was a thriving prehistoric, Native American settlement. The first recorded deeds make reference to the "Indian Springs". There were five springs, which indicates a rather large Indian population. Jefferson Street, that bisects the village of Buckland, was once known as the Iroquois Trail. (Record of this Trail appears in 1662, when Col. Abraham Wood, a noted surveyor of his day, reported that "the Susquehannoc Indians would leave their main village about forty miles up the Susquehanna River; make their way to Point of Rocks, thence down into North Carolina, where they would barter with Indians on the Yadkin River for beaver skins, then return to New Amsterdam and sell their skins to the Dutch".) After the Treaty of Albany was signed in 1722, the trail became known as the Carolina Trail or Road.

This location on the banks of Broad Run with a never failing, swift flow of water, proved to be as desirable to the European settlers but, rather for the establishment of mills. The land at Buckland was originally part of the Broad Run Tract owned by Robert (King) Carter and after his death, his sons, Landon and Charles, deeded the tract in 1771 to brother-in-law Walker Taliaferro. The Carter family had operated a Mill here in the early 1770's when the property was conveyed in 1774 to Samuel Love "together with the mill built and erected thereon and the land mill dam and other appurtenances used with said mill". Mr. Love who was then living in Maryland, and is reputed to have engaged the architect William Buckland to design a house for his new residence in Virginia while serving at the Maryland Convention in Annapolis, Maryland in 1773-74. Buckland, British architect who was brought to America in the 1750's to design George Mason's Gunston Hall, was building the Hammond-Harwood and Chase-Lloyd houses in Annapolis at that time, and died suddenly in 1774. Samuel Love built his Virginia house after the death of William Buckland. It was thereafter called Buckland Hall, it is believed it was named, in his honor. Mr. Love moved to Virginia with his wife and sons, Samuel, John, Charles, and Augustine. The four sons fought in the Revolutionary War. Samuel Love petitioned the Virginia General Assembly on 22 November 1779, for an improvement to the roadway and was later granted "a new road to Mr. Samuel Love's Mill". This shifted the old Carolina Road to the west slightly, which was the main route of travel through the region. The town of Buckland was later laid out along the realized road.

The Love family owned many farms comprising more than 12,000 acres. They grew wheat and tobacco and bred horses extensively. Sam Love was involved with early commerce by assuring the transportation of commodities to and from Virginia's seaports. He sat on the some of the first toll road committee boards in Virginia, including that which operated the Little River Turnpike and also owned property in the old port of Dumfries. Samuel Love died "at his home Buckland" 24 April 1787, leaving to "His son, John, the land I now live on" and was buried in the family graveyard east of the main house. In 1794, John and his brother Charles Love applied for water rights on Broad Run. They erected a second mill at Buckland (later known as Kinsley Mill). Records indicate that more than twenty houses had been built before 1798, probably for

the many employees required to run such an endeavor. An Act of the Virginia Assembly, introduced by John Love and some of the townspeople, dated 15 January 1798, granted "that the lots and streets as the same are already laid off by John Love, on his land lying on both sides of Broad Run and near the mill of the said John Love, shall be established a town by the name of Buckland". As the founder of the Town, Love had early plans to connect it by highway with Alexandria. Educated at William and Mary, he practiced law in Alexandria. He served as Chairman of the committee, which moved the Prince William County seat from Dumfries to Brentsville, elected Virginia State Delegate 1805-07, United States Congressman 1807-1811, Chairman, Committee on District of Columbia, and Virginia State Senator 1816-20.

John Love and his brother, Samuel, who were breeding horses at Buckland in the 1780's- 90's were among the first in America to import Arabian and fine European horses. The Loves were among the early Virginians who had the noble ambition to improve the bloodstock of horses. Those bloodlines are among the foundations of the modern thoroughbred. The Loves breeding operation was conducted on a large scale. They corresponded with George Washington, for example, in June of 1799 about "furnishing a number of horses for use of the Army of the United States". Later that year, by direction of President Washington, the Love's negotiated the terms of sale for many horses with the Secretary of War, James McHenry, under President John Adams. Washington suggested to McHenry, that in this case "the most eligible mode of obtaining the best Horses for Cavalry service would be to permit the Captains to purchase them for their respective Troops". Stallions were stood "at Buckland", and among them, the "noted horse Mahomet". In 1799 the Loves purchased "the celebrated horse Spread Eagle, imported from London, and the late property of Lord Sackville, undoubtedly the best three-year old of his day in England, having won the Derby stakes at Epsom, England, against the best colts in the Kingdom". George Washington himself purchased one of the Love's horses for his own use. Seeing young Lieutenant, Charles Love riding his own horse in the Army, the General directed the Secretary of War to inquire about its purchase. Love wrote General Washington, 2 April 1789 and agreed to the sale with reluctance but further stated: "Could I hope Sir, you would accept the use of this horse until your immediate purpose was answered, it would be much more agreeable to me than to part with him altogether, permit me to observe, however, flattering it may be to my mind to have contributed in any degree to your ease or convenience, I am equally activated by a desire to remove, as far as is in my power, every obstacle that can have a tendency to retard the progress of our new established government."

John Love also experimented with crops at Buckland and was a member of some of the early Agricultural Societies. The larva of what was to be called the "Hessian Fly" was introduced, it is believed with the rations of the British Hessian. This fly caused a near failure of the wheat crop in the United States and helped cause the Panic of 1819. There were two strains of wheat that had a natural resistance to this devastation One was "the Lawler wheat", which John Love was growing at Buckland. Records of the early Agricultural Societies in Virginia and publications of the day, such as the "English Agriculturalists" abroad, referenced the Lawler wheat.

President Monroe visited Buckland to see John Love's wheat crop in spring of 1817 and purchased "200 bushels for himself, reserved 200 bushels for James Madison and the same quantity for Thomas Jefferson". There are letters among John Love, Monroe, Madison and Jefferson, in which they compared the results of various wheat seed grown and how it performed against the Hessian Fly and other enemies. Thomas Jefferson wrote John Love, 3 August 1817 about President Monroe's proffered reservation of wheat: "I feel much indebted to the President for having thought of me, and to yourself for giving me an opportunity of procuring a supply of the Lawler wheat for seed".

The town of Buckland continued to prosper throughout the nineteenth century. John Love formed the Fauquier-Alexandria Turnpike Company in 1808 and built a road from the Little River Turnpike directly to Buckland. In 1821 the company was reorganized and renamed the Alexandria-Warrenton Turnpike Company, at which time the road was extended from Buckland to Warrenton. This provided the first well-maintained route for citizens of the region to transport their crops and goods to the great port of Alexandria, the early port of Dumfries having silted in by this time. The records of this turnpike company document the employ of Claudius Crozet, French-born engineer, later Chief Engineer for the Commonwealth of Virginia and Chief Engineer of the United States, as the builder of this road including the design and construction of the old stone bridge at Buckland. Most of this stone bridge remains today beside a modern lane of Route 29. Crozet used a new process of road construction developed by Scotsman, John Loudon McAdam. The term "McAdam and McAdamizing" (predecessor to modern asphalt) has become an important part of the road builder's vocabulary. The first roads built in the United States using this process were being built simultaneously, from Hagerstown to Boonesboro, Maryland (completed in 1823) and from Buckland to Fauquier Court House, (Warrenton) Virginia (completed in 1824). The McAdam road at Buckland was the first of its type to be laid in Virginia and was touted as "the best road in Virginia" by many sources. People came from all over the country to see it and by 1827, many other major roads were "taken up and relaid to make it correspond with and equal to the new road from Buckland to Warrenton".

General Lafayette traveled this road known locally as "The Pike" in the spring of 1825 in the last leg of his triumphant tour of the United States and was received at Buckland Tavern "by little girls who strew flowers in his path" and was honored by the citizens of Buckland, several of whom had written poems in his praise.

On 30 January 1830, Buckland was visited by a Mrs. Anne Royall, who later published a book about her early travels in the United States entitled "Mrs. Royall's Southern Tour". She described Buckland as "a romantic, lively, business-doing village, situated on a rapid, rolling stream which runs through uneven ground, broken into charming complex swells. The borders of the stream are beautifully shaded with walnut trees, and the surrounding soil is rich but stony. 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 huge vessels are quite a show. There is also a flour manufactory here, on a very extensive scale. The stream is a fund of wealth to the citizens. There are also several stores and two taverns in Buckland...Sunday, I was

invited to walk over the town and view manufactories, nor was I ungratified in the scenery of the place- a bold running stream, 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”.

In 1835, an article in a Gazetteer of Virginia described Buckland as “a postal village with an elevated and romantic situation on Broad Run on which two extensive flour manufacturing mills are situated. The village contains 22 dwelling houses, one general store, one large and extensive distillery, one apothecary shop, one house of public worship free for all denominations, two houses of entertainment, one tanner and currier, one wagonmaker, one boot and shoe manufacturer, one cooper, one hatter, one millwright, one blacksmith, one tailor and one saddler...it is an incorporated town, and for beauty of situation and circumjacent scenery, is perhaps not to be surpassed by any in the country. There is one well-organized Sunday School and one Common School. Population 130 whites whom one is a physician and 50 blacks.”

In 1841, Eppa Hunton, later of Balls Bluff fame, “opened a public school at Buckland” at which he taught the five sons of John Webb Tyler among others. He lived with his brother, Silas Hunton, who owned what was later called, Cerro Gordo Plantation, which sits high above Broad Run on the East side of town. The farm was named to commemorate Robert E. Lee’s success in the battle of Cerro Gordo in the Mexican-American War after 1847.

The Mills of Buckland were a target of both sides during the War Between the States and the Warrenton Turnpike was a most important route for east-west travel. As a result, Buckland experienced the frequent movement of both armies through its streets and many skirmishes. The first shots of the Battle of 2nd Manassas were fired on its stone bridge 26 August 1862. Although Brig. General George Armstrong Custer is best known for his exploits as an Indian Fighter in his tragic “Last Stand at the Little Big Horn” in Montana, he also served as a Union cavalry officer during the Civil War and made, what has been called “His First Stand” at Buckland in the best known battle fought here on 19 October 1863. After many disappointments for the Confederacy, this battle, the last southern cavalry victory of the war, improved the moral of the confederacy. It came to be recalled humorously by the confederate troops and is known by the name General J.E.B. Stuart gave it that day “THE BUCKLAND RACES”.

Just before daylight at Buckland, Confederate General Stuart placed sharp shooters and artillery along the west bank of rain swollen Broad Run. Stuart, commanding 2,800 men, sent a note to Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, still in Auburn and asked for protection on his right. A courier from Fitz Lee galloped up to Stuart’s headquarters at Buckland with a reply. Fitz Lee had 5,200 men and devised a trap. “Let Kilpatrick come on, and you withdraw in front of, (luring) him down the Warrenton Pike. When he passes Buckland, I will come in with my command and cut him off in the rear. You turn and come at him when you hear my guns. We will gobble him up and everything with him!”.

Custer’s second brigade began the engagement at Buckland taking the lead on the

Warrenton Turnpike approaching Buckland from the east. His regiments dismounted near the stone bridge and fired on the Stuart's dismounted cavalymen. Custer effected a crossing of Broad Run but realized his flanking moves had succeeded too easily. The opposing Union forces under the command of General Davies (approximately 6,100 men) arrived at Buckland that morning. The First brigade, led by Gen. Kilpatrick, took the lead in pursuit of Stuart as he withdrew, west on the Warrenton Turnpike. Federal Capt. William Glazier, who was in one of the cavalry brigades under Kilpatrick wrote "Dripping wet and somewhat stiffened with cold, we were ordered in battle array early in the morning and the command, about 2000 strong, advanced toward Buckland Mills. The rebel pickets, (Stuart) were quickly withdrawn and their whole force slowly without resistance, retired before us. With some degree of hesitation, yet unconscious of immediate danger, Fitz Lee opened upon our unsuspecting column with a battery of flying artillery. Stuart, who had hitherto retired before us, quietly, now turned about and advanced upon us with terrible determination. Scarcely had we time to recover our sense from the first shock of attack upon our rear and front, when CSA, General Gordon, with a third division of cavalry, until now concealed behind a low range of hills and woods to our left appeared with furious attack which threatened to sever our brigades."

Custer was instructed to follow Davies but refused to move ahead immediately. His men had been fighting all morning and the horses had not been fed since the night before. He remained at Buckland to take care of these matters. In the afternoon, Custer had progressed only a short distance down the Warrenton Turnpike when he heard shots vindicating his suspicions that the enemy had something planned. He raced back and had his men form a battle line facing south on the turnpike, close to the stone bridge at Buckland. Custer saw an enemy line of infantry more than a mile in extent advancing against his brigade. Custer had a big problem; it was Fitz Lee's entire command and Custer was separated from Davies by more than a mile. Confederate cavalymen seized the stone bridge at Buckland. Custer lost his command vehicle, filled with his personal effects and brigade official papers. Davies could not stand it long; they broke and he ordered "every man for himself". The frantic steeplechase for five miles back along the turnpike resulted in J.E.B. Stuart's jocular characterization, "THE BUCKLAND RACES". Kilpatrick had his best horse "Lively" shot out from under him. During the chase, Gen. Stuart, who was familiar with the terrain, forced union troops to cross Broad Run north of Buckland. Many of those men died fleeing the Confederate forces, as the Union troops had no knowledge of the cliffs at Broad Run on the north side of Buckland Mill. Many were taken prisoner, among them Capt. William Glazier, who found himself that night in the Warrenton Town Jail. Custer wrote the next day to Nettie Humphrey "Under very distressing circumstances, I turn to you and her (future wife, Libbie) for consolation. It is for others that I feel. Yesterday, October 19th, was the most disastrous this division ever passed through...their entire cavalry under Generals Stuart and Fitzhugh Lee made a stand and prepared to charge my advance. They had the advantage in position. As soon as I discovered their immense superiority, I sent a staff officer to General Kilpatrick asking for assistance, but failed to get it".

In a letter dated 21 October 1863, General Robert E. Lee wrote home to "My Dear Mother, It has been quite an age since you have heard from me and though I am very tired and sleepy, I'll not neglect this opportunity, as we move off in the morning, of

letting you know that I am well and in good health. We have had a long and tiresome trip but our men stood it very cheerfully and the cavalry covered themselves with glory...all the country the other side of Warrenton along the railroad and east of it, is a perfect desert. -- not a dwelling that is not torn all to pieces, not a piece of fencing or any signs of civilization.. We met separately and collectively the three Yankee divisions of cavalry Bedford's Regulars, Gregg's and Kilpatrick's and whipt them every time. The last fight was at Buckland on the Warrenton & Alexandria Turnpike; where General Stuart retreated designedly before them towards Warrenton and our Divisions under General 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 of their ambulances, one wagon loaded with ammuniton and one loaded with medical stores & 800 prisoners".

In an article entitled "Custer's Stinging Defeat", the Buckland Races have been described as "J.E.B. Stuart's last victory over the union cavalry and Custer's most serious defeat until his final battle at Little Big Horn". Stuart boasted in his field notes, "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".

Alfred Waud is recognized as the best Civil War sketch artist who documented the war for the nation's pictorial press. Waud made three sketches of Buckland: 1st- "Buckland from Mr. Hunton's House, scene of cavalry engagement with Stuart" that was engraved for use in the front page of Harper's Magazine 14 November 1863 2nd- "Advance of Custer's Brigade" 19 October 1863 and 3rd- "Crossing Broad Run" at Buckland. These drawings were part of J. P. Morgan's collection and were given to the Library of Congress at his death.

A funny story, told a thousand times, concerns a blacksmith in Buckland by the name of John Trone. "He was too old to fight in the war but he did his part for the Confederacy in his shop by the roadside. One day, a federal officer rode up and demanded that his horse be shod, but he was curtly refused. "This horse is going to be shod, by God" he shouted, to which the blacksmith quickly retorted, "maybe God will shoe your horse, but John Trone will not." So the Federal Officer rode away without having received either divine or human aid.

John Love sold Buckland in 1840. He had invested in several hundred thousand acres of land in Tennessee and previously had moved there in the 1820's. Both Charles and John Love had close ties in politics, business and friendship to Andrew Jackson. There is much correspondence among them. John Love sold Jackson several thousand acres and also represented him as an attorney. Charles Love is painted by Ralph Earl as one of "Andrew Jackson's Court". He was given power of attorney as "a favor to his friend" by then President Jackson "to oversee the reconstruction of his home The Hermitage" when it burned.

Buckland Hall was sold in 1840 to one of George Washington's cousins, Temple Mason Washington. In 1853, it was conveyed to the eldest son of Congressman Richard Bland Lee of Sully. R. B. Lee II was a West Point graduate, nephew to "Lighthorse

Harry" Lee and first cousin to General Robert E. Lee. He obtained the rank of Major in the United States Army and upon the outbreak of the War Between the States, resigned that position and was appointed the same in the C.S.A.. R. B. Lee II and his descendents lived at Buckland Hall until 1935. I am truly grateful to his great grandson, Mr. Bland Lee, for having explained many interesting facts about the history of the farm and town I might never have known otherwise. His grandmother's first cousin was the famous portrait painter, John Singer Sargent, who often spent summers at Buckland during the late 19th century. While visiting, he painted Buckland Hall (1887) and three large oil landscapes of various views of the farm. In 1935, the property was sold to Mitchell Harrison and was carefully restored by noted architect, Irving Fleming.

Thereafter, the property was sold to Thomas Mellon Evans, noted Wall Street financier, philanthropist and horseman. At Buckland, he bred champion Thoroughbred horses over four decades, including Pleasant Colony, winner of the 1981 Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes and who narrowly missed the Triple Crown by placing in the Belmont Stakes. Mr. Evans was active in numerous charities and art organizations including the National Gallery of Art, the National Portrait Gallery and Carnegie-Mellon University.

Pleasant Colony died New Year's Eve, 2002. He was buried New Year's Day at Buckland within site of the barn in which he was foaled, in the center of the new Casanova Hunt Race Course.

The history of Buckland has many layers, and I have just begun to understand its significance. I believe it to be an important part of Virginia's splendid past, as well as, the heritage of this nation. While new roads and homes are necessary with the modern impetus of progress, those few places remaining that have such a high concentration of historical significance, should, somehow, be preserved. The efforts necessary to preserve the town of Buckland will require more than my family, neighbors, and citizens of the old town here can muster. I urge all who may share my interests and concerns to please support changes to the current plans of the Federal and State Highway Administrations that will make possible the preservation of Buckland. It is my hope that we may all better appreciate its simple beauty and enjoy it together.

DAVID WILLIAM BLAKE

Further information concerning the history and preservation of the Town of Buckland is available by calling 703-754-8406 in Prince William County or 540-347-5821 in Fauquier County. We are in the process of founding a non-profit foundation for this purpose.