

# historical treasures

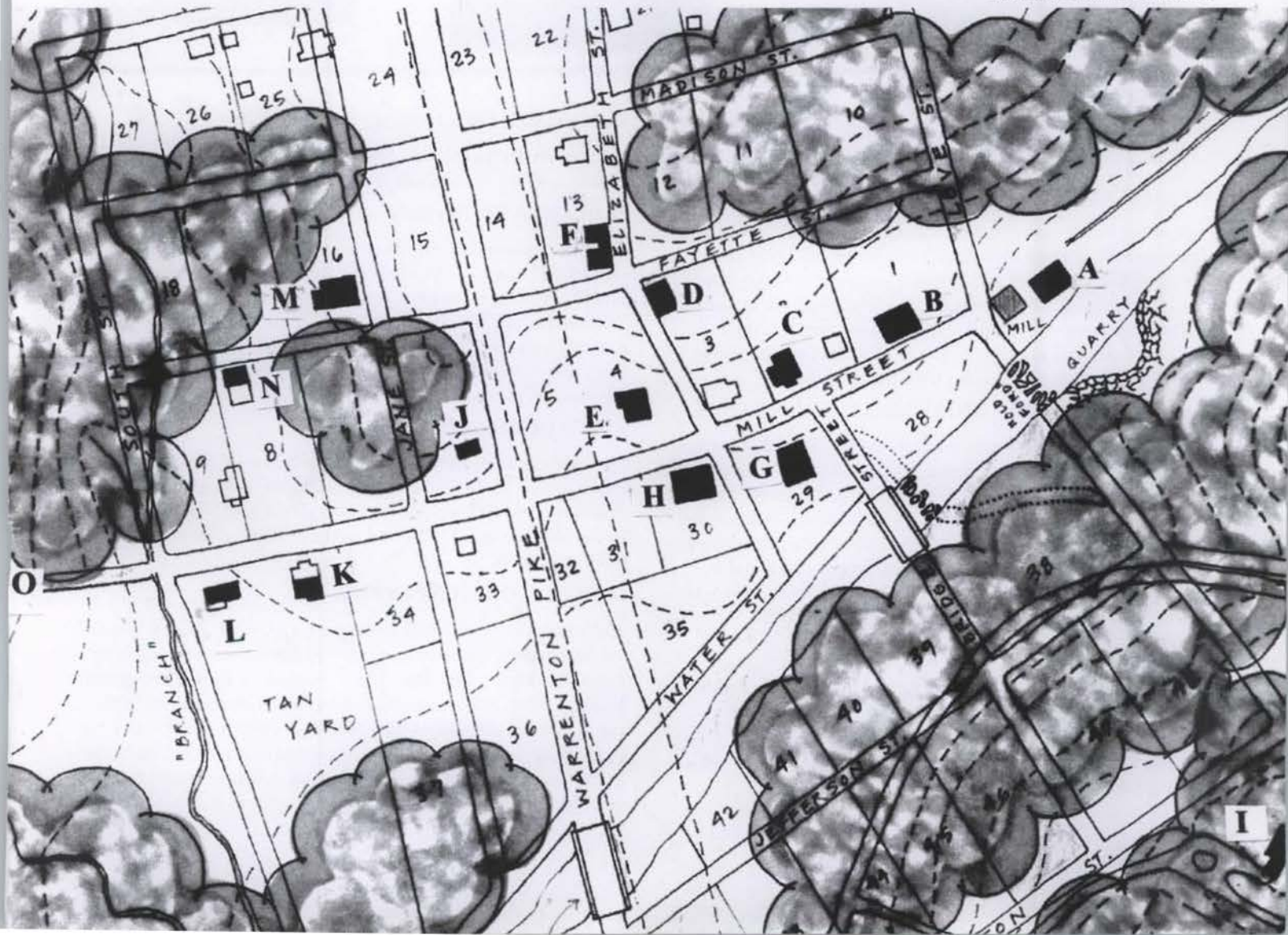
## Discovering Buckland's

Part II: The town has many surviving 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century structures

Although archaeological evidence has documented continuous major settlements at "Buck Land" Virginia for several thousand years, along with an early European settlement in the 1750s, the historic buildings that remain extant on the site date from the 1770s to 1856. These structures are largely those associated with the Town of Buckland, finally chartered by Act of General Assembly in 1797.

More than a dozen modest houses had been built at the site prior to 1759 (according to Betram Ewell's map). The most substantial early dwelling house was constructed by the Reverend Isaac Campbell by this time on land later owned and occupied by the Hunton family and renamed Cerro Gordo.

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However, the origins of the town begin with the Love family. Samuel Love purchased the Broad Run Tract in 1774, and his son John Love (Delegate, Senator and U.S. Congressman during the Jefferson and Madison administrations) laid out the "Town of Buckland." Using the road between Love's Mill and Buckland Hall as an axis and main street, he created what experts call, "a rare example of the English Axial Village Pattern."

Today, it is important to understand that the Town of Buckland survives remarkably intact, with 21 period buildings and highly significant archaeological sites<sup>11</sup> on the north side of U.S. 29 and 10 on the south side. This road was a project founded by John Love in the early 1820s and originally called the Fauquier-Alexandria Turnpike.



*A sampling of the main structures follows:*

**A. BUCKLAND GRIST MILL**

Parts of the Buckland Grist Mill date back to the 1790s. Original architectural features include hewn sills, chamfered post and bearing plates, and hewn and pit-sawn joists and framing. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century milling equipment remains on the upper floor, as well as the drive system, pulleys, belts, sifters and graders. It is the only fully intact mill still standing in Prince William County, and is owned by Brian Mannix and his wife, Susan Dudley.

**B. SAMUEL LOVE JR.'s STORE/MILLER'S RESIDENCE**

Now the home of Mr. Mannix and Ms. Dudley, their 20<sup>th</sup> century residence was built around a one-story log-and-frame structure that has been identified as the miller's home for the Buckland Mill and two earlier mills. The log section bears the plan of a commercial store and counting room; the frame part was the family's dining room and parlor, with bedchambers on the upper floor and a storage room in the stone cellar. It is believed that the store was built by Samuel Love on Lot #1 prior to October 1798.

**C. BROOK'S TAVERN**

A two-story frame structure dating to ca. 1790, Brook's Tavern (Lot #2) was built by George Britton, and later sold to the Hampton family, who built the distillery across Mill Street. Pres. James Monroe and the Marquis de Lafayette stopped at Brook's Tavern during Lafayette's trip to the U.S. in 1825.

**D. RICHARD GILL HOUSE**

Located on #3 on the west side of Mill Street, the Richard Gill House dates to the 1780s. It is now owned by Mr. Thomas Ashe.

**E. BUCKLAND TAVERN**

Records indicate that the three-story Buckland Tavern was built on Lot #4 prior to 1799, when the property was sold first by John and Elizabeth Love to Charles Thornhill, and soon afterward to William Brooks. The interior features stone fireplaces with fine mantels, and the English basement with its low, beamed ceiling has been restored to the time when it was visited by Andrew Jackson. Thomas Ashe purchased the historic tavern in 1975.

**F. NED DISTILLER'S HOUSE**

Owned by Francis Hawley in 1800, the house on Lot #13 was purchased by Ned Distiller, a free black who worked at the distillery on Mill Street, no later than 1821. Ned Distiller is listed in the 1810 census of Buckland, and owned two slaves, possibly family members.

**G. BUCKLAND POST OFFICE**

The story-and-a-half frame structure built on Lot #29 around 1800 was originally a store, with a traditional storeroom and counting room above a storage cellar. There is extensive early framing and building fabric indicating that the room on the north end of the porch may have served as the post office. Largely intact, it is a rare example of an early commercial store, and may also be one of the earliest surviving post offices in Virginia. It is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Wright Jr.

## H. DR. BROWN HOUSE

Located on Lot #30 across Mill Street from the Buckland Tavern, the original part of the Brown House was built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A two-story addition was built about 1855, and the house was enlarged again after the Civil War. It is clearly visible in the Alfred Waud drawing done in 1863. The wing that served as Dr. Brown's office was demolished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## I. CERRO GORDO



## L. 8205 BUCKLAND MILL ROAD

Originally built in 1840 as a residence, the house at 8205 Buckland Mill Road was licensed as the Francis Tavern later that year.

## M. BUCKLAND CHURCH

The Buckland Church on Lot #15 was completed in 1856, on the site of an older church that dated back to the early 1790s. Originally an Episcopal church, it was opened to all denominations, and later became St. Mark's Methodist Church.

Owned by Edward B. "Barry" and Linda Wright since 1983, Cerro Gordo sits on a rise on the north side of Broad Run across from Buckland. The present structure was built in 1925, upon the foundation and using the stone chimneys of a circa 1827 frame house built by William Alexander, and later owned by the Hunton family. In the late 1840s, Eppa Hunton, then master of the Buckland School, lived at Cerro Gordo with his brother Charles and his family. During the Battle of Buckland Mill, troops under Gen. George A. Custer and Pennington's Battery attacked the town from a position at Cerro Gordo. The house burned during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but its remains were used to guide the design and plan of the existing structure.

## South Side of U.S. 29

### J. JOHN TRONE HOUSE

Located across present-day U.S. 29, Lot #6 was purchased by John Trone from John Love on June 8, 1825, who built his home there soon afterward. Documentary evidence indicates that a shop occupied the site before Mr. Trone, a blacksmith and lay preacher, acquired it. During the Civil War, Trone refused to shoe a Union officer's horse. The officer is said to have shouted, "This horse is going to be shod, by God!" to which Mr. Trone replied, "Maybe God will shoe your horse, but John Trone will not." The officer rode away, his horse unshod. Mr. Thomas Ashe now owns the Trone House.

### K. 8203 BUCKLAND MILL ROAD

The house at 8203 Buckland Mill Road was built in the 1840s as workers' housing for the businesses in Buckland, or as a tenant house for Buckland Farm.

It is one of five pre-Civil War churches in Prince William County, and is considered to be the only surviving example of a frame temple-form country church. The Buckland Church is also one of four county churches that served as a battlefield hospital during the Civil War. On the property is a cemetery, where those buried in the African American portion have graves marked by plain fieldstones. The church is owned by Mr. Thomas Ashe and is currently used by the Redeemed Church of Jesus Christ.

### N. ISAAC MEEKS HOUSE

The Isaac Meeks House was built in 1805 on Lot 16, just below the church. The original house was a one-story, single-room structure with a gable roof. During the 1800s, a two-story addition was built on the east end of the house, and the earlier part became the rear service wing. The original structure provides an example of the basic, one-room plan house required by the town trustees as a condition for retaining ownership of a lot. Mr. Thomas Ashe owns the house.

### O. BUCKLAND HALL

Samuel Love built Buckland Hall, originally called Buckland House, in 1774. In 1806, Samuel's son, John Love added onto the original structure, and re-oriented the front of the house to face the road. The property was sold to Temple Washington in 1822, and in 1853, Buckland Hall was acquired by Maj. Richard Bland Lee III. In 1956, Buckland Hall was purchased by the late Thomas Mellon Evans, who raised Thoroughbred horses on the farm. It is now owned by Mr. David Blake.

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## The Work Continues

Conducting research on the existing structures in Buckland and archeology on the sites of those that have been lost will continue through the coming years. In the meantime, other projects are underway dealing with the rich history of the town.

A project to map and survey three properties within the Buckland Historic District was done during March and April 2011. The work, done by the James River Institute for Archeology Inc. and DATA Investigations LLC, focused on the sites of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century distillery, the woolen mill, and a domestic site near the existing mill. The archeologists also surveyed the Buckland Mills tract, conducting shovel testing and mapping key landscape features, including the 18<sup>th</sup> century millrace that provided water to power the grist and woolen mills.

The project was funded by a Certified Local Government grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, with a matching contribution from the Buckland Preservation Society.

It is known that portions of the Fauquier-Alexandria Turnpike still exist, and the macadam section passing through Buckland has been designated an historic site, recorded with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (076-5121 and 076-0131-0045). The old road, hidden on the east side of U.S. 29, is considered a contributing resource to the Buckland Historic District.

Preliminary studies indicate that there is an intact 210-foot portion of Macadam roadbed running from the western abutment of the old bridge back toward Warrenton. Other sections may exist on the eastern side of the bridge as well.

"Evaluating the exact location and integrity of the Macadam road and landscape features associated with the turnpike through archeological testing is the primary purpose of this project," according to the Request for Proposals written by David Blake and Steven Fonzo "This project

is the first phase of a larger, multi-phase project partially funded through the Virginia Department of Transportation's Transportation Enhancement (TE) program."

Along with the existing building and landscape, defining the roadbed will provide an opportunity to re-establish the original town grid and "...learn more about how travelers and businesses interacted and co-existed along this significant stretch of an early American turnpike," according to Mr. Blake and Mr. Fonzo.

The second phase is a survey of Buckland's original layout, with the demarcation of streets and property corners, and the third phase – which would be started after research and surveys have been completed – involves the planning and construction of trails, signage and vehicle pull-offs in the Buckland Historic District.

In the meantime, members of the Buckland Preservation Society continue their work with federal, state and local governments and other preservation organizations to preserve – and some day rebuild – the historic town of Buckland.

Author John Toler is a writer and historian and has served Fauquier County for over 50 years, including 4 decades with the Fauquier-Times Democrat. He has written and lectured about many legendary characters in Fauquier County's history. Toler is the co-author of 250 Years in Fauquier County: A Virginia Story, and author of Warrenton, Virginia: A History of 200 Years.



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