

HISTORIC SITE FILE: *Buckland Historic District*
PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM *November 2009*
RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib, Manassas, VA

Warrenton

Lifestyle

Living & Shopping In Wonderful Warrenton, VA

magazine

In this issue...

Seniors Playing Wii!
Buckland's Treasures
Active Choices for Children
New Chamber Emerges

A LESSON IN *History*

Buckland.



"In my opinion, properly protected and researched, Buckland has the unique potential to teach generations to come much about American values, especially the role of free enterprise, in the development and growth of the U.S. during its founding years between the American Revolution and the Civil War Era. Too often, as at Jamestown, no architectural evidence and few documents survive to help tell significant pieces of the story as it does at Buckland."

William M. Kelso, Ph.D.
APVA Director of Archeology
Jamestown Rediscovery

In an area rife with American history – monuments, President's homes, Civil War battlefields – there is one place nearby that can hold its own with anything anybody else has to offer. You've probably never heard of it, but if you've lived in the area for any length of time, you've probably driven past it hundreds of times, maybe – if you commute to work in Northern Virginia – even thousands of times. The place? It's Buckland, just over the county line in Prince William County.

So, exactly what kind of history are we talking about here? Well, how about Native American burial mounds to start. Then add in all the luminaries from the birth of this nation – George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson. Toss in a couple of foreigners like the Marquis de Lafayette and Claudius Crozet – Napoleon's bridge

The landscape has not changed much from this October 18, 1863 drawing by Alfred Waud (scene of cavalry engagement with Stuart) and the Buckland Preservation Society is working hard to keep it that way.



Small Town, Big History

Preserving Fauquier's Historical Borders

By George Rowand

builder. Then bring it more up to date with connections to the Underground Railroad, a battle between forces of Jeb Stuart and George Armstrong Custer, a stop over by Teddy Roosevelt, and you've got enough history to keep archeologists and preservationists busy for years to come. And, oh, I almost forgot, many of the important buildings from 200 years ago are still standing.

David Blake, the owner of Buckland Farm nearby, said that he was fascinated to learn all the historical information about the nearby area when he bought the farm.

A Yankee Town

"There was a town right here," Blake said. "A very important town in Virginia history. When you're whizzing past here at 60 miles-per-hour, you don't realize that there's so much history that's here. I'm hoping that this can be preserved as a welcome to Fauquier and as a way to keep Gainesville from rolling over us."

Blake made a PowerPoint presentation to show some of the historical facts. He showed an old map of the town, which showed the location of the buildings.

"These are all 18th and 19th century buildings," he explained. "It's the best example of a Piedmont Virginia town that there is. In Warrenton, the original buildings are lost. You don't have the original buildings in their context."

But the history of the town goes back a lot farther than the 18th century, Blake said.

"There is a Native American step mound here, which could go back 5000 years," he said. "Religious ceremonies were held there. This was a major trade

route for Native Americans and one of several sites in Northern Virginia for Native Americans. We need to tell the story inclusive of Native Americans. We can tell a much richer story, and it's all here. There are twenty-some burial mounds around the step mound."

Blake showed slides of some Native American artifacts found in the area, one of which looked like it could have been used in ceremonies involving human sacrifice.

Blake stated that the town of Buckland came to be because of Broad Run.

"Europeans came as far inland as possible by boat, and here's where they stopped on Broad Run," he stated. "The early American settlements were established from about 1747 to 1796. Buckland was built by the power of Broad Run, and it boomed during the turnpike road era when everybody was coming through this place. It had pretty much everything, a quarry, three mills, a blacksmith, and the largest distillery on the east coast at the time. That was their biggest export, whiskey. And we have three of the four original taverns still standing. Williamsburg has only two. A woman of that era [travel writer Anne Royall] said that Buckland was 'a real Yankee town for business' because there was so much activity here."

Blake said that he has spent a decade doing research into the town that he has come to know and respect so well.

"Buckland was one of the first towns to shift from a tobacco economy to a wheat economy," he explained. "And in 1797, it became a chartered town with

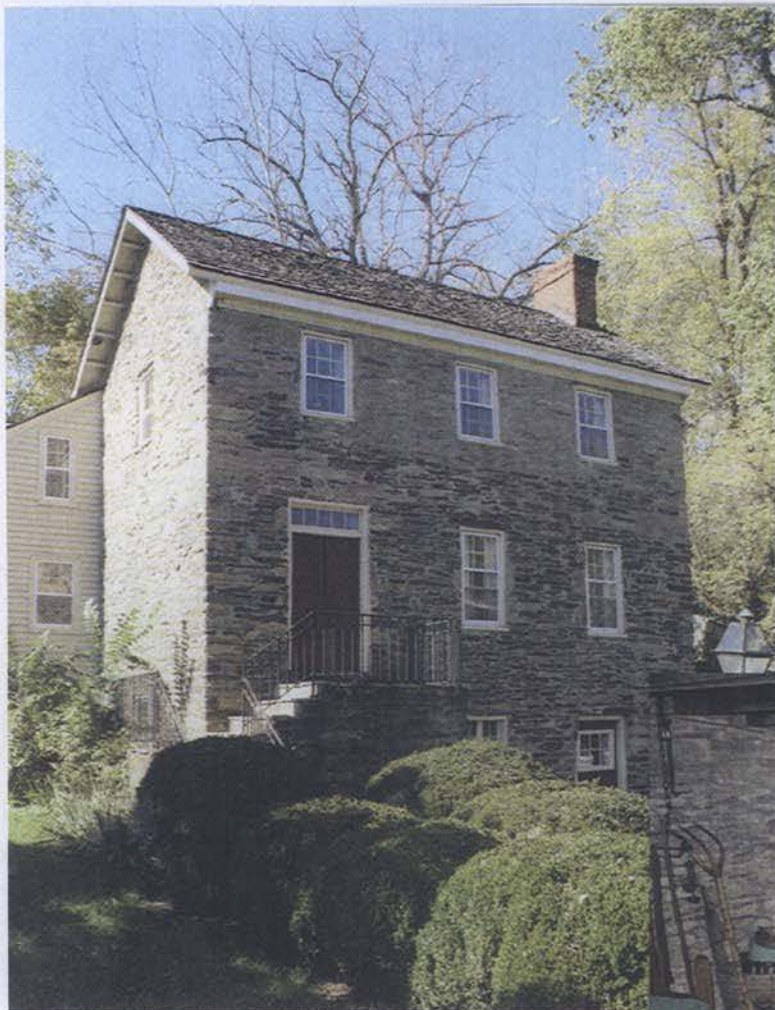


Brooke's Tavern (one of two taverns in the town) once hosted a meeting between General Lafayette and President Monroe.



Just a few feet from what is now Rt. 29, French Engineer Claudius Crozet, bridge builder for Napoleon, inspected and redesigned the thoroughfare between Buckland and Warrenton. In 1823, Crozet had been appointed Virginia's state engineer, making the turnpike at Buckland one of his first American projects.

HISTORY Continued on Page 8



Buckland Tavern, now the residence of a member of the Buckland Preservation Society, was frequented by many former presidents and politicians. President Van Buren scheduled a meeting at Buckland Tavern in 1838.

President Andrew Jackson "passed through this place, in great state, stopping to take breakfast...while here, some of his friends called on him and had some conversation with him in the [Buckland] Tavern (the tavern porch, by the bye, was once a favorite haunt of his, and the theatre of many of his exploits)... he held forth most luminously among other matters relating to his administration upon the Bank of the United States."

The current resident, a great collector of antiques, keeps the Tavern and its rooms as close to original while keeping it habitable for himself.



HISTORY Continued from Page 7

48 lots with a grid and a town common, which was unusual in the South. Buckland was established by tradesmen and merchants."

All About Trade

Blake said that John Love – who owned the house known as Buckland House that Blake currently occupies – was a man of business.

"John Love was an attorney who made a lot of money on patents, law and land speculation," he said. "He went to Philadelphia and saw all the machinery there, and he decided to bring it down here. This guy was following every new piece of technology in the world."

One of the things he did was to start a turnpike company from Fauquier to Alexandria. He hired Claudius Crozet to build the bridge over Broad Run.

"Buckland Bridge was built in 1807, and it leads onto the first McAdam [a hard surfaced] road in Virginia," Blake

said. "On that road, you could get your manufactured goods to port and then to market. The bridge is gone, but the foundations are still there, and so is the road, covered by dirt now."

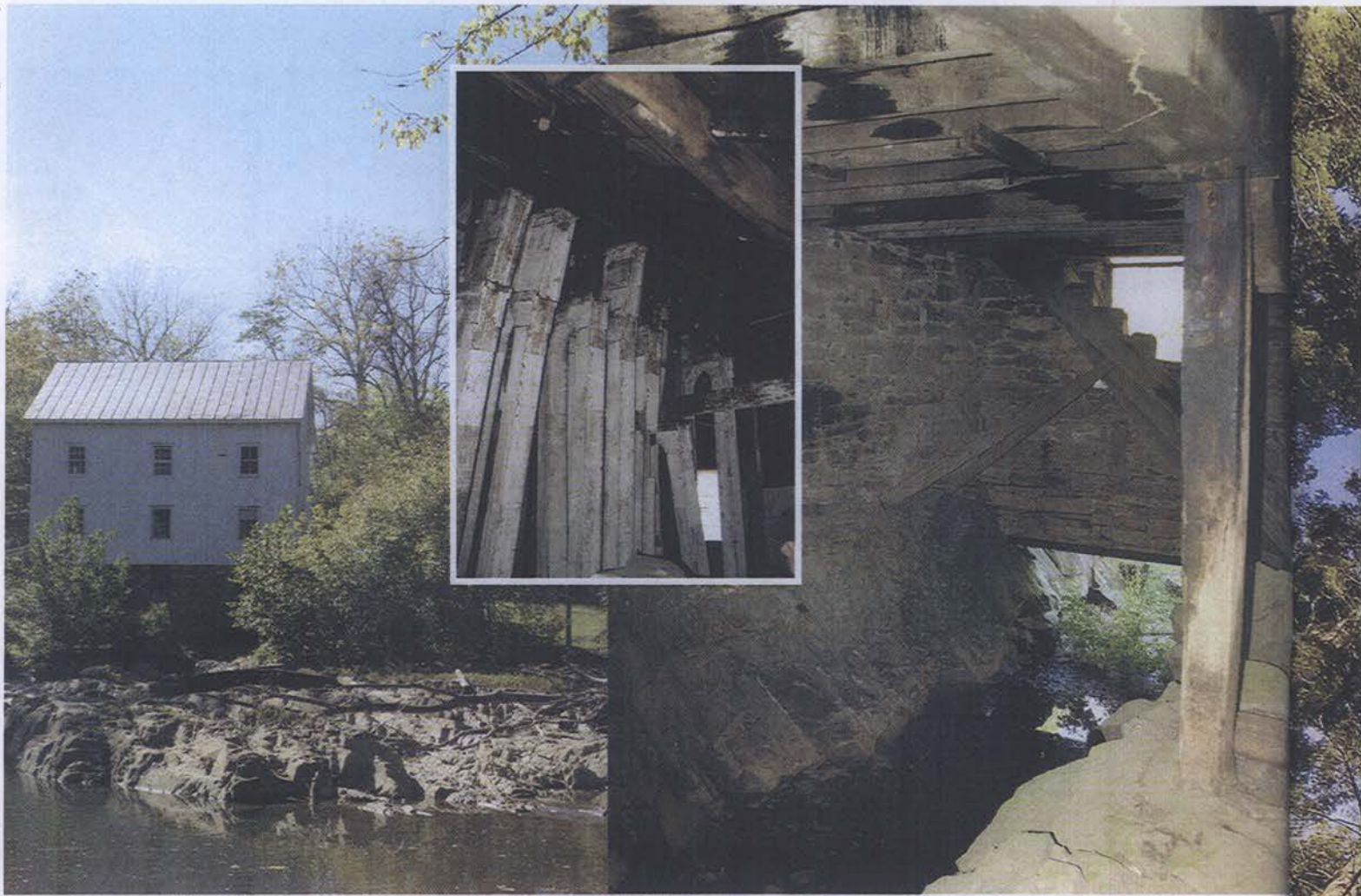
Early presidents came and went through Buckland and Buckland House, Blake said, (see accompanying article) and another bit of history concerns the role of African Americans in the town.

"In 1835, there were 130 whites and 50 African Americans in the town," Blake said. "There were freed blacks here, and they lived among the whites, not in a different part of town. Some of the freed blacks owned slaves themselves, and there was a slave auction house and



Buckland Post Office - records show the list of Postmasters dating back to its opening in December of 1800. The post office also served as a store and as a stop for coaches and advertised a fare of \$1.75 from Fairfax Courthouse to Buckland.

HISTORY Continued on Page 10



Buckland Mill (left: view from across river; center: top floor of mill; right: below ground level). This particular mill was a grist mill for grinding grain to flour.

HISTORY Continued from Page 8

holding pens, so there were good and bad sides to this history. When the Nat Turner Rebellion [a slave-led rebellion against their masters] occurred, the whites got really scared, and they started turning the blacks out, so there was this ugly side. This also was a stop on the Underground Railroad that helped slaves escape to the North and freedom. I think that we need to tell the whole story.”

In 1863, there was a battle between Union and Confederate troops in the town.

“It was in October, 1863, after Gettysburg, and it was a very important battle for the South after the defeat they took in Pennsylvania,” Blake said. “All the Yankee papers said that the Battle of Buckland Mills was a skirmish,

but there were 12,000 men fighting, and the generals said that it was a rout. Hundreds of men were killed here. George Armstrong Custer was here, and it was the last defeat he suffered until the Battle of Little Big Horn. The Confederates marched 200 prisoners to Warrenton, and the Yankees had set up their command on top of the [Native American] step mound. It’s the highest spot around here.”

Blake said that another favorite of area residents of the day – Col. John Mosby – used to use Buckland as his favorite place to fight duels.

“He shot a man dead here,” he said.

Buckland went into decline after the Civil War, yet that might well have saved what is there.

“The turnpike era ended when the

railroad came through, and all this closed down after the Civil War,” Blake explained. “Then the Great Depression hit, and nothing was touched. It’s pretty rare to have a site like this that is untouched. There are 21 buildings that are still standing from that era.”

The history that Blake wants to preserve is under a new threat, even worse, it seems, than Yankee cavalry.

“VDOT wants to make a six-lane highway along [U.S.] 29,” Blake explained. “If they do that, we will lose a lot of the town.

“We’ve got a unique gem here, and with the records that we have, we can restore it, and we need to restore it all. That is the aim. I hope that Buckland can become a center for education that is known world-wide. **W**

A LESSON IN

History

Unveiling



Pleasant Colony's final resting place.

THE
Warrenton
Lifestyle
magazine

A division of Piedmont Press & Graphics
404 Belle Air Lane • Warrenton, Virginia 20186
540-347-4466 • www.warrentonlifestyle.com

***: