

Buckland, the 'time capsule' village on Broad Run



Part I: Quiet setting today belies Buckland's rich heritage and historical significance

By John T. Toler

Driving south on U.S. 29 where it crosses Broad Run, one can catch a glimpse of the old stone tavern on the corner, and farther back, some old houses and a large frame building next to the stream that was once a mill.

This community in a shallow valley along Broad Run is what remains of the town of Buckland, once called "the Lowell of Prince William County," a reference to the industrial town of Lowell, Mass.

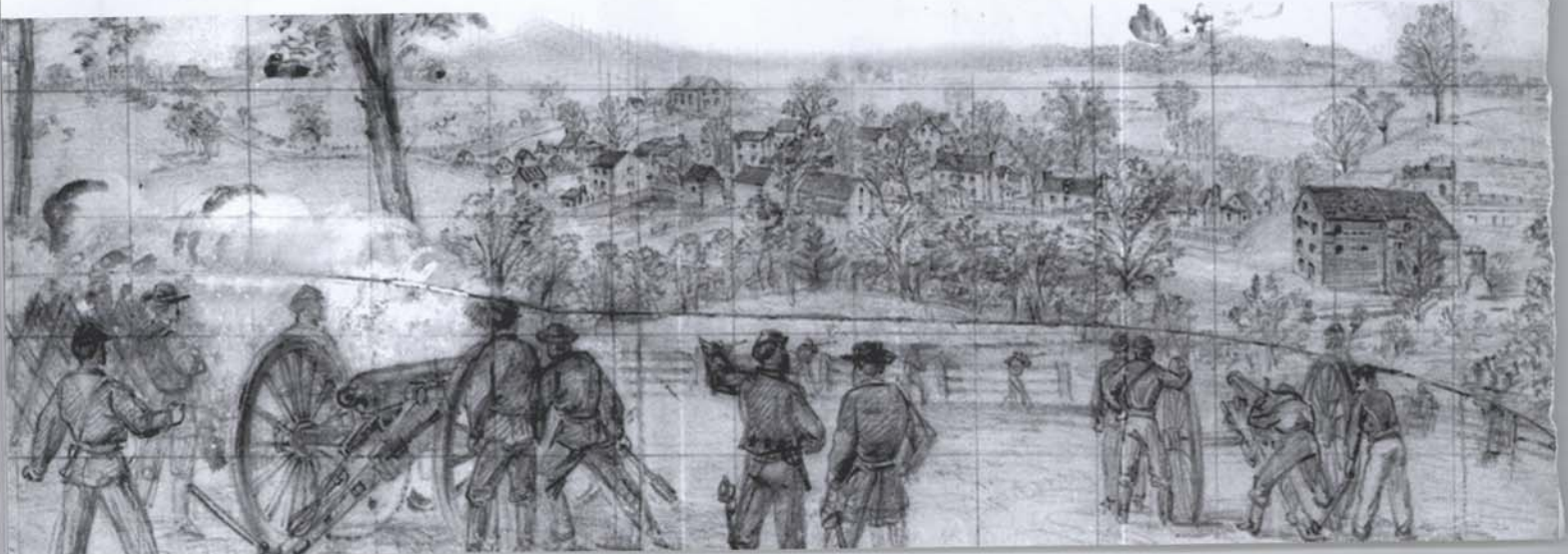
The curious who venture down the short, narrow section of Route 684 leading back to the mill quickly realize that they have entered a place that is very special, if not unique; the number of historic site markers along the street remove any doubt.

Due to its location in a high-growth area directly on a heavily traveled highway, in recent years Buckland has faced certain obliteration. Fortunately, people connected to the village, including current property owners and other kindred spirits, became aware of the village's endangered condition, and have acted.

Along with his neighbors, David W. Blake, owner of nearby Buckland Farm, founded the Buckland Preservation Society Inc. in 2003. They realized that Buckland offered at least three separate "historical landscapes" that have survived virtually intact:

- The Town of Buckland and the immediate surrounding areas, which are now protected in a 497-acre National Register Historic District;
- The entire core ground of the 1863 Buckland Mills Battlefield, as established by the American Battlefield Protection Program; and
- A Native American town/trading center and sacred site on the Susquehanna Plain Path (Old Carolina Road) at Buckland.

Above: Label once used for products manufactured at the Buckland Woolen Mill. Below: Contemporary drawing by Civil War artist Alfred Waud, depicting Gen. George Armstrong Custer's position at Cerro Gordo, on the heights above Buckland during the Battle of Buckland Mills, Oct. 19, 1863.



Because so much of these separate historic landscapes survive as well as the original buildings in their original contexts, Mr. Blake believes that Buckland could be restored "...in a way you can't restore other historic places."

To this end, the BPS has used several different methods to acquire and protect the property in and around Buckland, and much of the land has been placed in permanent easement – never to be developed, and protected from encroachment.

Buckland's Rich Heritage

There was already business activity going on in the town on Broad Run originally called "Buck Land" by the Native Americans, when Samuel Love, Buckland's "Founding Father," purchased land from Robert "King" Carter's sons and son-in-law in the area, including a mill and dam. He also built Buckland Hall, a stone house east of the village.

Changes began in 1775, after Love petitioned Fauquier County (at the time it was thought that the little settlement was in Fauquier) to build an improved public road that could carry wagon traffic from Warrenton to his mill on Broad Run, replacing the rutted, inadequate private road then in use.

It was determined that there was sufficient public need, and the road was one of the first public roads in the region. Samuel Love's sons Samuel, John, Charles and Augustine served as Virginia Regiment officers during the Revolutionary War, and returned to transform Buckland into a vibrant mercantile center.

Beside (Love's) mill, they built an assortment of secondary structures for production of manufactured goods at the base of the lane leading to the main house.

The Town of Buckland was chartered by an Act of the Virginia General Assembly in 1797, and included 48 lots on both sides of Broad Run and the Town Common, with the road passing through the settlement.

The influence of the Love family on Buckland cannot be overstated. In 1808, John Love, then a U.S. congressman representing Fauquier and Prince William counties, formed the Fauquier-Alexandria Turnpike, which would link Fauquier Court House – by way of Buckland – with the Little River Turnpike (present-day Route 7), and on to Alexandria.



Buckland Mill is the only one of the three mills in Buckland to survive. In this late 19th century photo, the large dam on Broad Run can be seen.

It took several years for the first paved road in Virginia to be built. French engineer Claudius Crozet was engaged to design and construct the portion that passed through Buckland. It was Crozet who determined that the new road should pass through the center of Buckland, rather than the north end, upstream of Broad Run, where an old wooden bridge once stood. In addition to taking four lots out of the original plan, the placement of the road would have a lasting impact on the town.

From an historic viewpoint, the actual construction of the turnpike was also significant. In addition to being Crozet's first project in Virginia, it was built using the new process developed by John Loudoun McAdam, whereby a roadbed of smaller stones built up between two ditches was paved over with larger stones, creating what at the time was considered to be "the finest road in Virginia."

With the road improvements, Buckland became a regular stop on "Extra Billy" Smith's stagecoach route. The "Stagecoach Inn" was built in 1824 to accommodate travelers, and a post office established in the town by 1800.

By the 1830s, the town had two water-powered gristmills, a woolen factory, two successive distilleries, blacksmith's shop, tannery, several stores and a stone quarry. Other enterprises were attracted to the area and leased parcels in the town, and soon there were two taverns, an apothecary, a wheelwright and a cooper, a boot and shoemaker, and a saddle maker offering their products and services.

Residents continued to move into Buckland, building homes in and near the town, including skilled laborers, craftsmen and professionals. By 1855 about 130 whites and 50 freed African Americans and several hundred enslaved were living in Buckland.

The Battle of Buckland Mills

After Confederate forces abandoned their defensive positions at Centreville in March 1862, Union troops moved south into the Piedmont, occupying towns and villages including Warrenton, Haymarket and Buckland.

In August 1862, the first shots of the Battle of Second Manassas were fired when Union Gen. Pope's men were involved in a local skirmish on the Buckland Bridge.

Fortunately for Buckland, the presence of Union troops in the area did not result in the burning the town, as it did in Haymarket in November 1862. But Buckland was the scene of a significant battle involving 12,000 cavalrymen supported by artillery that took place on Oct. 19, 1863.

At the beginning of the day, Confederate forces under Gen. J.E.B. Stuart held the Town of Buckland. Using the buildings in the town for cover, they fired on Union cavalry and artillery under Gen. George A. Custer positioned on the high ground across Broad Run at the Cerro Gordo plantation, the home of Charles Hunton.

When Stuart's troops retreated by design west on the turnpike from Buckland, heading west on the turnpike, Union cavalry under Gen. Henry E. Davies and Gen. Judson Kilpatrick pursued them, leaving Custer to guard the town and ridge above it.

Riding hard toward Warrenton, Stuart lured the Union forces into a Confederate trap west of present-day Greenwich Road (present-day Rt. 215), where 5,200 cavalrymen under Gen. Fitzhugh Lee were concealed in the woods.

buckland continued on page 10

As Davies' brigade passed the wooded area, Lee ordered his cannons to fire, springing the trap. The advancing Union column was cut in half, and a running battle on the turnpike from New Baltimore to Buckland raged, as the forward element of the Union force fled toward Gainesville and Haymarket. The pursuit of the Union cavalry by Lee and Stuart's men later became known as the "Buckland Races."

Lee and Stuart combined their forces and attacked the confused Union troops from the front, flank and rear, and driving them back to Broad Run in full retreat. Likewise, Custer's men, who were bringing up the rear as the battle unfolded, were pushed back to the Buckland Bridge.

About 250 Union soldiers were reported killed or wounded in the battle, as well as 200 captured, and marched to the jail in Warrenton. Half the Union army's ambulances and wagons carrying medical supplies were captured, along with Custer's personal papers, which were later published in a Richmond newspaper, in a clear effort to humiliate him.

Commenting on the Confederate victory, Custer – who had two horses shot out from under him – noted that the Battle of Buckland Mills "...was the most disastrous this division ever passed through ... I cannot but regret the loss of so many brave men." Historians studying the battle note that Custer's decision to defy orders and hold his men back after the initial attack, rather than rushing into the trap likely spared the lives of many of his cavalymen. This has become known as "Custer's First Stand."

The Battle of Buckland Mills was the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia's last cavalry offensive, and Gen. Stuart's last victory over enemy cavalry.

Preservation Efforts Organized

Buckland enjoyed periods of moderate prosperity after the Civil War, but like many 19th century agricultural communities, was not immune to economic depression and events beyond its control. A changing world left the town behind, and the catastrophic flooding of Broad Run that happened also took its toll.

By the 1930s, Buckland was a mere village scattered over a sloping hill, where filling stations and small, tumbled-down old



Above: Kinsley Mill, on Broad Run east of Buckland, was demolished during the 20th century. Left: The Stagecoach Inn, demolished in the 1930s, once served travelers on William "Extra Billy" Smith's stagecoach line. The woman in the photo is believed to be Mrs. Grace Bear, who lived in the landmark Buckland Tavern for many years.



structures and the crumbling remains of Buckland Tavern marked the site of the old town.

Although the village took another serious hit in 1951, when U.S. 29 was widened to four lanes, only a small slice of the historic features of the town were lost. The original foundations of the few buildings taken remain extant.

Addressing the fragile existence of Buckland, BPS directors initiated a project to preserve and eventually restore the town on those original foundations. Philosophically, they believe that ownership is the best foundation for stewardship, and that historic preservation is the highest and best use of their properties.

In that spirit, BPS members have placed nearly 400 acres of the Buckland Historic Landscape into permanent protective easements. BPS has a formal long-term plan approved by the American Battlefield Protection Program to continue placing easements on 2,333 acres of the battlefield core area.

Richard Bland Lee V, the fourth generation of the Lee family to live at Buckland, serves as Chairman Emeritus. Involved in historic preservation efforts, Mr. Lee also served as chairman of the Sully Foundation.

David W. Blake serves as BPS chairman. In addition to his home, Buckland Hall, Mr. Blake has placed 100 acres of Buckland Farm into permanent easement, and has a plan with the ABBP to continue easements and acquiring other parcels on the battlefield, which will also be protected by easements.

BPS President Linda Wright and her husband Edward B. "Barry" Wright have

owned Cerro Gordo Farm since 1983. The main house overlooks Broad Run and the village, and figured prominently in the Civil War actions at Buckland. The Wrights also own the old post office in the village.

Vice president of the BPS is Thomas Ashe, who acquired the Buckland Tavern at the corner with U.S. 29 in 1975. He later purchased the Richard Gill house, the Hampton-Trone house, the Eppa Hunton Schoolhouse, part of the original Town Common, and St. Luke's Church.

Director Brian Mannix and his wife Susan Dudley acquired the Buckland Mill tract in 1986, and live in the Miller's House next to the mill. Their property includes approximately 4,000 feet of the Broad Run streambed and is now under easement.

Mrs. Betty Evans, who with her late husband Thomas Mellon Evans owned Buckland Farm for four decades, also serves as a director.

Past Director John McBride, an attorney who specializes in the areas of land use and development, continues to be actively involved with the society.

The Buckland Preservation Society works closely with the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the counties of Prince William and Fauquier, APVA Preservation of Virginia, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground, the Land Trust of Virginia and others to

buckland continued from page 10

Buckland Hall. Section of C. Allan Brown's Buckland Cultural Landscape map showing the street layout, Broad Run and other details.

implement a long-term preservation plan.

Major accomplishments include listing the Buckland Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places, and gaining federal recognition of the Buckland Mills Battlefield.

Their success in preserving land through easements has been recognized, and the BPS has been awarded matching grants from federal, state and private funds to purchase additional properties that will be put into protective easements. The terms of these grants call for public access to the historic areas, something the BPS fully endorses as part of their research and educational commitment.

By providing a window into Virginia's industrial, architectural and cultural past, they are confident that Buckland can become a destination for those involved in heritage tourism, bringing visitors to the area and stimulating the economy as part of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Program.

"Tourism is the #1 industry in 15 counties in the Journey Through Hallowed Ground," according to Cate Mageniss Wyatt, founder and president of the JHTG. "Tourism generates \$3 billion in revenue, and 54,364 jobs in the region."

Buckland is close to the middle of the 180-mile Gettysburg-to-Monticello Journey Through Hallowed Ground, and Buckland – with nearby access to I-66 – is "an excellent gateway to the JTHG," she added.

Part II, to be published in February, deals with the new initiatives taken on by the Buckland Preservation Society Inc., and what the future may hold.



Buckland Preservation Society Chairman David W. Blake, reviewing documents pertaining Buckland at his home.

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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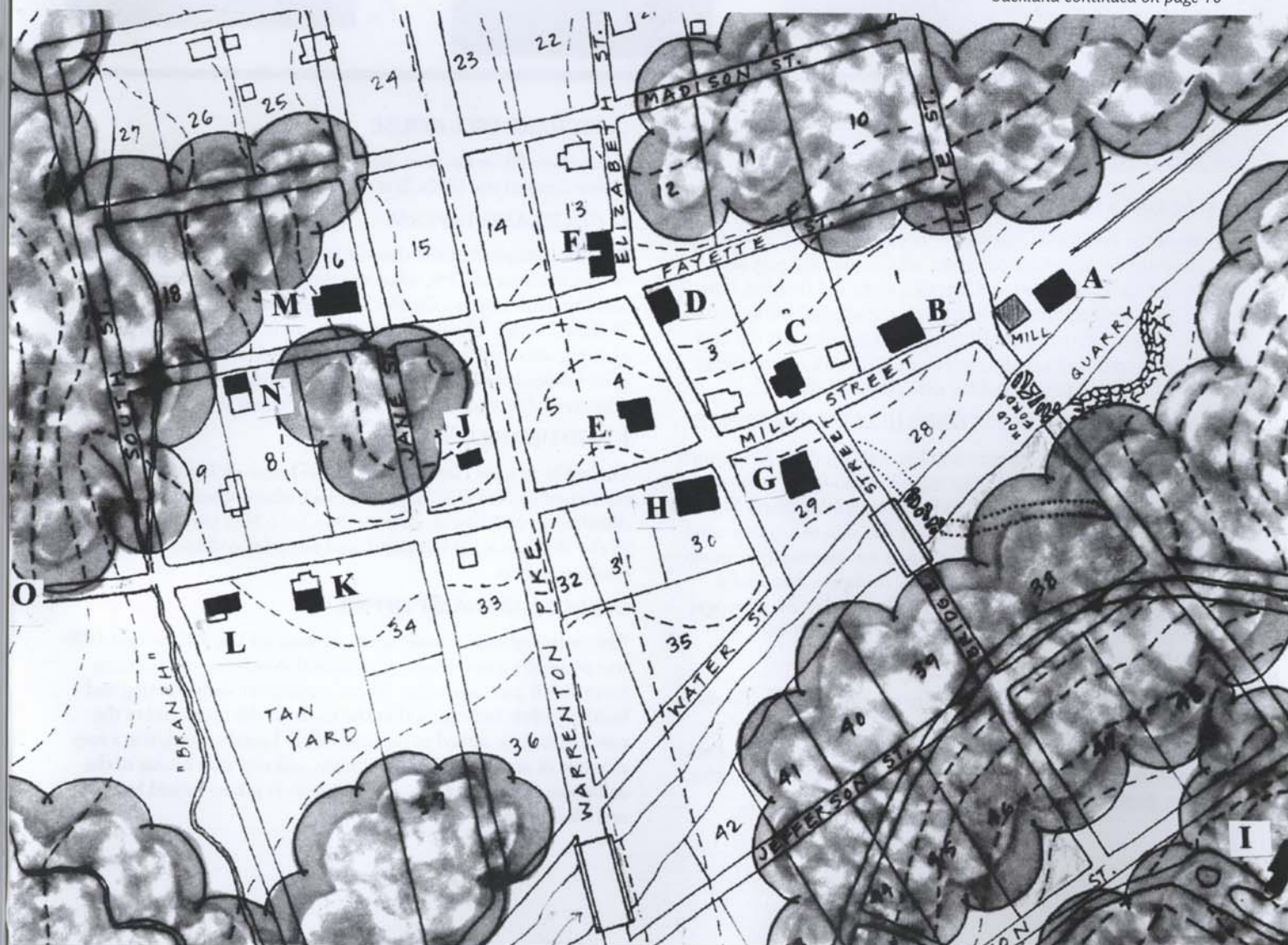
Discovering Buckland's

Part II: The town has many surviving 18th and 19th 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.

buckland continued on page 10



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 sites¹¹ 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 19th 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 20th 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 19th 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 20th century.

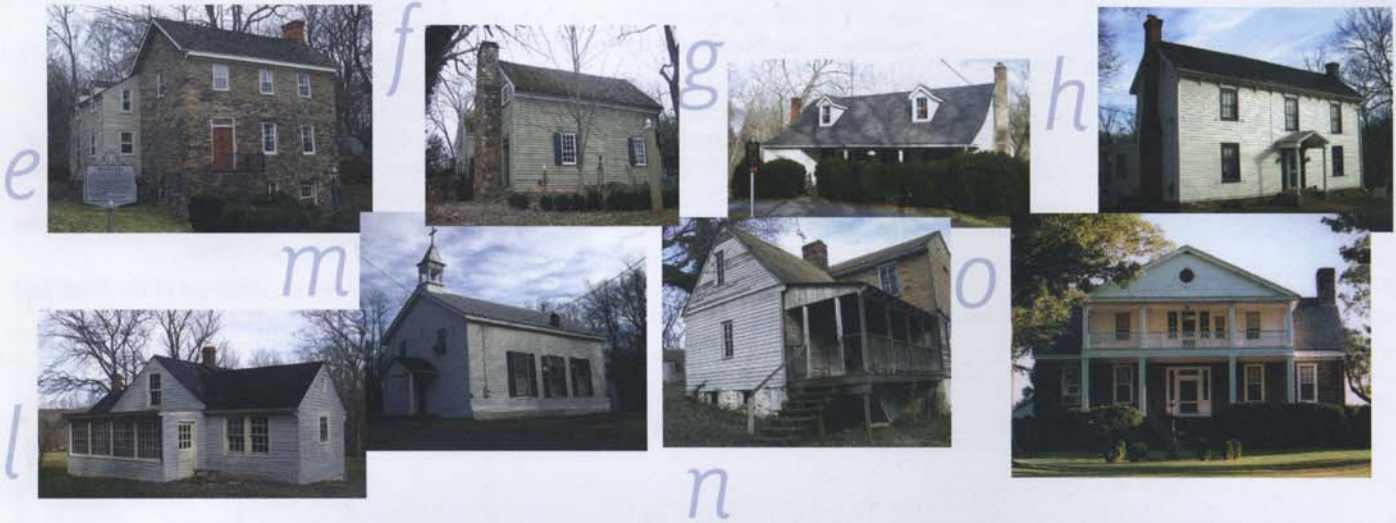
I. CERRO GORDO

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 20th 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.

buckland continued on page 12

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 19th 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 18th 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.

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