

Fredericksburg Remembered

Musings on history, public history, and historic Fredericksburg

Posted by: **Mysteries&Conundrums** | April 22, 2011

An unmatched visual record: the 1888 steeple shots reveal some of Fredericksburg's lost buildings

From John Hennessy:

NOTE: I have assembled the steeple panoramas into a single image . It's a 22mb file—that is to say, large—but I've loaded it [here \(https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/panorama-total-and-complete.jpg\)](https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/panorama-total-and-complete.jpg) if you wish to explore it on your own. We'll occasionally take a look at this image in the coming month or so, seeing what it can tell us about Fredericksburg's 19th-century landscape.



<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/panorama-total-and-complete-smaller-file.jpg>

In 1888 a photographer mounted the steeple of St. George's Episcopal Church on Princess Anne Street and took a series of eleven panoramic images of Fredericksburg, spanning the compass. The panorama isn't perfect—there are gaps—but it is as thorough a documentation of any Virginia town as exists from that period. Explored deeply, the panoramas are a gold mine, revealing a number of buildings since lost, a town still recovering from war, and a utilitarian landscape that has largely disappeared.

Today we'll look at the intersection of Caroline and William—the very heart of downtown Fredericksburg. This is one place where the panoramic images match nicely, and I have put them together here.



(<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/steeple-panorama-wallace-house-stitch.jpg>)

Two things emerge from this image. First, prominent in the middle of the image is the only known photograph of the home of Dr. John H. Wallace. The house in this view was built just after the Civil War to replace the home badly damaged during the war—one that appears in a famous sketch done of the looting of town (below)



(<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/steeple-panorama-wallace-house-closeup.jpg>)

Pardon the distortion—the house sits at the junction of two of the images.

Wallace was one of a half-dozen prominent doctors in Fredericksburg in 1860, and like many of them dabbled in other ventures as well (he served as the President of the Farmer's Bank on Princess Anne Street). His family was large and influential—indeed, his son Wistar would largely be responsible for the

creation of what we now know as the Central Rappahannock Regional Library. Dr. John Wallace also owned "Liberty Hall," a farm of more than 500 acres along Potomac Creek north of Truslow Road in Stafford County (north of Ellerslie, another Wallace place that still stands).

To the right of Wallace's house, three of four lots have newly constructed buildings.

To the left, across William Street, the site of the Bank of Virginia (burned December 11) still stands empty 25 years later. Moving farther north (just above Hall's Drug Store), the entire first half of the block was destroyed, and most of those lots still appear vacant.



<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/steeple-panorama-cropped-on-1000-block-caroline.jpg>

The 1000 block of Caroline—parts of it still unreconstructed in 1888.

During the battle, Dr. Wallace and those parts of his family not in the Confederate army had refugeed. Family tradition holds that Dr. Wallace's house survived by the efforts of a slave, Fielding Grant. The family found the house surrounded by the burnt remnants of neighbors' homes, with many of the Wallace family belongings looted or destroyed. This image shows the looting on the street in front of the battered house on December 11, 1862. Noel has written about that [here](http://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2010/12/27/an-unseen-sketch-of-fredericksburg-december-1862/) (<http://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2010/12/27/an-unseen-sketch-of-fredericksburg-december-1862/>).



(<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/lumley1.jpg>)

Here is the Wallace house site today.



(<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/wallace-house-site-today.jpg>)

The Wallace house site today. This building was in the 1960s W.T. Grant five and dime—the scene of sit-ins in 1960, but more on that in another post.

In our next, we'll look at another lost building or two, plus the great visual documentation of backyards and back alleys the panorama offers.



Posted in Lost buildings, Reconstruction and postwar

John : Simply amazing, and agree – what an invaluable documentary tool for Fredericksburg. Is anything known about the actual photographer of the steeple panoramas, any additional Virginia images attributed to his artistic hand, etc. All the best, -David Nelson

By: **David Nelson** on April 24, 2011
at 7:44 pm

Reply

David – It is believed that the artist who produced these images was William G. Turner, a Fredericksburg area jack-of-all-trades who dabbled in photography in the 1880s. An article that includes 48 of Turner's photos, including these steeple shots, and provides biographical material on the artist, appears as "Southern Exposure: Forty-eight Views of the Fredericksburg Area, 1880s" in *Fredericksburg History & Biography*, Volume Six (2007).

<http://www.cvbt.org/CVBT%20Journal%20sale%20page%20web.html>
(<http://www.cvbt.org/CVBT%20Journal%20sale%20page%20web.html>)

– Eric

By: **Eric Mink** on April 27, 2011
at 8:56 am

Reply

Eric: Appreciate the link to Volume 6 containing information on photographer Wm. G. Turner of Fredericksburg. -David N.

By: **Dr. David Nelson** on April 29, 2011
at 1:04 am

Great post, John. A few years ago, I had the opportunity to climb the scaffolding around the steeple during a major renovation and exposed a series of images that roughly mirrored the 1880s shots. They are published in one the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation's "Journal of Fredericksburg

History "(one of the 1990s volumes). The 1880s shot is on one page and the corresponding 1990s shot is on the opposite page. They are not exact, but may still be of interest. I look forward to your additional research.

By: **erik nelson** on April 25, 2011
at 9:30 am

Reply

A nice job of putting the cyclorama together, Mr. Hennessy. Wouldn't it be cool to have a large scale presentation like this, showing the armies passing over the landscape?

Around 2000 I went up there from the inside of the bell tower to replicate the view of Market Square from this series, showing the home and bakery of John Henry Myer, my project de jour. It was quite an experience, especially when the clock struck two!

By: **John Cummings** on April 28, 2011
at 7:15 am

Reply

John: I just realized what you were speaking of about the gaps. The set you have access to it incomplete. The whole series consists of eleven individual stereo views, all of which were published, as Erik Nelson says, in the 1998 issue of "The Journal of Fredericksburg History", Volume 3. It seems to have been the same copies used in Ronald Shibley's 1976 book, "Historic Fredericksburg, A Pictorial History", although in there he used ten of the eleven, leaving out the left hand side of the pair showing Scotia. The two missing from your set are the one looking down river toward Ferry Farm and the railroad bridge, and the one looking essentially north, up Princess Anne Street, which also shows the rest of Market Square.

I can not at this moment lay my hand on the 2007 issue of "Fredericksburg History and Biography", to compare if that is the same set you assembled here. Both the Nelson and Shibley uses credit the images as courtesy of the National Park Service, but if my memory serves me, they have since then been donated to HFFI or the Central Rappahannock Heritage Center. This second set must be the one in a private collection and is perhaps the ones also used in Eric Mink's 2007 article.

Can you clarify who does have the first known set, HFFI or CRHC?

Still, as you assert, they are a very vivid and important view of the post-war recovery of the city.

By: **John Cummings** on April 28, 2011
at 9:19 am

Reply

John. You are right. I used the wrong version—an incomplete one. But I have replaced the faulty version with the one that has all eleven photographs. Thanks.

By: **The staff** on April 29, 2011
at 4:01 pm

Reply

John – All of the reproductions you reference come from the same set of photos. While Shibley and Erik Nelson reference images in the collection of the National Park Service (NPS), what the NPS actually had at the time, and still has, are modern copy prints from original stereoviews.

The original set of William G. Turner stereoviews were offered to the NPS by a private collector in 1984. It appears the NPS had access to these images prior to the offer, at which time print copies of some of the images, including the steeple shots, were made. This would explain Shibley's use of NPS copies in 1976. The NPS declined the 1984 offer to buy the stereos, but they were purchased by the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation, Inc. (HFFI) and in whose hands they resided for 20 years. In 2007, HFFI transferred the stereos to the Central Rappahannock Heritage Center, which is where they are currently stored.

When you see the photos credited to the NPS, it is actually copy prints that are being credited.

– Eric

By: **Eric Mink** on May 4, 2011
at 2:14 pm

[Reply](#)

The Wallace home and store burned on 21 Feb 1866. A fairly detailed report appears in the 23 Feb edition of the "New Era."

By: **Roger Engels** on July 23, 2012
at 1:56 pm

[Reply](#)

Hello:

Is there a copy of the "New Era" article available somewhere?
What were the circumstances of the fire?

Thanks!

By: **Gordon Wallace Silleck** on March 1, 2016
at 11:32 am

[Reply](#)

The New Era is available on microfilm in the Virginiana Room at the library. The fires that destroyed the surrounding structures were caused by the Union bombardment on December 11, 1862.

By: **Mysteries&Conundrums** on March 1, 2016
at 11:48 am

Any more info you can give me on Dr. Jon Wallace would be great. He was my 5th great grandfather.

By: **Carol Starmont** on October 31, 2013
at 3:20 pm

Reply

I was not correct- he was an uncle- my gr grandfather was Jonathan his older brother.

By: **Carol Starmont** on August 6, 2016
at 9:37 am

Reply

Reblogged this on Mysteries & Conundrums (<https://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2016/03/01/an-umatched-visual-record-the-1888-steeple-shots-reveal-some-of-fredericksburgs-lost-buildings/>) and commented:

Note, March 1, 2015: Here is a post that first appeared on Fredericksburg Remembered a few years back. Fredericksburg Remembered gets far less traffic than M&C, and so we will be migrating some posts that are appropriate to M&C in the coming weeks.

By: **Mysteries&Conundrums** on March 1, 2016
at 8:12 am

Reply

These photos are a fascinating record of 1880's Fredericksburg. I was extra excited to see the first posting to be of my GGGrandfather's home on Caroline St. Question: Do you have any identification of the white house behind the Wallace house? This was on Wallace's lot where the old gas station was. Thanks again for the great posting!

By: **Gordon Wallace Silleck** on March 1, 2016
at 11:29 am

Reply

Gordon: You are quite right that the white house behind the Wallace House was on the family's lot. I have no record that in 1860 it was leased or used by anyone else...and so on my 1860 map, I do not have it labeled. It was likely a kitchen quarters, used by slaves before the war.

By: **Mysteries&Conundrums** on March 1, 2016
at 11:42 am

Reply

Dear cousin Gordon and John, etc. I thought this 2012 email from Roger Engels might prove of interest. Basically, Dr. John Wallace also owned the house at 1015 Caroline Street until he sold it to his sister in law, Elizabeth Brown Wallace in 1844. I engaged the Fredericksburg committee to research 1015, and afterwards placed a historical plaque there to designate it's historical significance. Additional homes which remain "standing" in Fredericksburg with Wallace connections include the Rising Sun Tavern, and Federal Hill (and Ellerslie in Stafford County) but the Wallace connection at 1015 Caroline Street had unintentionally been "overlooked" during the 20th century-it's an rare architectural gem in the midst of the 1000 block on Caroline! Best regards, -Dr. David Nelson

> From: Roger Engels
> To: ddnelson
> Cc: Richard Hansen (rhansen)
> Sent: Tue, July 24, 2012 12:52:50 PM
> Subject: Elizabeth Wallace home Fredericksburg
>
> In researching the building at 1015 Caroline, I have encountered
> quite a lot of information about the Wallace family. The only family members who
> are connected to the building are John Hooe Wallace and Elizabeth Brown Wallace,
> two owners in the 19th century.
> As you are no doubt aware, Dr. John Hooe Wallace was a prominent
> physician, banker and political figure, and his life is fairly well known. His
> brother, Howson Hooe Wallace Sr., was somewhat less prominent and the facts of his
> life are less well known. Howson sr. married a daughter of Michael Wallace III and Mary Kelton
> Glassell Wallace: Miss Elizabeth Brown Wallace, a distant
> relative, in 1826 and they lived in Fredericksburg. They had a number of
> children and he died on a date which I have not found. There are many references
> which refer to his death in 1849. I have found only one published reference
> which actually gives that year, a work called "Virginia Genealogies," by Hayden.
> I don't know where that date comes from, but it cannot be correct. The will of
> Howson Hooe Wallace (believe he is buried at Liberty Hall in Stafford Co.) was probated in
> Fredericksburg in March 1844, indicating his
> death in that year or late 1843. In July, 1844, Elizabeth Brown Wallace
> purchased 1015 Caroline from her brother in law John Hooe Wallace in her own name, a
> circumstance
> that would not have been possible had she been married. She also appears in the
> census of 1850 as the head of household with numerous Wallace children, some of
> whom were almost certainly not hers. Howson Hooe Wallace appears in the census
> of 1840 in Fredericksburg, but I have found no record of him owning property
> here.
> Unfortunately there is a gap in the newspapers surviving from much
> of the 1840s, so I could not determine his death date. He is not listed as
> buried in any of the local cemeteries. Perhaps he died elsewhere and was buried
> there.
> Searching for information is complicated by the family's practice of
> naming their children after forbears, which complicates the job of succeeding
> generations of researchers. There are two Howson Hooe Wallaces in the next
> generation. There were also two Elizabeth Brown Wallaces in the Fredericksburg
> area. (Both Dr. John H. Wallace and Mrs. Elizabeth Brown Wallace had their portraits painted by
> Fredericksburg artist John Adams Elder.)
> The blog post from the National Park Service mentioned the Wallace
> store at the corner of William and Caroline. There was some speculation about
> whether the house had actually survived the war, since a new building was
> referred to in 1866. The house did survive the war, but succumbed to a fire, a
> frequent occurrence in the 19th century. A fairly extensive report of the 21 Feb
> fire appears in the "New Era," of 23 Feb 1866.

By: **Dr. David McCrary Donald Nelson** on March 3, 2016
at 1:27 pm

Reply

Thank you cousin David for the very interesting information!
I will have to check out 1015 Caroline and try to get a copy of the "New Era".
Thanks to Roger as well for the Email. The fire story is new to me.

By: **Gordon Wallace Silleck** on March 8, 2016
at 1:06 pm

Reply

Who in the Wallace family lived in Federal Hill ?

By: **Carol Star** on April 12, 2016
at 8:26 am

Reply

Hello Carol! Howson Hooe Wallace, jr. and family. After the War, they eventually moved to Richmond. He was the son of Howson Hooe Wallace, sr. and wife Elizabeth Brown Wallace Wallace of Fredericksburg and Stafford Co., VA.

By: **David McC. D. Nelson** on April 17, 2016
at 10:43 pm

Reply

Thanks- yep-2 Eliz.Browns found the 1st ones house Rich Hill in Bel Alton,Md. Booth his out there 6 days- after he killed Lincoln-(land open to public). Michael Wallace (Ellerslie) and Eliz. eloped from a window. Her father Dr. Gustavus Brown- and her brother was Dr Gus Brown II Washington's doctor- his home Rose Hill-Port Tobacco,Md.

By: **Carol Starmont** on May 25, 2016
at 5:27 pm

I found Eliz's home in Madison Co.,Va. off rte.665 (Garth Mt.Rd.) and Graves Mt. Chapel rd. It is now called "The Glen", off Wallace Gap Rd. It is privately owned and the owners only come there during Thanksgiving. It is gated. I just happened to be there when the manager showed up and gave me a tour of the house and cemetery. Michael III's grave is there.

By: **Carol Starmont** on August 7, 2016
at 10:07 am

Thanks so much !! I have found Ellerslie and 2 pics of Liberty Hall which burnt down -but where was it ? off Truslow Rd. ? So confusing-a Liberty hall and a Liberty Hill, 3 Eliz Browns, 3 Michael Wallaces, a John and a Jon in the same family- but what fun figuring out the puzzle! I also found Rich Hill and Rose Hill in Md. I have cousins coming in Oct. one from Calif. and one from S.C. and we will venture up the road from my home Barboursville,Va. and see some sights. Any cousins still in the Fredericksburg area let's get together ! My 2 cousins will be here and we will be in

Fredericksburg 2 nights Oct. 12-14. Our ancestor was Jonathan- not much about him- he went to South Carolina but was born at Ellerslie. I also found Glen Wallace in Madison Co. Michael III's home.

By: **Carol Starmont** on August 6, 2016
at 9:47 am

Reply

I think some of us are cousins- care to share emails ? CarolStar50@gmail.com
(mailto:CarolStar50@gmail.com)

By: **Carol Starmont** on August 7, 2016
at 10:12 am

Reply

I read Dr.John Wallace repaired the house after the Civil War-so parts were torn down but not all of it. The Union Army was at Cheatam and Lee would not shell it because he met his wife there. Stonewall Jackson saw the Yankees looting the houses and said- "kill them- kill them all."

By: **Carol Starmont** on August 12, 2016
at 10:46 am

Reply

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