

Fredericksburg Remembered

Musings on history, public history, and historic Fredericksburg

Posted by: **Mysteries&Conundrums** | April 28, 2011

More lost buildings—the view from St. George's #2

From John Hennessy (read the first post on the St. George's steeple shots [here](https://fredericksburghistory.wordpress.com/2011/04/22/an-umnatched-visual-record-the-1888-steeple-shots-reveal-some-of-fredericksburgs-lost-buildings/) (<https://fredericksburghistory.wordpress.com/2011/04/22/an-umnatched-visual-record-the-1888-steeple-shots-reveal-some-of-fredericksburgs-lost-buildings/>); download the entire panorama, stitched together, [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>) [patience, it's a large file]. Pardon the imperfections in the Photoshop work—there are gaps in the images that I stitched together to create this panorama):

Last week we introduced the [series of panoramic photographs taken from the steeple of St. George's in 1888](https://fredericksburghistory.wordpress.com/2011/04/22/an-umnatched-visual-record-the-1888-steeple-shots-reveal-some-of-fredericksburgs-lost-buildings/) (<https://fredericksburghistory.wordpress.com/2011/04/22/an-umnatched-visual-record-the-1888-steeple-shots-reveal-some-of-fredericksburgs-lost-buildings/>)—as well as my attempt to stitch the images together into a single image. After looking into the heart of the town last time, let's turn our attention westward, between George and William Street, for what I think is the most interesting part of the series, for here are two of Fredericksburg's most important lost buildings.



(<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/steeple-panorama-edited-together-cropped-on-methodist-and-scotia.jpg>) To the left is George Street, off the camera to the right is William, and in the far distance is Marye's Heights. The roof immediately below the camera is what was during the war the Farmer's Bank—the home of the slave John Washington and perhaps the most important Civil War building in Fredericksburg, which we have written about [here](http://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2010/10/11/is-this-the-most-important-civil-war-era-building-in-the-fredericksburg-region/) (<http://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2010/10/11/is-this-the-most-important-civil-war-era-building-in-the-fredericksburg-region/>). Beyond, easily seen, is the Masonic Cemetery, certainly the moodiest burial ground in town and an important landmark during the Battle of Fredericksburg.

There are two supremely important lost buildings in this view worth pointing out—indeed, for one of them, this is the only clear image of it I know about. In the upper left edge is a church standing on the SW corner of George and Charles.



<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/steeple-panorama-edited-together-cropped-on-methodist-church-south.jpg>) This is the Methodist Church South, during the war one of two Methodist churches in Fredericksburg. The building gains significance for two reasons. First, it is a direct manifestation of the pre-war debate over slavery, for the congregation that built this church broke away from the more liberal thinkers in what became known as the Methodist Church North, which stood on the site of the present Fredericksburg United Methodist Church on Hanover Street. The rub between the churches: slavery. We wrote about this in another post (find it [here](#) <https://fredericksburghistory.wordpress.com/2010/08/24/a-church-divided-over-slavery-and-fredericksburgs-first-house-of-worship-for-african-americans/>)), but it is worth reiterating that Fredericksburg was no monolith when it came to slavery. This photograph shows the now-abandoned church in the last year or so of its life. It was shortly torn down. Today, a modern bank (BB&T) stands on the site.

To the right in the larger image above is another lost building: Scotia. (Pardon the distortion, but the building appears at the junction of two of the nine images taken that day in 1888.)



(<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/scotia.jpg>) We explored some wartime images of Scotia over at Mysteries and Conundrums (click [here](http://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2010/06/09/the-omnipresent-woman/) (<http://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2010/06/09/the-omnipresent-woman/>)), and this place on Charles Street has been the subject of some good detective work by Noel Harrison and John Cummings (the wartime photos of Scotia were for decades mis-identified). But this image clearly shows the carefully tended back plots in the back yard and the streetside dependency to the left of the house. The demolition of these buildings in the 20th century represents one of Fredericksburg's greatest losses.

Here is how this facade of Scotia looked during the war. The women on the portico include abolitionist and nurse Abby Hopper Gibbons.



(<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/scotia-smaller-file1.jpg>)

Click to enlarge

Look beyond Scotia and the Masonic Cemetery and you can see open ground beyond Prince Edward Street.



<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/steeple-panorama-edited-together-cropped-on-hurkamp-park.jpg>

What is today Hurkamp park is the open ground visible in this extract.

This is the former Corporation Burial Ground, now known as Hurkamp Park. The city ordered the site cleaned up in 1874, but the contract only included the removal of headstones and other visible features. The graves remained, and they remain today too, though I suspect few who frequent the place for lunchtime frolics or romantic moments know that....

And finally, in the distance is the Bloody Plain, looking still largely unchanged since the war (that would change rapidly in the coming years).



<https://fredericksburghistory.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/steeple-panorama-edited-together-cropped-on-bloody-plain-copy.jpg>

Click to enlarge

Brompton is at right, and the Stratton House still stands solitary in the middle of the plain, with both Martha Stephens's House and Innis also visible. A few houses have been added, but not much.

In our next piece on the St. George's steeple images, we'll take a look into Fredericksburg's 19th Century back yards.



Posted in [Churches](#), [Lost buildings](#), [Reconstruction and postwar](#)

With regards to burials remaining in Hurkamp Park, the marker there states, “Following the Civil War, the graves and stones were removed and the cemetery converted to its current use as Hurkamp Park.”

[Source: <http://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=14429%5D> (<http://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=14429%5D>)

I would be interested in a discussion of the evidence for either position. Not being a Fredericksburg area resident, I am curious why there is a difference in opinion on this.

By: **Jay Rarick** on January 24, 2012
at 1:32 pm

[Reply](#)

Testing my memory here—I don’t have all my notes at hand. But in 1874 the town let a contract for clearing the cemetery, and as reported in one of the local papers, the contract called only for the removal of headstones and other above-ground features. There was no provision for the removal of bodies. While it is conventional wisdom (or perhaps wish) that the bodies in Hurkamp Park were removed, I have seen no evidence of it, and indeed the 1874 contract suggests just the opposite. Good question, though.... John H.

By: **The staff** on January 24, 2012
at 6:08 pm

[Reply](#)

Reblogged this on [Mysteries & Conundrums](https://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2016/03/09/more-lost-buildings-the-view-from-st-georges-2/) (<https://npsfrsp.wordpress.com/2016/03/09/more-lost-buildings-the-view-from-st-georges-2/>) and commented:

Our second installment about the images taken from the steeple of St. George’s.

By: **Mysteries&Conundrums** on March 9, 2016
at 9:19 am

Reply

There are 34 burials recorded in the Fredericksburg (City) Cemetery that predate its establishment in 1844, most of which presumably are removals from the Corporate Burial Grounds. (The original records of the Cemetery Co. were lost in a fire in the early 20th century, so this information is not guaranteed.) At least 2 of the 33 have no stone, which either means that the stones were lost to time or that they were recollected, unmarked reinterments noted when the records were “rebuilt” after the fire. At least one of the 31 stones that predate 1844 has a vault, probably brick, confirmed during a recent sounding as we attempt to locate unused burial spots for resale. It seems unlikely a vault would have been built unless the body was reinterred. I expect that the 1874 contract was for clearing up those stones that remained after families had the chance to move/remove their loved ones following the establishment of the “new” cemetery.

By: **Florence Barnick** on March 9, 2016
at 8:28 pm

Reply

Florence, thank you for the update and comment. What you posit certainly makes sense... although it invalidates a good story I've been telling visitors I bring to Fredericksburg. ;~)

By: **Jay Rarick** on March 10, 2016
at 7:11 am

Reply

Oh I'm confident they weren't ALL removed, so your story is probably still ok. 😊

By: **Florence Barnick** on March 10, 2016
at 10:01 am

Reply

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