

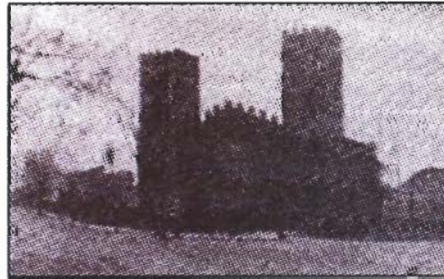
Second Grace Memorial Church, built on Grace St. in 1902 and demolished c. 1929

Letter documents DH history

We recently received a copy of a letter documenting the fate of one of Diamond Hill's most beautiful old buildings, Grace Memorial Episcopal Church. The letter reproduced on page 2 was discovered in the Vestry Book at St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

The small photograph above shows the original Grace Church built about 1860 at the corner of present-day Grace and Sixteenth Streets [from Christian's *Lynchburg and Its People*, p. 377]. Land for the church was given by Charles A. Calhoun and his wife. "The wording of the deed settles satisfactorily that Grace Street derived its name from the church, rather than the reverse. To quote in part, the old document, dated March 9, 1866, states: A certain tract of land lying and being in the suburbs of the City on Diamond Hill . . . the said lot herein conveyed is bounded as follows—Beginning at the intersection of the Lynchburg and Campbell County Turnpike, with the Northern boundary of said lot, and running thence southward with the edge of said Turnpike eighty feet . . ." [Robert Beeland, *One Hundred Years of Grace 1859-1959*, p. 40]

The new church was almost completed when the Civil War began. "According to Captain Blackford's records, the church building was often used as barracks during the war, for



Original Grace Memorial Church (1860-1902)

troops stationed briefly in Lynchburg, resting here in the course of a troop movement, or convalescing after wounds or illness. Contrary to a widely held opinion, there is no record of the church's being used as a hospital. The soldiers were neither able nor inclined, in their generally miserable condition, to care properly for their temporary lodgings, and in Blackford's words the building was 'much injured.' It may well be, however, that an even greater cause of its state of decay at the end of hostilities was its disuse, rather than its misuse, during those four years." [ibid, p. 6]

The first service was held in the church by Rev. William H. Kinckle, rector of St. Paul's on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1866. During the following year he conducted services at St. Paul's on Sunday mornings and at Grace Church on Sunday afternoons. On March 2, 1867 he died and Grace Church was named Grace Memorial Church in his honor.

"The consecration of Grace Church, meaning we assume that it had now been paid for in full, took place on the Sunday after Ascension, May 24, 1868, on the occasion of the annual council of the Diocese of Virginia at St. Paul's. It is interesting to note that General Lee was a delegate from Lexington at that council." [ibid, p. 8] It was during this council that Lee was a guest in the home of Col. Charles M. Blackford on Pearl St.

"The year 1899, according to W. Asbury Christian's Lynchburg history published the following year, was a time of prosperity 'hitherto unknown' in the city. This prosperity made itself known in Grace Memorial Church in a movement to construct a new church building, a finer and more imposing one than the first. By May of 1901 the decision had been made and a provisional maximum cost of \$11,000 set by the vestry. The architect chosen was Mr. J.M.B. Lewis, a member of the congregation." The second church (shown above) was completed by late 1902.



Continued on page 2

MAY Historic Preservation Month

Grand Open House of Historic Homes, May 6

The city's historic districts cordially invite prospective home-buyers to a Grand Open House that will showcase available homes in Lynchburg's historic districts and downtown. The homes represent many architectural styles and range from beautiful homes that have been completely restored to houses that need a lot of work but also have great potential. Fran and Rad Briley will open their home as a hospitality house where potential buyers can meet with selected restoration vendors and "ambassadors" from the historic districts. If you love old homes, we would love to have you as our neighbor!

A brochure and map of the open houses may be obtained at the Lynchburg Visitor's Center at the corner of Twelfth and Church Streets. For information, or to request a brochure and map by e-mail, please contact C. Kaye Chandler at 434-847-0491 or at Newton.Chandler@verizon.net. The Open House will be held May 6 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. This event is free.

NOTE TO MEMBERS: Let's get our neighborhood ready for the Grand Open House by beautifying the fronts of our homes by May 6th. If you live next door to an out-of-town owner, please consider cleaning up your neighbor's tree lawn as well. Dennis Newton will try to get a dumpster for this cleanup.

The original Grace Church stood for 42 years and was in regular use for the last 38 years. The new building was used for only 24 years. With the resignation of Dr. Lloyd in 1920, the calling committee wrote a letter of invitation to Rev. Carlton Barnwell in which he stated that "the work of the parish was among 'two classes' ... but still 'principally among the poor. Mr. Barnwell did not come to a plush parish, but he came to an enthusiastic one with an effective ministry to its community. In his first year he presented 21 persons for confirmation, with 33 following in 1922." [ibid, p. 19]

Even under pressure from Bishop Jett to establish a church in Fort Hill, the members of Grace Church rejected St. Paul's initial invitation to merge. "The reasons for the merger are difficult to state, and seem to have been different according to whether one was a member of St. Paul's or Grace Memorial. The latter was not in financial straits or any sort." [ibid, p. 20]

"At the end of 1925 there were four hundred and forty communicants of St. Paul's and three hundred and twenty of Grace, so that the communicant strength of the congregations combined will be seven hundred and sixty." [unidentified newspaper clipping] By 1926, however, the two churches had reached agreement, as evidenced by the enclosed letter.

"Dr. J.M. Robeson, then rector of St. Paul's, was soon to resign, and a part of the proposal of St. Paul's vestry was that Mr. Barnwell would become rector of the combined parish. It seems certain that some of the eagerness in St. Paul's for the merger was the desire to have Mr. Barnwell, a young man of accomplishment and still greater promise . . ." [ibid, p. 20]

The merger lasted less than a year and architect Preston Craighill was hired to design the third Grace Memorial Church. Greenstone from Epiphany Episcopal Church, which had been established near Miller Park, was used for the tower and part of the exterior. Until the first service was held on Sunday, September 2, 1928, services were held at the Fort Hill Club.

In 1929 the old church building on Diamond Hill was sold to C. Warren Falwell, Jr., who demolished it and used the bricks to construct a garage for his new intercity bus line. This garage still stands across the street from Calvin Falwell's office at 2900 Campbell Ave. [Diamond Hill News, Sept. 1993] The city eventually took title to the land on which the church had stood and by the 1990s it was an eyesore, covered with brush and trash.

The Keep Lynchburg Beautiful Commission led a effort to clean up the triangular lot and turn it into a mini-park designed by Jane White. The park and a memorial commemorating the original site of Grace Church were dedicated May 15, 1993. DHHS member John Seminatore donated the old wrought-iron fence that separates the upper and lower levels of the park to encourage pedestrians to use the flagstone path.

"There can be little question that Grace Memorial Church was a notable landmark in Diamond Hill and that its presence there was of great value to the area." [Beeland, p. 19]

Lynchburg, VA
September 20, 1926

Secretary, Vestry of St. Paul's Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

Dear Sir and Gentlemen:

In response to your recent communication the Vestry of the Grace Memorial Church at a special meeting held September 9, 1926, adopted the following resolutions which were passed on and accepted in the manner and upon the conditions set forth in these resolutions, by the congregation of Grace Memorial Church at a special call meeting, Wednesday evening, September 15th.

"Believing (a) that it is vitally necessary to the future advancement of the Church in Lynchburg that an Episcopal Church is established in the Fort Hill Section of the city as soon as possible, and (b) that the Opportunities for service on the part of Grace Church would be greatly increased and multiplied if this Church were relocated in this rapidly developing section of the city, therefore be it
RESOLVED:

1. That in accordance with the invitation issued by the Vestry and congregation of St. Paul's Church, the Vestry and Congregation of Grace Church unite with the Vestry and Congregation of St. Paul's Church, under the Rectorship of the present Rector of Grace Church; continuing with the Congregation of St. Paul's Church in worship, in active service and in financial support of the Church's work at home and abroad, that there may be no needless impairment of the Church's efficiency as regards its work in this community or its support of the Church's Program.

2. That the property of Grace Church, exclusive of its furnishings, memorials etc. be disposed of as quickly and advantageously as possible, upon condition that similar disposition be made of the Epiphany property; and that the proceeds of such sales be used towards the purchase of a lot and the erection of a new Church in the Fort Hill section, which Church is to be known as Grace Memorial Church.

3. That upon the completion of the new Church in Fort Hill, the members of the united Congregation, whether former members of Grace Church or St. Paul's Church, be given the opportunity, either of continuing their membership in St. Paul's or of uniting themselves with the new Grace Memorial Church."

This Vestry is of the opinion that all matter relating to the erection of the Fort Hill Church be placed as early as possible in the hands of a committee consisting of representatives from Grace Church Vestry, St. Paul's Vestry, and residents of Fort Hill Section.

Assuring you of my pleasure in submitting to your Vestry the above resolutions, we are,

Sincerely,
Vestry Grace Memorial Church

Diamond Hill News

Published Sept. through May by
Diamond Hill Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 803, Lynchburg, VA 24505
Website: www.diamondhill.org

Officers & Directors

President:

Vice-President:

Recording Sec: Carolyn T. Banker

Membership Sec: open

Treasurer: George W. Dooley

Historian: Jean L. Hannon

Director 06-07: Mari W. Smallshaw

Director 2007: Leonard R. Briley

Director 07-08: Jon I. Alvarenga

Director 07-08: James J. Carrington

Committee Chairpersons

Newsletter Editors: Josi Alvarenga
and Jim Carrington

Neighborhood Watch: L. Robert Halpin

Neighborhood Beautification: Dennis Newton

Tours: Julianna K. Neighbors

Hospitality: Tina Secord

Long-Range Planning:

Fund-Raising: Kaye Chandler

Endowment Fund: George W. Dooley

Meetings

Business meetings are usually held at 7:30 p.m. on first Tuesdays of each month except June, July and August. Owners of properties in the Diamond Hill Historic District and others interested in supporting historic preservation are welcome to attend.

Membership

Annual dues for Active Members are \$10.00 per person and the initiation fee is \$5.00 (first year). Active Membership is limited to adult members of households owning Diamond Hill property. Annual dues for Associate Members are \$10 per person (no initiation fee). All members receive this newsletter at no charge. Newsletter subscriptions for non-members are \$5.00 per year.

Publisher's Statement

The Diamond Hill Historical Society (DHHS) is a nonprofit historic preservation organization approved under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Its purpose is to preserve and encourage—through the fostering of education, research and restoration—the historical and architectural integrity of the Diamond Hill Historic District. DHHS was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia February 22, 1979. Views expressed in the *Diamond Hill News* do not necessarily reflect the position of DHHS or its officers and directors.

Officers resign

During April DHHS President C. Kaye Chandler and Vice-President Dan M. Hague resigned their offices. Kaye explained in her letter of resignation, "This has been a difficult decision for me, but I have come to the conclusion that the Society would be better served by having someone else in this position. I humbly apologize for any inconvenience to the group over this decision and thank you for the opportunity to serve our neighborhood. I will follow through with the Open House Event on May 6, since the event is too close to effectively turn over to someone else."

Dan was out of town for several weeks and unable to take over Kaye's position immediately. His email stated, "I accepted the Vice Presidency on the condition that Kaye was elected President and that certain milestones were achieved during the year, and since neither condition can now be satisfied I will follow on Kaye's heels and resign my position as well."

A called meeting of our Board of Directors was held Sunday, April 22nd, to discuss the situation and prepare for the May business meeting.



Thanks, Jane!

Our sincere thanks to Jane Simms who has served on the *Diamond Hill News* editorial staff for the past four years. It has been a great pleasure working with such a conscientious and talented worker. Thanks, Jane!!!

With our April issue, we welcome Josi Alvarenga to our newsletter team. Welcome aboard, Josi, and thanks for volunteering.

Thanks for your support

We would also like to thank the following members who made cash contributions to DHHS with their 2007 dues: Robert H. Garbee, William and Hope McRorie, John and Bonnie Marsh, David M. Ruggio, Ted and Jean Hannon, and Jim Carrington.



2007 Easter Egg Hunt

Even the Arctic blasts couldn't deter the Diamond Hill Kids and their friends from participating in the annual Diamond Hill Easter Egg Hunt on the morning of April 7. Each child went home with a clutch of eggs—after enjoying the party at the Smallshaw's home. About a dozen boys and girls from ages 1 to 10 scurried around the lawn at the corner of Washington and Harrison Streets and rapidly cleared the area of goodies. It proved impossible to keep those kids who were ready to roll to wait for a few others who were late.

Our thanks to Carol Banker, Tina Secord, and Julie Neighbors for helping provide eggs and treats for the event, and to the Smallshaws for hosting the after-hunt party.



The Diamond Hill Kids---ready for action.



Steve explains the rules to the "attentive" participants.



Matthew and Brian Penalita count their loot.



Members support Operation Clean Sweep

Operation Clean Sweep, Lynch's Landing's annual cleanup of the downtown area, is a rain-or-shine event and our participation is a key requirement for participation in Friday Cheers, a money-making event we have come to depend on.

With the resignation of our president and vice-president, Julie Neighbors rallied our troops so that we had *nine* volunteers who worked the morning of Saturday, April 14. This was the largest turnout we have ever had for Operation Clean Sweep. Julie reported, "It was very rainy and cold, but we still had great support! We cleaned up trash and some weeds on Commerce Street from 5th and Main all the way to the end. Wow!!"

Our sincere thanks to Julie for organizing our crew and to the other workers: Jon and Josie Alvarenga, Bob and Shirley Eugeni, Pat Gatti, Kaye and Dennis Newton, and Julie and Vernon Neighbors.

DH properties for sale

- ◆ 1223 Clay Street
- ◆ 1304 Clay: Ryland-Addison House (1906)
- ◆ 1308 Clay: Stokes House (1906)
- ◆ 1313 Clay: Akers House (1904)
- ◆ 707-09 Fourteen St: duplex
- ◆ 1317-19 Harrison St: duplex
- ◆ 1420 Madison: Moore House (1910)
- ◆ 601 Pearl Street: Jones House (1887)
- ◆ 604-06 Pearl: Blackford Duplex (c.1880)
- ◆ 605 Pearl;Owens_Heald Duplex (1899)
- ◆ 618 Pearl: Blackford House (c. 1855)

Trustee's sale

Legal notices in *The News & Advance* of April 6 and 13 announced a trustee's sale of the duplex at 611-13 Washington Street to be held April 19 at 11:00 a.m. The owner of record is Marcel A. Costantino.

1414 Church St. sold

Former DHHS member R. Lee Stone sold his house at 1414 Church Street on Feb. 28, 2007 to James and Gail H. Oschrin for \$133,000.

Battle of New Market

On May 9th, Dr. Robert H. Bowden will present a talk entitled "The Battle of New Market" at Jones Memorial Library at 5:00 p.m. There is no charge for these talks which are a part of the John D. Owen Lynchburg History Series, now in its 10th season. For details, call 846-0501.

*Double loss*

During a recent interview with the city's urban forester, Klaus Schreiber, we learned that the smaller of the two ivy-covered trees at the top of the Washington Street Steps had blown over during a late February windstorm, causing a power outage in that area. While the city's contractors were removing the fallen tree, they discovered that the other tree is also rotten and they plan to remove it this spring.

We realize that a few of our members have some tender feelings about those two trees, but Klaus says they must both be removed. He thinks that both of them are mulberry trees—probably planted years ago by birds. This gives us an opportunity to plant more desirable trees at locations that will not block the vista of the James River Valley.

*June Social*

June 5 6:30 p.m.
517 Washington
Street

Website renovation progressing

Mari Smallshaw is leading a major effort to improve our website at www.diamondhill.org. She has collected many old photographs that will make the website more interesting. At our April meeting, the membership appropriated funds to hire Jeff Snyder, a website specialist, to provide technical assistance and make our website more user-friendly. Thanks for heading this important effort, Mari. "The website facelift should be completed soon," she says, "Watch for updates."

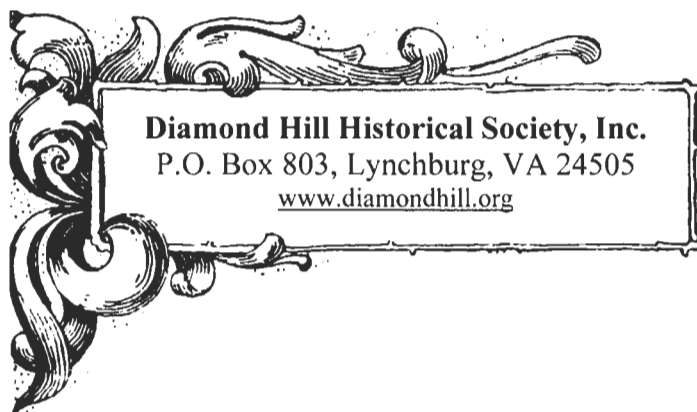
*May Meeting*

Tues., May 1st
7:30 p.m.

at the

Tyree-Slaughter House
(1856)
1421 Harrison St.

Hosts: Jon and Josi Alvarenga



Diamond Hill Historical Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 803, Lynchburg, VA 24505

www.diamondhill.org