

#1327

**“An American Tale and Rabbit Trails”**

**L. Kimball Payne, III ✕**

**SPHEX Club Presentation**

**March 18, 2010**

For some time now I have planned to do a SPHEX presentation on the story of my great-great-grandfather, Michael McLaughlin, an immigrant from Ireland to America, and, ultimately, to Lynchburg in the early 1800's. I am fortunate to have a cousin, Emily Cosby Dieter, who has researched and compiled the McLaughlin family genealogy. I also have in my possession the McLaughlin family bible which tells part of Michael's story. His story, while interesting however, is not complete enough for an hour long presentation so I expanded my research to include an examination of the Irish in Lynchburg, in general, and some of the individuals and sites that my great-great grandfather might have been involved with. The result was a survey of literature on the Irish in Lynchburg and their role in the community. No one, to my knowledge, has written exclusively on the Irish immigrants to Lynchburg but many authors mention them, either specific individuals of note or more likely related to the great influx that came with construction of the James River and Kanawha Canal. I am grateful to all of those who have written about the early years of Lynchburg, including Asbury Christian, Margaret Cabell, Louis Blunt, Phillip Lightfoot Scruggs, Rosa Faulkner Yancey, Allen Chambers, Jim Elson, and others.

My goal for this presentation is to weave the tale of my great-great grandfather, Michael McLaughlin, into the broader context of the Irish in Lynchburg and the community in which he lived for sixty years. His is the “American Tale” and my telling of it will take us down various “rabbit trails” of context. The sixty years of his life in Lynchburg saw much progress: the town became a city, built its courthouse, major roads, its first sewer line, a water system, and churches. The canals came and went, replaced by railroads. The City experienced the rise and fall of tobacco, went through Civil War and its aftermath, and suffered floods. It also saw significant growth and development, including the establishment of Lynchburg College and Randolph Macon Women's College and an annexation in 1870. Business grew and the community prospered. Michael McLaughlin was just one of the many Lynchburg citizens who lived through those times, most with anonymity but some with a degree of fame. Michael was somewhere in the middle.

✕ MR. PAYNE IS THE CITY MANAGER OF  
LYNCHBURG.

## *Irish Immigration in the 1800's*

Most of us are aware of the great Irish immigration to the United States that was triggered by the potato blight and subsequent famine of 1845-49. Irish immigration, while not as great, was still significant in the earlier years of the nineteenth century. The "Great Hunger" was not the first famine in Ireland and cholera epidemics, British oppression, and anti-catholic sentiment provided sufficient incentive for poor Irish farmers to seek a better life in America. John Doyle, an Irish immigrant in New York City, wrote to his wife in 1818, "It's a fine country and a much better place for a poor man than Ireland" (Padden & Sullivan, p. 74).

"Between 1800 and 1830, perhaps 300,000 Irish Catholic immigrants landed on U.S. shores" (Padden & Sullivan, p. 75). Michael Padden and Robert Sullivan in May the Road Rise to Meet You: Everything You Need to Know About Irish American History, write: "In the early days of the Industrial Revolution thousands of jobs were created in America. There were canals to dig, mills to build; soon there would be railroads to lay. The Irish were the backbone—the sweat and muscle..." (p. 75). Padden and Sullivan call this the "first assimilation" of the Irish immigrants. The reception of the Irish Catholic immigrant was not always pleasant, as the "natives" often distrusted and resented the new arrivals. Padden and Sullivan explain, "It must be remembered that the United States was—pre-famine, pre-freeing-of-the-slaves, pre-westward-expansion-into-Indian-territory—a homogeneous community of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants of English descent. Give me your tired, your poor wasn't yet part of the picture. The Irish were the original wretched, huddled mass thrown upon North American shores" (p. 117).

Most of the Irish who came to America did not settle in the South. By 1860, only 84,000 of the 1.2 million Irish immigrants in America lived in the eleven states that joined the Confederacy in 1861 (Gleeson, p. 2). Nevertheless, concentrations of Irish immigrants settled in Savannah and New Orleans. "In Virginia, Alexandria, Lynchburg, Norfolk, Petersburg, Portsmouth and Wheeling all had significant Irish populations" (Gleeson, p. 36).

### *The Early Irish in Lynchburg*

One of the best places to learn something about the early Irish immigrants to Lynchburg is in its cemeteries. A plaque in the Old City Cemetery speaks about European immigrants in general and the Irish in particular:

Buried throughout the cemetery are hundreds of European immigrants who came to Lynchburg and the surrounding counties, ca.1820-1920. They sailed to America seeking economic opportunity and refuge from war and famine, from countries

including Ireland, Germany, Scotland, England, and Italy. They made important and diverse contributions to Lynchburg during their lives, and are an integral part of the cemetery today.

Three-quarters of the immigrants buried here are Irish. Most were laborers who found work building Lynchburg's impressive canal and rail systems. Like the Griffen family from County Kerry in southwest Ireland, they could not afford private plots elsewhere, and thus were buried here, in the City's Potter's Field. ... Other Irish immigrants became very successful artisans and businessmen, like the master stone mason James Scurry (1820-1869). His massive stone and ironwork family plot is along the left side of the entrance drive. (Stories of the Stones, p.12)

In *Behind the Old Brick Wall, A Cemetery Story* is the following:

Lilting Irish place names fairly sing themselves. From Portbello and Monachan, from Dingle Parish, County Kerry, from Sligo, Cork and Tipperary came John Leonard, Patrick Macough, Patrick McGowan, Robert Maxwell, Patrick Griffin, Thomas Moriarity, John Connor, the brothers George and John Smith, John Sheehn, Francis Boles, James Healy, Michael McGrath, and the twin brothers Daniel and James McCarty, whose stone bears the inscription, "Aged 30 years each, Brothers born in Cork, Ireland." They died on the same day, August 27, 1823. (Baber & Moore, p. 4)

Many of the gravestones in the Old City Cemetery are either missing or unreadable due to age. Someone interested in the variety of Irish names and places related to Lynchburg would do better to visit the Holy Cross Cemetery on Bedford Avenue. It was established much later and its gravestones are more legible. Most of these early Irish immigrants lived their lives quietly and left little record of their time in Lynchburg.

### *Prominent Early Irish Settlers*

The most important early Irish settler in this area was, of course, Charles Lynch. Phillip Lightfoot Scruggs says that Charles Lynch was an Irish Catholic, probably from Limerick (p. xv). Asbury Christian tells the story of his departure from Ireland in 1720, at the age of 15, of his arrival in Virginia, his indenture to Christopher Clark, his marriage to his master's daughter Sarah Clark, and his settlement at Chestnut Hill, on the James (p. 9). His son, John Lynch, founded Lynchburg.

An Irish Presbyterian, John Irvin (later with an "e") came here about 1742 from Pennsylvania and was one of the first settlers of Campbell County, with his home at Hat Creek (Early, p. 432).

Another Irishman, Daniel Candler, who first settled in North Carolina in the mid-1700's, was in this area as early as 1761. On December 1, 1779 he received a grant of land that included what we know today as Candler's Mountain.

Mrs. Margaret Anthony Cabell in her *Sketches and Recollections of Lynchburg (1858)* mentions a number of early prominent Irish natives in Lynchburg, including Charles Irvine, "...a native of Ireland, and a member of one of the first families of the Emerald Isle. Emigrating to America, he became the husband of Anne Rose, a daughter of Hugh Rose, Esq., of Amherst. Mr. Irvine was a liberal, high-minded, gentlemanly man, hospitable in the extreme, and fond of cultivating all those arts which embellish life, particularly music, which was necessary to his enjoyment; so that he spared no pains or expense, in giving his daughters every advantage calculated to perfect them in that science" Mrs. Cabell was referring to the early 1800's. (Blunt/Cabell, p. 84)

Writing about Masonry in Lynchburg, Mrs. Cabell mentions John Robertson, known as "Irish John Robertson." She says, "He was a singular man, mingling little in society, and seeming to regard Masonry as his sole tie to mankind" (Blunt/Cabell, p. 186). Robertson went back to Ireland for a while but returned to Lynchburg to live out his days. His obituary appeared in the December 13, 1832 edition of the Lynchburg Virginian in which he was identified as "John Robinson," and called, "a native of Ireland, but for a long time one of our most respectable inhabitants" (Blunt, p. 83)

A "well known" Irish merchant "in the zenith of [his] prosperity" as Mrs. Cabell recalls, was David Kyle who owned property on the south and west corners of Second (Main) Street and First Alley (Eighth Street) that were called "Upper and Lower Kyles" (Blunt/Cabell, p. 272 & Blunt, p. 85).

And finally, Mrs. Cabell mentions, "Mr. William Burd and his good wife, [who] were natives of Ireland, but early in their married life emigrating to America, they became residents of Lynchburg, where they so ensured the love and respect of all with them associated, that they will long, with pleasure, be remembered in the city." Mr. Burd was a tin manufacturer and a "zealous" member of the Methodist Church. He had a large family of daughters, one of whom, Amanda, married a Mr. Patterson, another native of Ireland (Blunt/Cabell, p. 286-8).

### Charles Hoyle (1750-1825)

An early Irish immigrant of note was Charles Hoyle, proprietor of at least two taverns and then of the Franklin Hotel. Mrs. Cabell wrote, "This excellent and venerable man was a native of Ireland, but for a number of years previous, he had been an inhabitant of Lynchburg, and a proprietor of the old 'Indian Queen,' kept on Main Street. In his native country, Mr. Hoyle occupied a high standing amongst the Irish gentry; but circumstances rendering it necessary for him to emigrate, he, with his wife, son, daughter and nephew, embarked for America. Mrs. Hoyle was a lady of amiability and refinement, and long will this excellent couple be remembered in Lynchburg by the old inhabitants" (Blunt/Cabell, p. 296).

Hoyle, born in 1750, was an early settler of Lynchburg. Asbury Christian, in *Lynchburg and Its People*, identifies his house, located at the northwest corner of Second (Main) and Water (Ninth) Streets (where the Bank of the James now stands), as the second house built after Lynchburg became a town in 1786. He describes the house as follows: "This was a small frame house, with its gable end fronting Second Street, and a long porch on Water Street. It was Hoyle's Tavern, and was later called Eagle Tavern—by some, from the reputation of the place, Bull Pup and Buzzard" (p. 25). *The Saga of a City*, a collection of historical vignettes produced for the sesqui-centennial of Lynchburg in 1936, identifies the "point of beginning" for measuring lots in town as at the corner of Second (Main) Street and Water (Ninth) Street—a stone at the porch of Charles Hoyle" (p. 22).

Several sources report an event of great significance that occurred at Hoyle's Tavern on December 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 1806. Christian says, "The arrival of the first elephant in Lynchburg caused a great deal of excitement" (p. 34). *The Saga of a City* calls it "the grandest curiosity ever offered to the public" (p. 22). Admission was 25 cents, with children half price.

Mr. Hoyle also leased another tavern, the "Indian Queen" from Samuel Irvine, from December 1802 until about 1817. The Indian Queen stood on the north corner of Second (Main) Street and First Alley (Eighth Street) (Blunt, p. 101). Rosa Faulkner Yancey mentions the Indian Queen in her book, "It was a three-story brick building situated on lot number 19 in the original plat of the town, and was leased with the sign, bell, porch, benches and other appurtenances. The stables and gardens were on the opposite side of the street. The Indian Queen was probably Lynchburg's earliest hostelry worthy of the name, and must have presented a lively picture, with the sign of the Indian Queen swinging in front, and spacious gardens and grounds, stables and stableyards, with horses, dogs, carts and carriages" (p. 15).

In 1817 Charles Hoyle got out of the tavern business and became proprietor of the Franklin Hotel, located on lot #30, at the corner of today's Main

and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets where Schewel's Furniture now stands. The Franklin Hotel was owned by Samuel Jordan Harrison and became the leading hotel in town. In 1853 the Franklin Hotel became the Norvell House (Blunt/Cabell, p. 100). Yancey comments on Hoyle's proprietorship, "His place was conducted in a style superior to any in Virginia. "The excellence of the table, the perfect order of the establishment, the handsome antique furniture" (antique in 1817!), "the fine pictures, the kindly bearing of host and hostess, all these assisted in making such a public house as we can never see in this age of steam and telegraph," so writes Mrs. Cabell" (p. 15).

Charles Hoyle "finally retired after making a fortune here" (Yancey, p. 15) and his last home was on the present day Federal Street between Second and Third Streets on property he bought from John Lynch in 1814. The house was demolished around 1966 but the small brick office remains on the corner (Blunt, p. 102). Charles Hoyle died September 15, 1825 at the age of 70 and is buried in the Old City Cemetery beside his wife.

### *Michael McLaughlin*

Of Scottish ancestry, Michael McLaughlin was born June 24, 1810 in Edgeworthstown, County Longford, Ireland. He was one of eight children of a farmer, William McLaughlin and his wife, Margaret McDermott McLaughlin.

Edgeworthstown is approximately 60 miles northwest of Dublin and Michael claimed to have walked the distance. County Longford is described on an Irish tourism web site as, "Not a dramatically beautiful county, but like most midland counties, [it] has a special rural charm." It is noted for its lakes and its cultivated bogs. County Longford's place in Irish history was secured in 1798 when a combined French and Irish force was defeated, as was typical, by the British in the battle of Ballinamuck.

In the early 1830's Ireland was experiencing a famine and there was cholera in the towns. Michael decided to seek his fortune in America. Like thousand of other Irish he made his way to Liverpool. One historian notes, "Links between Liverpool and Ireland were prodigious, and travel to the city was one of the cheapest fares out of Ireland" (Gleeson, p. 27).

On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1834, Michael, age 24, arrived in New York from Liverpool "with a red bandana in his pocket" (Gertrude McLaughlin Batte). The ship that brought him from England, the Lotus, recorded his occupation as a "laborer" (From Ancestry.com).

One family chronicler, Gertrude McLaughlin Batte, had this to say about her grandfather, "Witty, humorous, he also truly kissed the Blarney Stone before he left Ireland....As he said, he only worked six weeks single handed, that is to

say, he worked for someone, and the idea popped into his mind, "better roll a cart of your own Michy." So, he purchased a horse and a wagon and went to work on his own helping build railways and canals. He helped build the old B&O Railroad and came to Lynchburg building the canals."

Another family chronicler, Mary McLaughlin Calvert O'Hara adds some background for Michael's move to Lynchburg. She relates: "There was a cholera epidemic in New York and they were burying the dead 10 deep in ditches so he left when the immigration authorities told them there was construction work from Richmond to Lynchburg." Michael didn't make it to Lynchburg right away. It took him four or five years as he passed through New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland, working his way south and arriving in Lynchburg about 1838 or 1839, joining hundreds of his countrymen to work on the James River and Kanawha Canal.

### *The Irish on the Canals*

Gibson Hobbs, whose canal history was recently published by Blackwell Press, says that the canal and rail companies in the north were having monetary difficulties and had suspended their operations during the winter of 1836-37. There had been a labor shortage on the section of the canal which was being built from Richmond to Lynchburg and so creating the opportunity that brought Michael and others south (Hobbs, p. 27). Hobbs relates that Joseph Carrington Cabell, first President of the James River & Kanawha Canal Company, reported in 1838 that about two-thirds of the 800 laborers then employed were white men—the greater part of them foreigners (p. 28) Chambers reports an even higher number; he says that two-thirds of 3300 laborers were Irish (p. 103).

Michael couldn't have picked a worse time to arrive for canal work. The summer of 1838 is recorded as being particularly hot and humid, and a large number of the Irish expired or moved north (Elson, p. 91; Chambers, p. 103; Hobbs, p. 28). President Cabell took a number of measures to keep the Irish in the labor force including furnishing "a moderate portion of ardent spirits" (Elson, p. 91). Perhaps the weather and the spirits were the source of the rheumatism that ultimately forced Michael to retire and put him in a wheelchair in later life.

Hobbs characterizes the Irish laborers as "quarrelsome, interrupting work to brawl and driving off the skilled American mechanics and masons" (p. 29). That behavior was attributable, to a large degree, to drink. Phillip Lightfoot Scruggs speaks of the diary of Lancelot Minor Blackford a young teenager who was fascinated by the various transportation projects under construction in and around Lynchburg: "In 1851 he recorded events showing the violence as well as advantages accompanying the advance of industrialization. On both the canal and railroad construction many immigrant Irish and Italian laborers were employed. Trouble often arose out of the traditional propensity of the Irish to

brawl and the fact that groups of the workers represented ancient feuding groups in Ireland. A February 14 entry in his diary said an Irishman named Lovett was murdered by an Irishman named Angel and that there were three murders within three months. Later he described a fight among the Irishmen in which 39 were arrested, after standing siege in a warehouse, as being a “feud between the Corkonians and the Fardowns” (p. 74).

Michael, on the other hand, was an upstanding citizen. “He often said he was not arrested but one time, and that was when he gave a check to his landlady, not knowing the bank had failed and the check no good. However, a wrong was righted” (Gertrude McLaughlin Batte).

Ultimately, most of the immigrant canal workers moved on, either by attrition or by choice and were replaced by slave labor. As Jim Elson remarked, “It is fair to say that on the social scale of the time the Irish ranked just above blacks. The one big difference, of course, was that the Irish were free to leave their jobs and black slaves were not” (p. 111).

#### *Michael, cont.*

Michael stayed in Lynchburg and prospered. His obituary and several other sources identify him as a “prominent contractor” in the City for a number of years until he retired from active work in 1861, badly crippled due to rheumatism contracted from his work on the canal. (The News, 15 Feb. 1898; see also Funai, p. 171 & Yancey, p. 360). Michael is credited by family members and others with building a section of the James River and Kanawha Canal below Lynchburg, surveying the Hollins Mill road and building the dam and mill, building the ponds and selling ice from them, and building Fort Early. He is also credited with opening many streets in the eastern part of the City, near the ponds for Mr. Henry Davis who “was owner of the entire Third Ward” (Funai, p. 171). We will explore some of those rabbit trails below.

The first official mention of Michael in Lynchburg is in a February 15, 1847 deed from Henry Davis for one acre of land described as “a lot of ground near Lynchburg containing one acre and bounded as follows, to wit: on the north west by Maple Street, in the southeast by Turnpike Street, on the south west by an alley which divides it from the land of John H. Tyree, and on the north east by an alley...” Michael built a house there, at 712 Maple Street, in 1853. The house still stands.

Another official record of Michael McLaughlin is in the Chancery and Law Order Book of the Lynchburg Hustings Court. Gary Rhodes and Ted Delaney have researched and compiled immigration and naturalization records in the court and those records include Michael’s declaration of intent to gain citizenship on January 1, 1849. The record indicates that he was of Longford, Ireland, was

born on July 4, 1813, had "lately arrived" and intended to settle in Lynchburg. On August 4, 1851 Michael was admitted to citizenship after certifying that he had been a resident of the United States and Virginia for at least five years on the oaths of Henry J. Brown and David S. Reid.

You might have noted that the birth date recorded in the Hustings Court record (July 1, 1813) differs from the June 24, 1810 that I announced above as Michael McLaughlin's birth day. This is just the beginning of the mystery of Michael's age.

The 1850 Census of Campbell County lists Michael McLaughlin as a laborer, age 45, living in the household of William McCadda, another Irish laborer. If he was born in 1810, he would have been only forty in 1850.

The 1860 Census only deepens the mystery. That census lists his age as 42. So he got three years younger in a decade. The same census records his wife, Henrietta, as 32 years of age when she was actually forty. Michael had married Henrietta Carter Stone August 10, 1853. (Now we know why he built a house in 1853.) Henrietta was the daughter of William Stone and Pamela Carter Stone of Prince Edward County. Michael and Henrietta had four children, one of whom was my great-grandfather William Henry McLaughlin.

While the 1860 Census still identified Michael's occupation as a laborer, the 1870 Census identified him as a "stonecutter," aged 56. He would have been 60. Henrietta was listed as age 42 (actually 50).

The last census record of Michael and Henrietta is in the 1880 Census. In those documents his age is recorded as 67 (it was actually 70) and Henrietta is listed as aged 50, aging only eight years in the decade since 1870. She was actually 60.

Most significant in the 1880 Census record is the occupation recorded for Michael McLaughlin. In it he is listed as a "capitalist," representing the climax of this American tale.

After his retirement from active work Michael McLaughlin was associated with Adams Bros. & Payne, lumber dealers, and the grocers, Robinson, Tate & Co. He owned land out on the Tyreeanna Road from which he sold timber to Adams Bros. & Payne. Michael also owned other land on Franklin Hill, most notably at 1931 and 2001 Grace Street, which are on either corner of Grace and Franklin. His son, William Henry McLaughlin (my great grandfather) was a vice president of Robinson, Tate & Co. and built a house in 1923 on Woodland Avenue where I used to visit my great aunts.

It has been reported that, "Between 1850 and 1855, Irish immigrants sent back an annual average of 1.2 million pounds, much of which paid for family

passage to America. Local southern newspapers carried advertisements for shipping lines that were offering safe remittance of money to Ireland" (Gleeson, p. 66). Michael was a part of this trend. When he could afford it, he sent money to his six brothers and sister in Ireland, so that they could come to America. Clara McLaughlin Funai (Michael's grand-daughter) reported, "When the McLaughlin brothers and sister came to Ireland, they landed in Norfolk, then came to Richmond and then to Lynchburg, on Capt. Jamison's packet boat" (p. 172) [Gibson Hobbs' book identifies Capt. Jamison's boat as the *Ohio*.]

### *Henry Davis*

Born in 1779, Henry Davis was a prominent business man who "conducted a hardware store in Lynchburg" (Early, p. 392). He was of the family of Friend William Davis, a prominent early Quaker, who married Zalinda, the daughter of John Lynch (Blount/Cabell, p. 30). Apparently this family connection and his many investments resulted in considerable wealth. Rosa Faulkner Yancey identifies him as a "merchant in Lynchburg and a prominent and valuable citizen of the town" (p. 293). Henry Davis was the grandfather of Rosa's husband, Robert Davis Yancey.

Transportation seems to have been a significant interest of Mr. Davis. It was at his expense that Mr. Davis had Michael McLaughlin build the roads through the Third Ward. In a minute I will tell you about one of his road projects, the Lynchburg to Campbell Court House Turnpike. But first, let me tell you about his involvement in the great debate that occurred in Virginia over the best way to move goods to and from the west. That was the competition between railroads and canals, which is well-chronicled by others. It was a competition initially won by the canal promoters but, ultimately, rail interests prevailed.

W. Asbury Christian reports in his book, *Lynchburg and Its People* (p. 109) that in September of 1828, in a meeting at the Franklin Hotel, Henry Davis, with others, was appointed to petition the General Assembly to build locks and dams on the James to make it navigable for steamboats from Richmond to Lynchburg. In November, another meeting discussed building a railroad from Lynchburg to the New River, and a "Blue Ridge Turnpike" along the James to Richmond.

The turnpike and the railroad were finally chartered in 1831 and Mr. Davis was elected Chairman of the trustees of the Lynchburg and New River Railroad. Shares in the railroad were sold with the town of Lynchburg purchasing 1000 shares and citizens purchasing 3060. Two-fifths of the shares were left for the State to take and the company was organized in January 1832 with Henry Davis as President. The state, however, refused to purchase the shares set aside for it and instead incorporated the James River & Kanawha Canal in March 1832, killing the railroad for the time being (Christian, p. 111).

Lynchburg and Mr. Davis were persistent, however. In 1846 he was involved in the effort to establish a railroad to the west and he became one of the directors of the Virginia and Tennessee railroad that was established by an act of the General Assembly in 1846 (Christian, p. 144) or 1849 (Scruggs, p. 63). Al Chambers records that the tunnel along Blackwater Creek was completed for the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad in 1850 after two years of work (p. 119). That tunnel, of course, is today a prominent feature on the James River Heritage Trail. In 1854, a second railroad, the Petersburg and Lynchburg, reached the City. I couldn't find any reference of Henry Davis's involvement but it would not be a surprise to learn that he was a part of that effort.

Henry Davis died intestate in December 1863. Phillip Lightfoot Scruggs says the date was the 13<sup>th</sup> and called Davis, "one of the oldest and best citizens" (p. 214). Chambers says he died on the 11<sup>th</sup> and also notes that he owned much of the Third Ward, which was the area east of 12<sup>th</sup> Street including much of Diamond Hill and Franklin Hill. Maps of Lynchburg from the late 1800's refer to this area as the "Davis Estate." There was a petition to divide the land for development in 1867 but that was challenged in court and, ultimately, topography prevented significant development of the area (Chambers, p. 211). In 1870, Franklin Hill was annexed into the City of Lynchburg (Chambers, p. 218).

### *The Ponds*

The subject of "The Ponds" was the first of many rabbit trails in my research. Their location was quite a mystery. The family papers mentioned that Michael McLaughlin extended Main Street for Henry Davis eastward to the first pond at about 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Of course, there is no intersection of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Main today. Chuck Bradnor at Jones Memorial Library gave me another clue. He suggested that the location of the ponds had been obliterated by construction of the Expressway, specifically, the interchange at Main Street.

Nancy and Dave Marion gave me even better clues. Dave recalled a reference to the ponds in Captain John Meem Payne's *Recollections of Lynchburg*, a 1931 manuscript in the Jones Memorial Library. Capt. Payne's recollections were about Lynchburg 80 years prior, or about 1851. It is a block by block and building by building description of the city at that time. In describing Main Street, east of Horseford Road, Payne relates:

At the northeast corner of Horseford Road was the shop of Fleming Mosely, who was an expert wood turner. He made most excellent spinning tops for the boys of that day. Further on, and on the hill, is where each circus coming to Lynchburg in that day pitched its tents. When John Robinson came we knew it would be a fine show. Beyond this place was the flower garden of McGowan. On the south side of this street was a brick building with a circular iron

balcony. This was intended as the location for a branch of the United States Bank. Further on were the residences of Captain McCorkle and other to [sic] White Rock Hill, with Davis' ponds in existence. (p. 10)

Nancy Marion provided the final clues when she referred me to Gray's 1877 map of Lynchburg. The map shows three ponds, a small one on the north side of Main Street and two larger ponds intersected by a road. But, which road was that, and does it still exist? The family papers provided the final clue. After mentioning the extension of Main Street to the first pond, the papers also report, "The street called Florida Avenue comes down between where the two old canals [sic] were." Could it be? A check of a modern day United States Geographic Survey (USGS) map confirmed that the depressions that once held water and are now wooded are still there on either side of Florida Avenue. The crowning touch is a Plecker and Maury photograph of one of the ponds that Nancy has in her collection (courtesy of Martha Miller). The 1892 Baist map also shows the ponds as bisected by the Campbell Courthouse Turnpike which was also Florida Avenue.

#### *Hollins Mill Dam*

Although the family lore says that Michael McLaughlin built Hollins Mill Dam my research casts doubt on that assertion. According to a pamphlet in the Jones Memorial Library (# 2421), in 1828 the Lynchburg Manufacturing Company was organized to manufacture cotton, wool, hemp and flax on Blackwater Creek. Our friend Henry Davis was a trustee. An article in the local newspaper (*The Advance*, January 8, 1957) speculated that, "The original dam which remains there today presumably was built about that time. Slave labor was used and reports have passed down that the dam cost \$60,000." If the dam was built in 1828, Michael McLaughlin didn't build it. He was still in Ireland.

Al Chambers, in his book *Lynchburg, An Architectural History*, (p. 86) speaks about the "Blackwater Mill," quoting a 1835 letter from Joseph Martin, "A cotton factory on the right bank of Black Water Creek erected by the Lynchburg Manufacturing Company with a capital of \$100,000 and intended to run 2500 spindles, and give employment to about 70 persons, is just getting into operation. This is the first attempt of any importance to carry on the cotton manufacture in S. W. Virginia; the success of the enterprise is confidently anticipated." Chambers says that the mill was in full operation in 1836. Even if the dam wasn't built as early as 1828, it was certainly up by 1835 and, although Michael was in America at the time, he probably hadn't made it to Lynchburg yet.

The pamphlet in Jones Memorial Library says that there were four mills on the site. Apparently, the last one was built and/or owned by John Hollins, giving

us the names for both the dam and the adjacent road. The mill is mentioned in his will of May 1859 (JML Pamphlet #1534). Phillip Lightfoot Scruggs identifies John Hollins as an "inspector and guager of liquors" (p. 50). Scruggs adds: "John Hollins was a grocer, tobacconist and prosperous citizen of the town, an associate of Samuel Miller in the establishment of an early textile mill on Blackwater Creek near the site of the long-time railroad station, and the founder of Hollins Mill, a grist mill razed a few decades ago, and giving name to Hollins Mill Road, part of the old Lexington Turnpike. His name is also perpetuated through his wife's gift of \$5,000 to Botetourt Springs school, whereby it changed its name in her honor." (p. 51)

Hollins Mill was purchased by W. Knight Smiley in 1914 and he milled grain there until 1952. On January 8, 1957, as reported in The Advance newspaper, the building was razed by English Construction Company to facilitate the construction of a City sewer line.

### *The Lynchburg and Campbell Court House Turnpike*

One of the principle roads through the Third Ward of the City (now Franklin Hill) was the toll road between Lynchburg and Rustburg. To what degree Michael McLaughlin worked on the road is questionable due to the dates. The Lynchburg and Campbell County Turnpike Company was authorized by the 1836 Acts of the Assembly. Henry Davis and others, including John R.D. Payne, were named as trustees and were authorized subscriptions to raise \$6000 in shares of \$100 each to finance the road. The enabling legislation stated:

*Provided* That said company shall not be required to make the said road more than twenty-four feet in width exclusive of side drains; nor to pave or gravel the same except in low marshy places; nor to make a summer or side road to said turnpike: *And provided also*, That the said company shall be allowed to erect but one toll-gate on said road, and to demand and receive thereat half the tolls allowed in the act aforesaid, as soon as the said road shall be opened, graduated, thrown up and drained, and the water courses requiring it properly bridged. (JML, Pamphlet #1284)

A toll house was erected on one and one-eighth acres of property purchased from Christopher Winfree on June 20, 1839 for \$356.00. It was located at the corner of Augusta Street and Florida Avenue, just in the bottom on the right as you are heading out. The building was demolished only a few years ago.

Al Chambers reports, "The road to Campbell Court House angled up the slope from Twelfth between Clay and Madison Streets [probably along the alignment of the present day Grace Street], and intersected Washington Street

near the crest of Diamond Hill" (p.81). The toll section started about the Presbyterian Cemetery. Once it was in operation, the road was frequently inspected by viewers and when it was found to be in disrepair the collection of tolls was suspended until the road was repaired. I suspect that this is where Michael McLaughlin got involved.

To bring this rabbit trail to a close; in 1903 the General Assembly authorized Campbell County to purchase the turnpike from Adolphus Humbles, President of the turnpike company. Campbell County took over the operation of the road, probably until it was taken over by the State in the 1930's. By the way, Adolphus Humbles was also a founder of Virginia Seminary and College, now Virginia University of Lynchburg.

### *The Catholic Church*

The first Catholic mass in Lynchburg is reported to have taken place in 1829 in the home of Mrs. Mary Dornin (Walsh, p. 13). In 1830, Fr. Joseph van Horsigh, a circuit riding priest from Norfolk, found 150 Catholics in Lynchburg (Fogarty, p. 72). Our own Jim Elson, in his history of Lynchburg, states, "The first Roman Catholics to appear in Lynchburg in significant numbers were Irish men seeking their fortunes in America, who came to work on the canal in the late 1830's (p. 111).

Father Timothy O'Brien, another visiting priest, made three visits to Lynchburg over six years starting in 1834 (Walsh p. 13). He established a Sunday school at the home of Mrs. Dornin in 1838. Mrs. Dornin's influence was considerable and one of the stained glass windows in today's Holy Cross church is dedicated to her memory.

Fr. Daniel Downey became the first resident pastor in 1841. He rented the old Baptist Church at the corner of Church and Fourth Streets for services (Walsh, p. 14). In 1842, the parish purchased a lot on Clay Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets and built St. Francis Xavier Church which was dedicated in 1843. Shortly afterward a Total Abstinence Society was organized. The church was not totally dedicated to saving soul from the evils of alcohol; it also had a political angle. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1842 the parishioners organized a Repeal of the Union Association (in 1801 the Irish Parliament had been dissolved and incorporated into the English Parliament). Mr. Patrick Quinn, a son-in-law of Mrs. Mary Dornin, was Secretary.

The Catholic Church in Lynchburg continued to grow, in no small part due, I am sure, to the siblings, children, grandchildren, and nieces and nephews of Michael McLaughlin. In 1871 the lot at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Clay Streets was purchased and the present Holy Cross Church, designed by Col. August Fosberg, was dedicated on September 14, 1879 (Walsh, p. 22). In 1874, Holy

Cross Cemetery was established "in the suburbs to the northwest of the city, near the Lexington Turnpike", now on Bedford Avenue near its eastern juncture with Rivermont Avenue. Al Chambers says, "Its oldest gravestones bear silent witness to the origins of Lynchburg's early members of the faith, among whom were natives of Killarney, County Kerry; Croome, County Limerick; and Knight, County Tipperary" (Chambers, p. 243). Among them lies Michael McLaughlin, of Edgeworthstown, County Longford, beside his wife Henrietta.

Michael McLaughlin died at 601 Franklin Street, in the home of his daughter Mary Ann Herley, on Feb. 13, 1898. In noting Michael's death, Christian refers to him as an "aged Irish Citizen" (Christian, p. 435). His obituary states that he was, "probably one of the oldest residents of this City, not a native" (The News, 15 February, 1898). And so ends this American tale.

## Sources

Lucy Harrison Miller Baber (Compiler) & Evelyn Lee Moore (Researcher and Writer), *Behind the Old Brick Wall, A Cemetery Story*, (Lynchburg, The Lynchburg Committee of The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1968)

Louis A. Blunt, *Sketches and Recollections of Lynchburg by the Oldest Inhabitant (Mrs. Cabell), 1858, with People and Places Mentioned by Mrs. Cabell*, (Lynchburg, Lynchburg Historical Foundation, Inc., 1974)

S. Allen Chambers, Jr., *Lynchburg: An Architectural History*, (Charlottesville, The University Press of Virginia, 1981)

W. Asbury Christian, *Lynchburg and Its People*, (Lynchburg, J.P. Bell Company, 1900)

Emily Cosby Dieter, compiler, *Collection of Family Papers* (on the McLaughins and their descendents)

Ted Delaney and Gary Rhodes, *Immigration and Naturalization Records*, unpublished; available in the Jones Memorial Library and at the Lynchburg City Cemetery

Ruth H. Early, *Campbell Chronicles and Sketches: Embracing the History of Campbell County, Virginia, 1782-1926*, (Lynchburg, J. P. Bell Company, 1927)

James M. Elson, *Lynchburg, Virginia: The First Two Hundred Years, 1786-1986*, (Lynchburg, Warwick House Publishers, 2004)

Gerald P. Fogarty, S. J., *Commonwealth Catholicism: A History of the Catholic Church in Virginia*, (Notre Dame, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2001)

Funai, Clara McLaughlin, *A Weaving*, (Lynchburg, J. P. Bell Company, 1977)

Donald T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South: 1815-1877*, (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2001)

T. Gibson Hobbs, Jr., *The Canal on the James*, (Lynchburg, The Blackwell Press, 2009)

*Hollins Mill (Blackwater Mills)*, Pamphlet # 1534, Henry Smiley Papers, and Pamphlet #2421, Jones Memorial Library (JML)

McLaughlin Family Bible, in the possession of L. Kimball Payne, III

Robert P. Merchant, "*Lynchburg and Campbell Court House Turnpike (1836-1904)*," 1992, Pamphlet #1284 (his notes are in Pamphlet #2450), Jones Memorial Library (JML)

Michael Padden and Robert Sullivan, *May the Road Rise to Meet You: Everything You Need to Know About Irish American History*, (New York, Plume, 1999)

Capt. John Meem Payne (1840-1934), "*Recollections of Lynchburg*," 1931, manuscript in the Jones Memorial Library (MS 1767)

*The Saga of a City: Lynchburg, Virginia, 1786-1936*, (Lynchburg, The Lynchburg Sesqui-Centennial Association, Inc., 1936)

Phillip Lightfoot Scruggs, *The History of Lynchburg, Virginia, 1786-1946* [also, *Lynchburg, Virginia: "its industry, enterprise and correct course."*], (Lynchburg, J. P. Bell Company, n.d. [1972])

*Stories of the Stones: Interpretive Plaques in the Old City Cemetery*, (Lynchburg, Southern Memorial Association, 1999)

Grace Walsh, *The Catholic Church in Lynchburg, 1829-1936*, (Lynchburg, Coleman & Bradley Printers, 1936)

Rosa Faulkner Yancey, *Lynchburg and Its Neighbors*, (Richmond, J. W. Ferguson & Sons, 1935)

PAYNE 18 MAR 2010

# An American Tale & Rabbit Trails

SPHEX Presentation

March 18, 2010

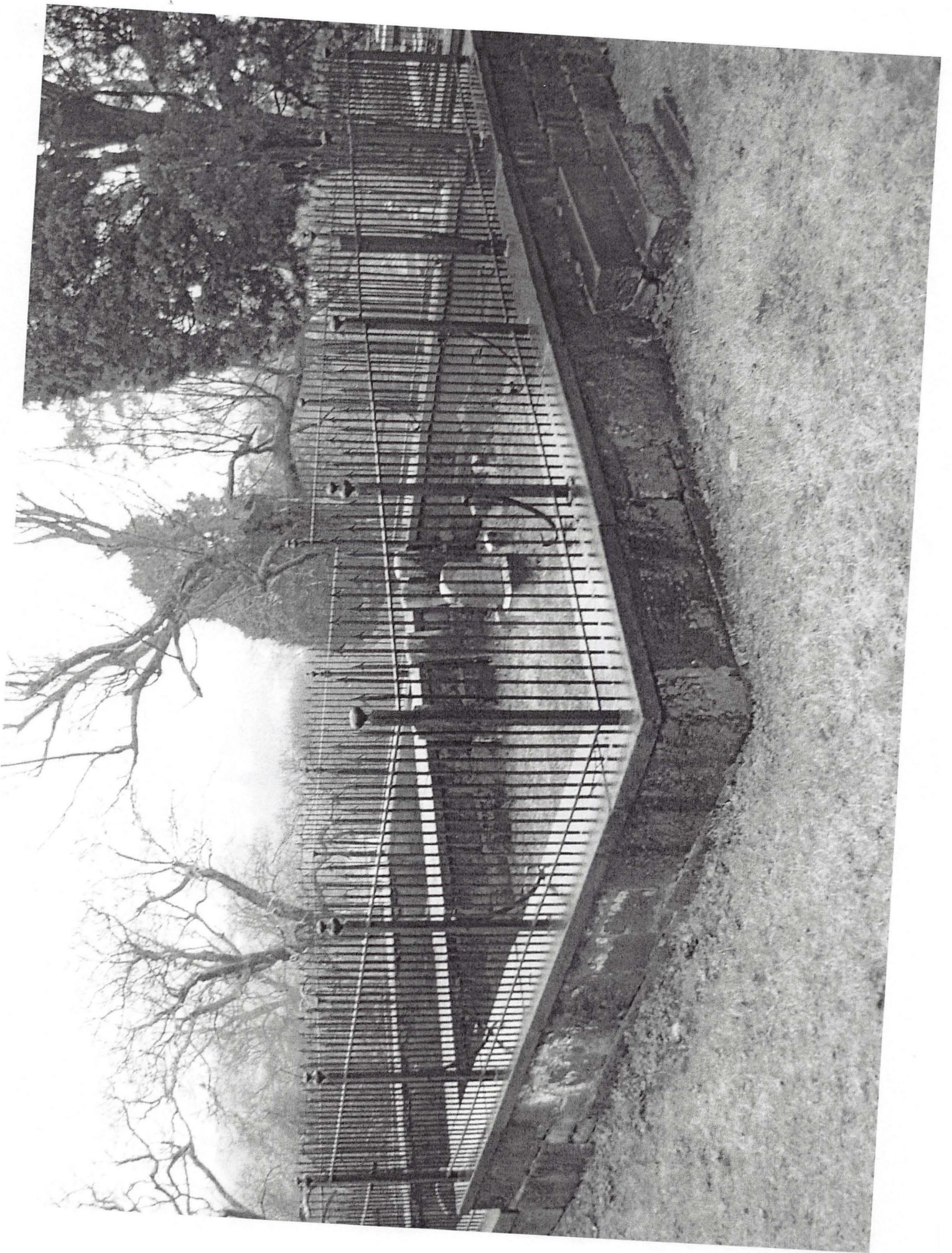
Kimball Payne

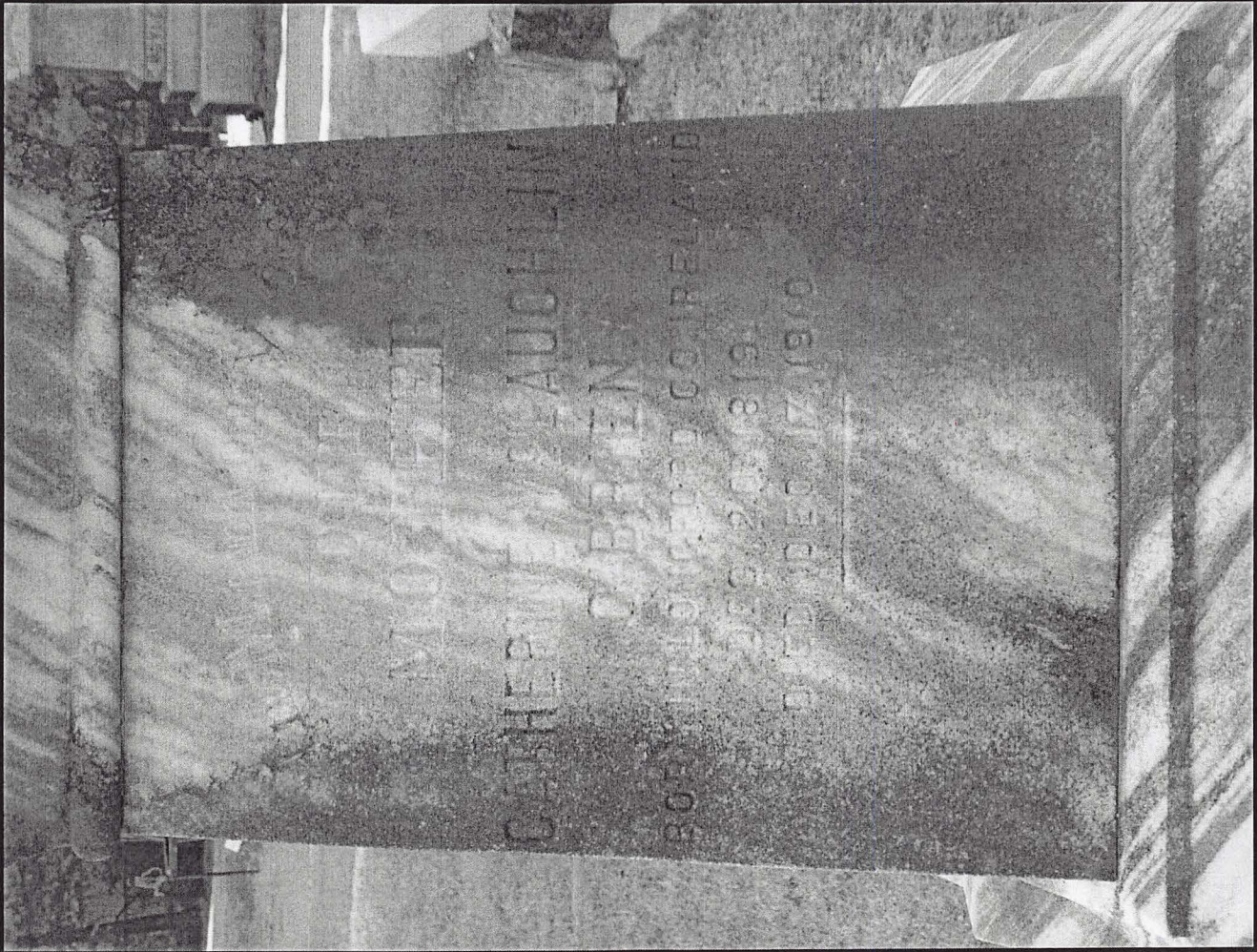
Michael McLaughlin died Feb 13<sup>th</sup> 1898  
He was born in Edgewoodstown, County Longford,  
Ireland June 8<sup>th</sup> 1810. He emigrated to the  
United States in 1834. His father's name was  
James McLaughlin. His mother's maiden name was  
Margaret McDermodt. His paternal grandfather was  
Anthony McLaughlin. His paternal grandmother  
Catherine Ann, nee Harding. His maternal grandfather  
was Brian McDermodt, His maternal grandmother  
was

Michael McLaughlin married Henrietta Stone

Aug. 10, 1853

He was the father of Mary A. McLaughlin who was born Aug 15 1854  
and Mrs. McLaughlin who was born 1856





WILLIAM  
MURPHY  
CATHERINE MURPHY AUCHINCLOSS

CATHERINE MURPHY  
BORN 1810 DIED 1891

1810  
1891  
1817  
1891

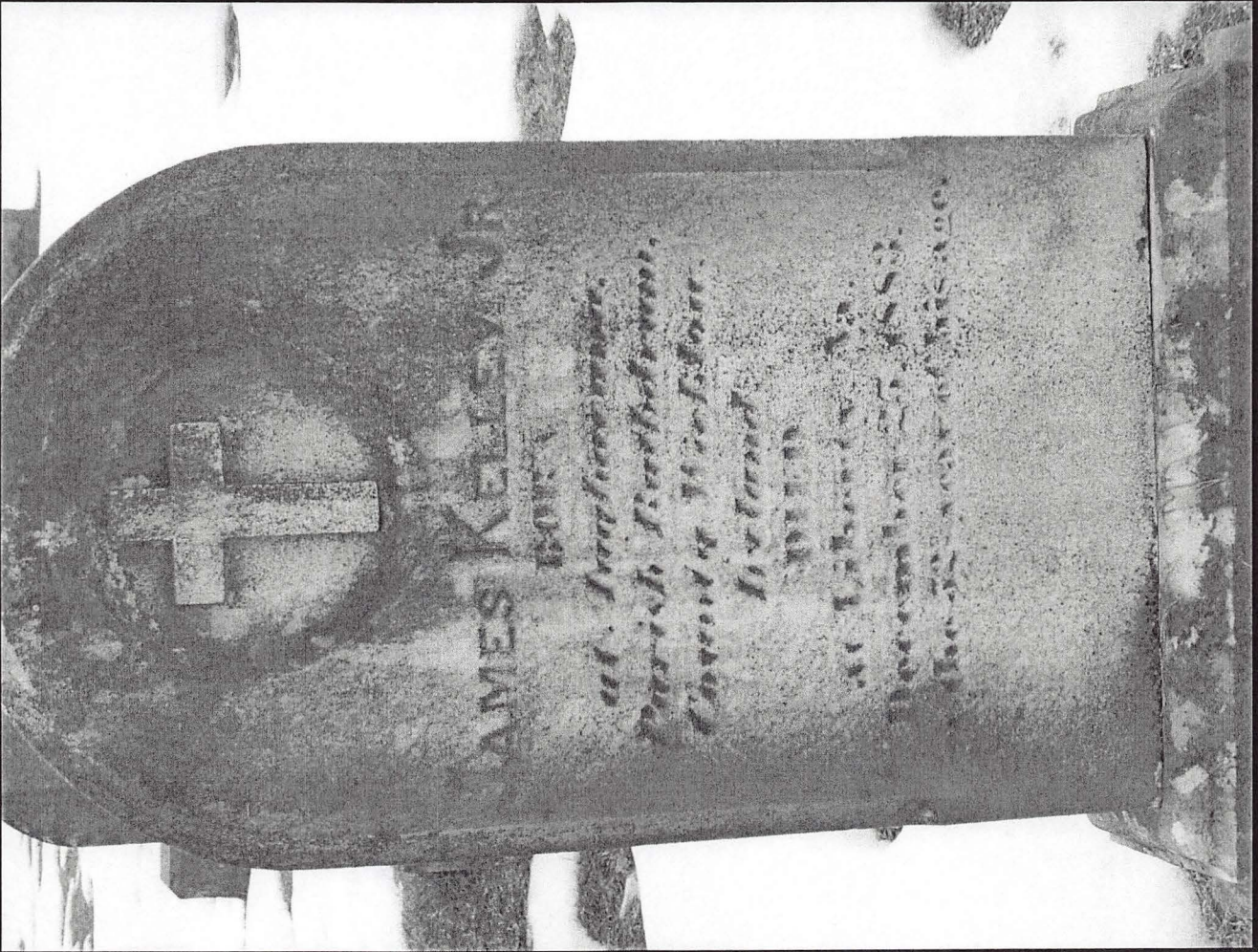
NEW WEST AUGHLIN

POST — SFSF  
proprietor  
John J. ...

MARY

Page of

W. MC LAUGHLIN



AMES KELLEHER

BORN

at Southport  
Parish Northampton  
County Northam.

Ireland

1811

at Cambridge N. H.  
December 25 1882  
Buried at his 100



W. D. TREHAY

BORN IN COUNTY  
TIPPERARY, IRELAND

DIED

JULY 17, 1874

AGED

52 YEARS.

Dear Wife for ever in love to weep  
O be still, still in rest,  
For I shall see thee no more, but  
among the pure in heart.



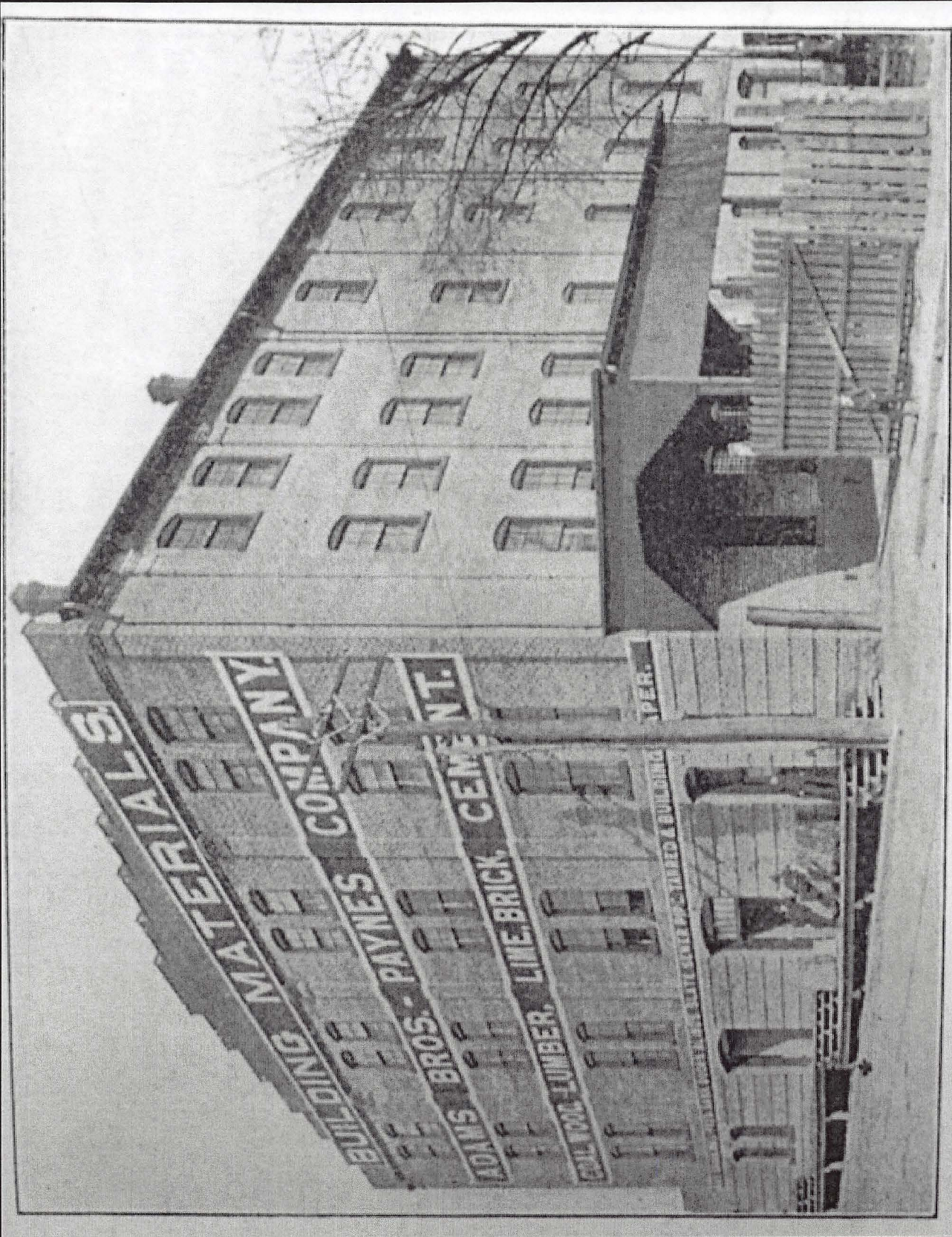












JOHN H. LEWIS.  
COUNSELLOR-AT-LAW.

813 MAIN STREET,

(P. O. BOX 211)

LYNCHBURG, VA

**J. R. HILL,**  
DENTIST,

1021 Main Street, - Lynchburg, Virginia.

JOHN W. ROBINSON. M. B. TATE. W. H. WREN. W. H. McLAUGHLIN.

ESTABLISHED 1866.

ROBINSON, TATE & Co.,  
**WHOLESALE GROCERS**

—AND—

COMMISSION MERCHANTS,

817 Main Street, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Orders by mail or telegraph receive prompt attention. Consignments solicited.

N. H. LAVINDER,

DEALER IN

FAMILY GROCERIES, CONFECTIONERIES, FRUITS, CIGARS, TOBACCOS, &c.

No. 712 Main Street, Lynchburg, Va.

C. H. ALMOND,

✽JOBBER✽ OF ✽HATS.✽

1003 MAIN STREET,

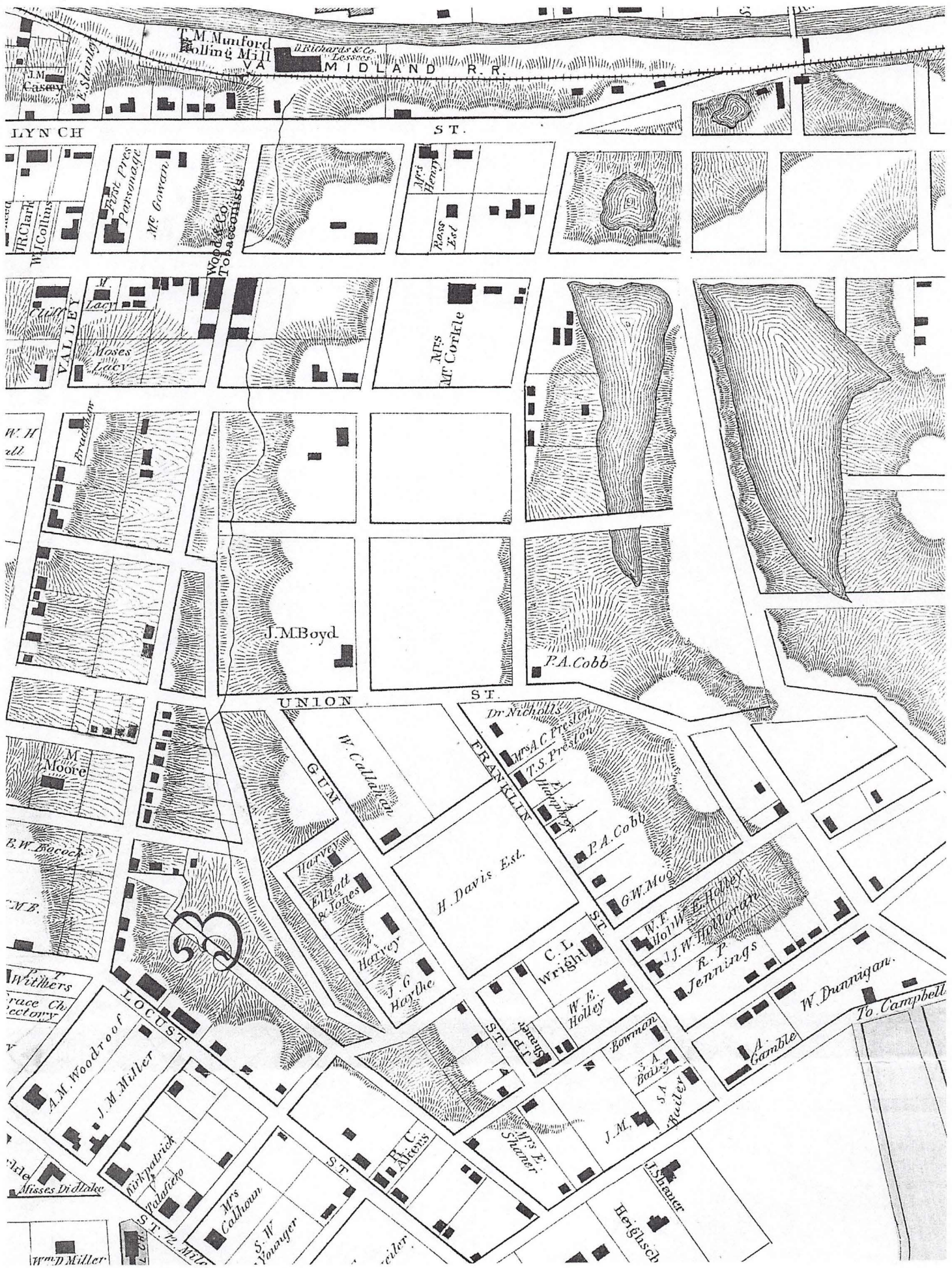
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA.



HENRY DAVIS

HENRY DAVIS

1778 - 1863



520

BONFORD AVE

EAST LYNCH ST

ELM ST

MAIN ST

ROSE ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

WATER ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

ST

HOSPITAL

HOSPITAL

HOSPITAL

FRANKLIN ST

DALE ST

GUM ST

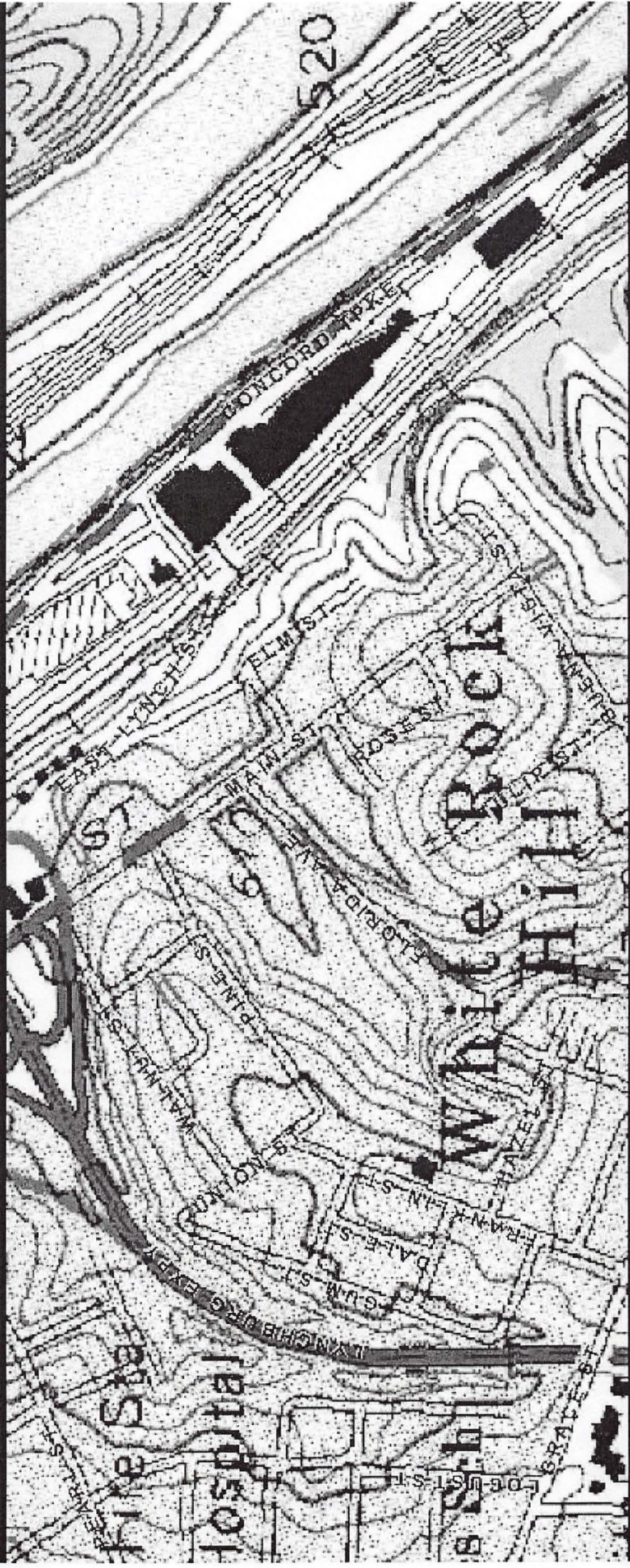
WINDYBIRCH AVE

506 ST

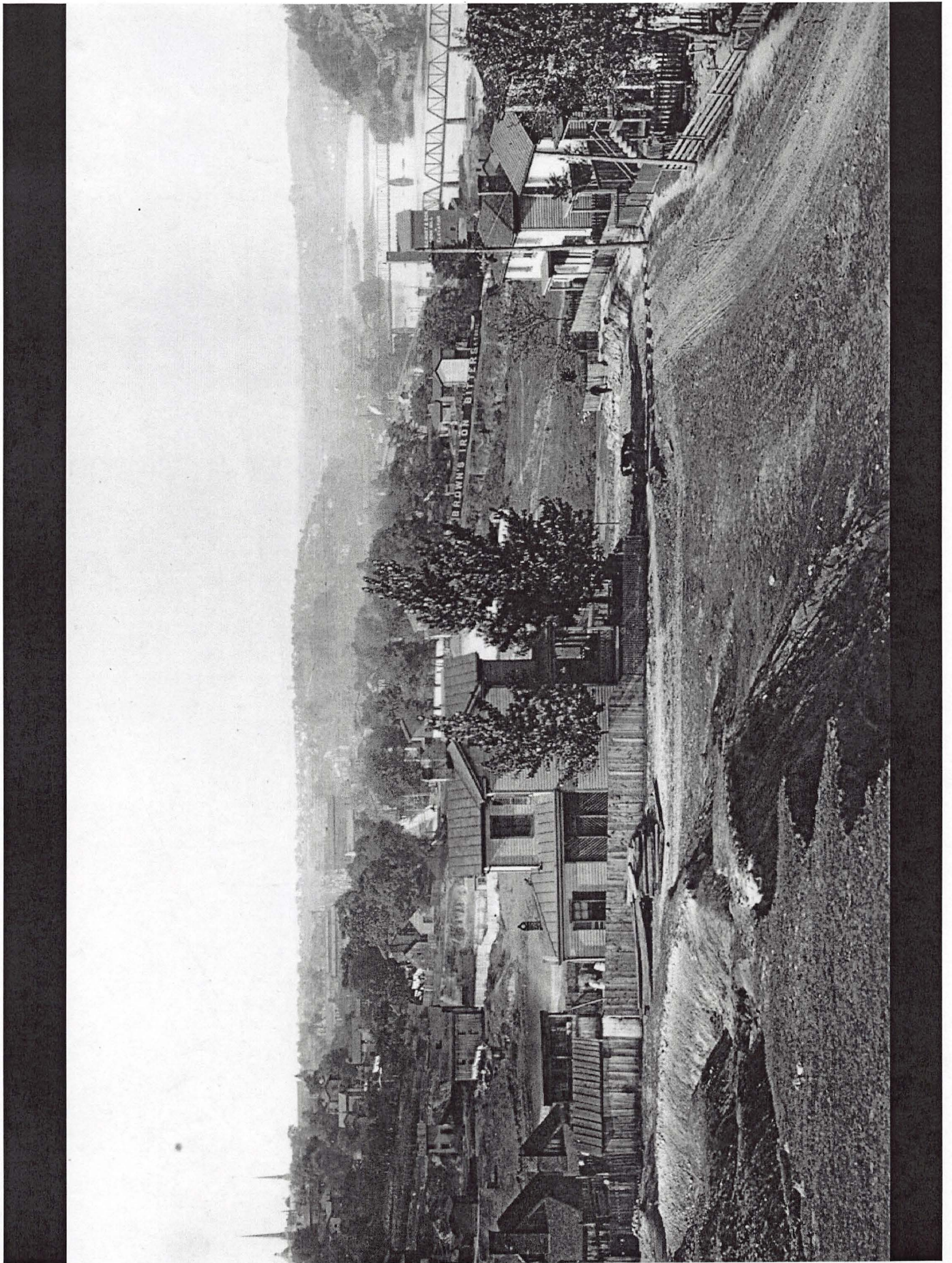
SRATE ST

SRATE ST

SRATE ST

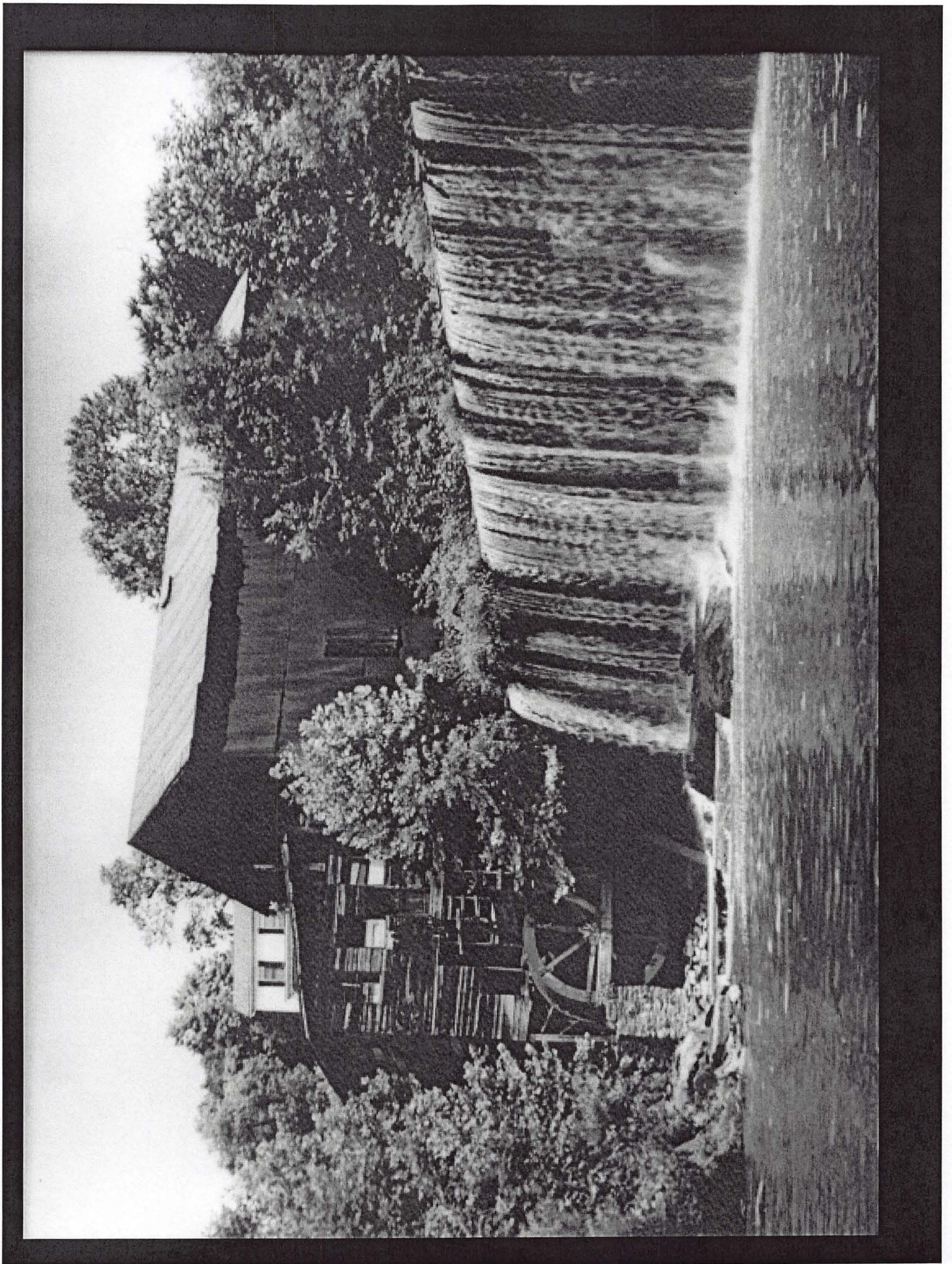


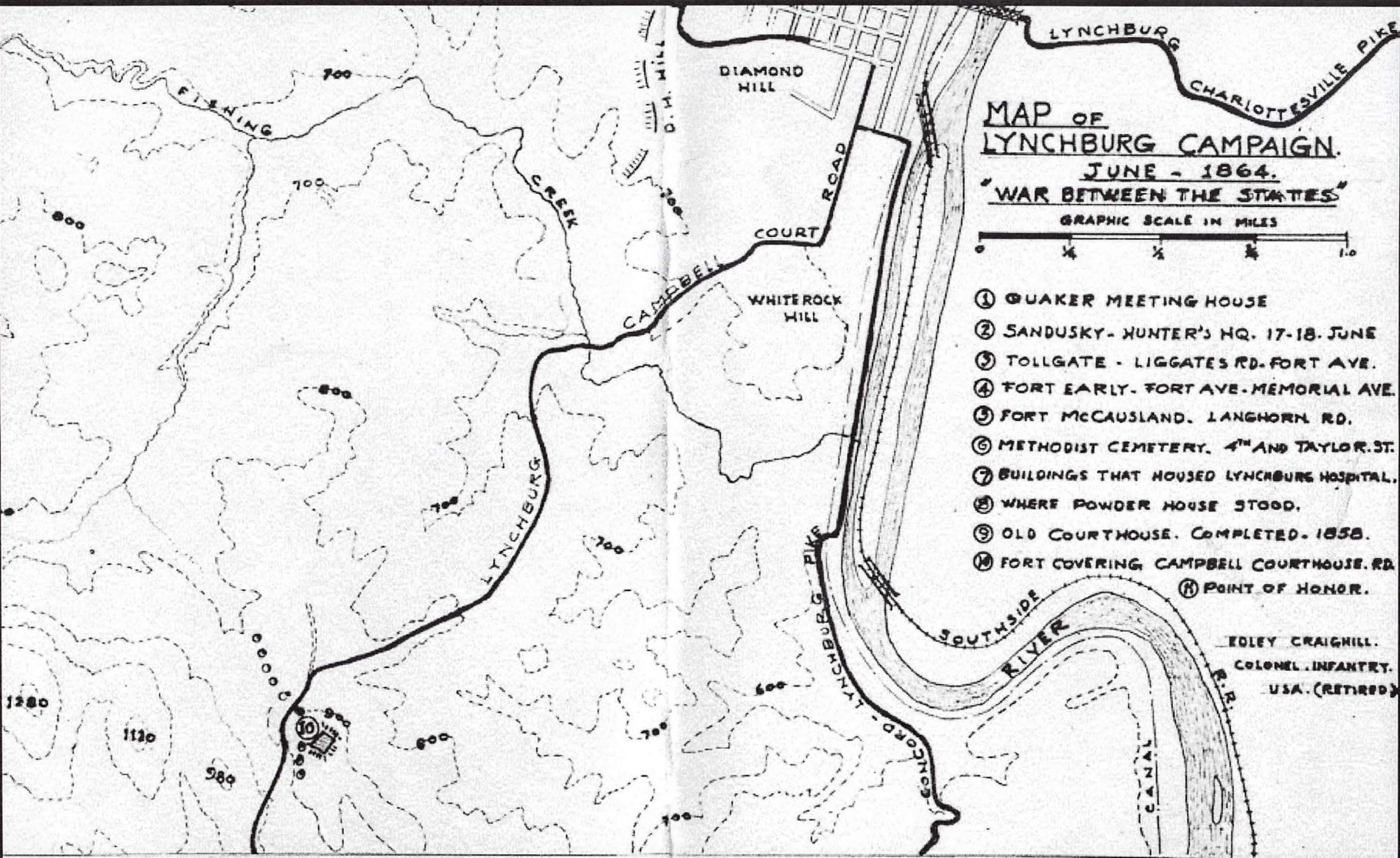












**MAP OF  
LYNCHBURG CAMPAIGN.**

**JUNE - 1864.**

**"WAR BETWEEN THE STATES"**

GRAPHIC SCALE IN MILES



- ① QUAKER MEETING HOUSE
- ② SANDUSKY-HUNTER'S HQ. 17-18. JUNE
- ③ TOLLGATE - LIGGATES RD.-FORT AVE.
- ④ FORT EARLY-FORT AVE-MEMORIAL AVE.
- ⑤ FORT MCCAUSLAND. LANGHORN RD.
- ⑥ METHODIST CEMETERY. 4<sup>TH</sup> AND TAYLOR ST.
- ⑦ BUILDINGS THAT HOUSED LYNCHBURG HOSPITAL.
- ⑧ WHERE POWDER HOUSE STOOD.
- ⑨ OLD COURTHOUSE. COMPLETED. 1858.
- ⑩ FORT COVERING CAMPBELL COURTHOUSE. RD.
- Ⓜ POINT OF HONOR.

EDLEY CRAIGHILL.  
COLONEL. INFANTRY.  
USA. (RETIRED)

# Rates of Toll

On the Lynchburg and Campbell Court House  
Turnpike Road.

## TO THE WOLF PIT.

For every score of sheep or hogs, 13-4 cts.

For every score of cattle, 33-4 "

and so in proportion for any greater  
or lesser number.

For every horse, mare, mule or gelding, 1 cent.

For every two wheel riding carriage, 3 "

For every four wheel riding carriage, 6 "

For every cart or waggon 13-4 cents for  
every animal drawing the same.

## TO CANDLER'S ROAD.

For every score of sheep or hogs, 21-4 cts.

For every score of cattle, 5 "

and so in proportion for a greater or  
less number.

For every horse, mare, mule or gelding 11-2 "

For every 2 wheel riding carriage, 4 "

" every 4 wheel riding carriage, 8 "

" every cart or waggon 21-2 cts. for ev-  
ery animal drawing the same.

## TO 6 MILE POST, or to TERRY'S.

For every score of sheep or hogs, 31-2 cts.

" every score of cattle, 7 "

" every horse, mare, mule or gelding, 13-4 "

" every two wheel riding carriage, 61-4 "

" every four wheel riding carriage, 121-2 "

For every Cart or Waggon, 31-2 cents  
for every animal drawing the same.

## TO CAMPBELL'S COURT HOUSE.

For every score of sheep or hogs, 7 cents.

For every score of cattle, 14 "

and so in proportion for a greater or  
less number.

For every horse, mare, mule, or gelding, 31-2 "

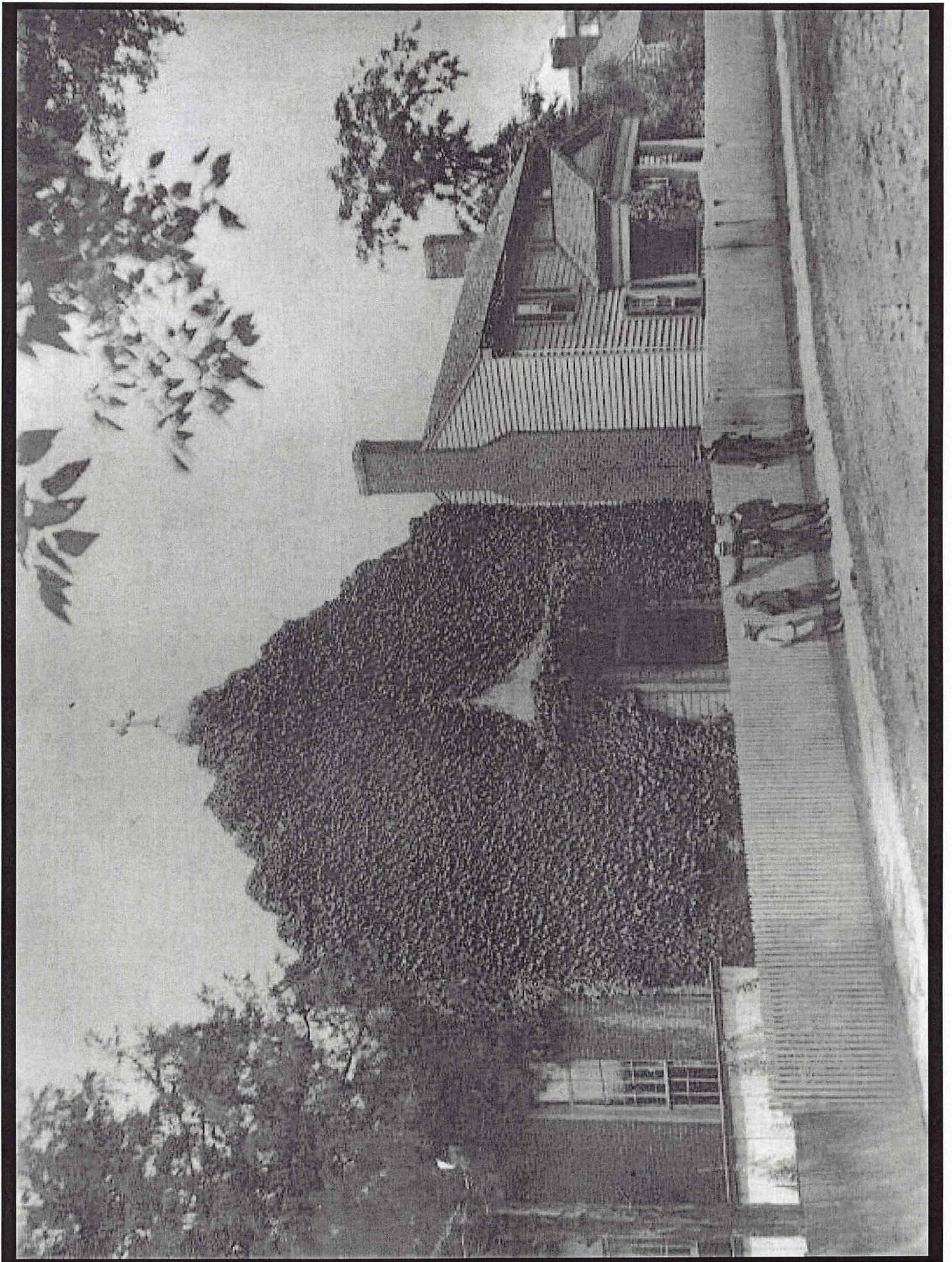
" every 2 wheel riding carriage, 121-2 "

" every 4 wheel riding carriage, 25 "

For every Cart or Waggon 7 cents for every animal drawing the same.

Carts and Waggons returning pay half the above rates.

M. W. DAVENPORT, Pres't.





Wife of  
**HENRIETTA STONE**  
**M. McLAUGHLIN**  
Born in Grapghill, County V.  
**MAY 8 1820.**  
**DIED**  
**JULY 6 1881.**  
Her words were her motto  
"I have done my duty"

**MOTHER**

**ISAAC McLAUGHLIN**  
Born  
in Grapghill, County V.  
**JUNE 24 1828**  
**DIED**  
**FEB 2 1885**  
His words were his motto  
"I have done my duty"

**FATHER**

MICHAEL McLAUGHLIN

BORN

In Edgemoor Vicarage  
County Longford Ireland

JUNE 24. 1810.

DIED

FEB. 13. 1898.

A Father, Soldier  
A Soldier, Soldier  
A Soldier, Soldier