

# NEWS - NOTES

The Newsletter of the Rockbridge Historical Society

*The past educating the present.*

Volume XXXVIII Issue II

March 2011

Headquarters and Exhibition Space at Campbell House, Washington & Randolph Streets, Lexington, Virginia

Editor, George Wm. Warren, IV • Graphic Design by B.R. Floyd

## Officers

Dr. Charles A. Bodie  
*President*

Col. Thomas W. Davis  
*Vice President*

Lt. Col. David Buckner  
*Vice President for Property*

Linda Kay Law Krantz  
*Secretary*

Nora Gaty  
*Treasurer*

## Board

John P. Ackerly III  
*At Large*

Joellen K. Bland  
*At Large*

Jane L. Brooke  
*Docent Chair*

John Matchette  
Jeanette Matchette  
*Gardens {Ex-Officio}*

Vaughan Stanley  
*Archives {Ex-Officio}*

## Trustees

Dr. Pamela H. Simpson  
*Chair*

David Coffey  
Richard K. Rathmell

Mary Skutt  
*Publications Chair*

## Executive Director

George Wm. Warren, IV

## March Program to Feature Humanitarian Accomplishments of Rev. William M. Morrison



*Rev. William McCutchan Morrison  
(1867-1918)*

On Monday, March 28th, at 7:30 pm, the Rockbridge Historical Society will present its second public history program for 2011 in the Auditorium of Nichols Engineering Hall, at VMI. The event is free and open to the public.

Dr. Christian Jennings, assistant professor of African history at Washington & Lee University, assisted by several of his students, will present an audio-visual program exploring the accomplishments of Rev. William M. Morrison, an 1887 W&L graduate, who created the first major, international human rights campaign through his courageous efforts to expose colonial atrocities in Africa.

William McCutchan Morrison was born just outside of Lexington in 1867. He enrolled at Washington & Lee at the age of sixteen, walking several miles to attend class each day. Morrison's classmates considered him dependable, devoted to his studies, and an excellent orator, but otherwise unremarkable. While at W&L, Morrison considered a career as a lawyer, but a few years after graduation decided to become a missionary.

In 1897, Morrison was sent to the Congo Free State [at the time a colony of Belgium, now two nations, the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the

*Continued on page 3*

## About the Presenters



*Professor Christian Jennings (seated center front) and his African history class on Congo and Rwanda*

Dr. Christian Jennings is assistant professor of African history in the Department of History at Washington & Lee University. He received his PhD in history from the University of Texas at Austin in 2005, then taught as an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point from 2005-2008 before moving to Virginia.

Professor Jennings is a specialist on the history of Tanzania and Kenya, the history of science in Africa, and the history of pastoralists (cattle-keeping people) in East Africa. He is the

co-editor of *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed* (University of Rochester Press, 2003) and is currently writing a book about the history of marine science in East Africa. His hometown is Austin, Texas.

Three students from the W&L Class of 2011, who have studied African history under Dr. Jennings, will participate in the presentation. They are Lauren Bohdan, Lebanon Township, NJ; Jay Kozak, Richmond, VA; and, Ruchira Ray, Milwaukee, WI.

## Meeting at a Glance

**Date: Monday, March 28th**

**Time: 7:30 p.m.**

**Where: Nichols Engineering Auditorium, VMI Post**

**Program:**

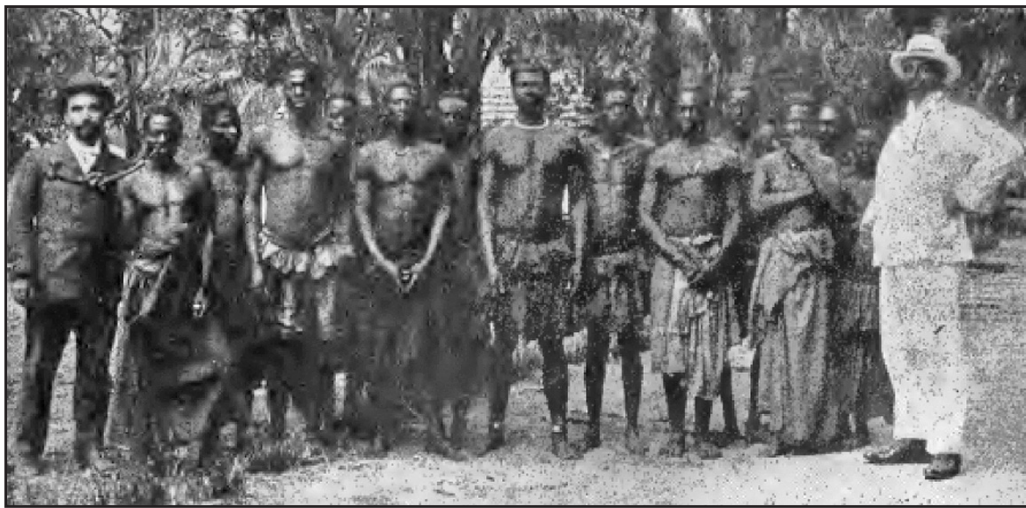
**“Rev. William M. Morrison – Pioneer International Human Rights Crusader”**

**Dr. Christian Jennings, assistant professor of African history at Washington & Lee University, with participation from the following W&L students in the Class of 2011: Lauren Bohdan, Lebanon Township, NJ; Jay Kozak, Richmond, VA; Ruchira Ray, Milwaukee, WI**

## March Program



*Rev. William H. Sheppard*



*Left to right, Rev. Morrison, group of Kuba tribesmen of the Congo, Rev. Sheppard.*

*Continued from page 1*

Congo]. This area was a private domain cut by Belgium's Leopold II out of an enormous swath of central Africa. Then as now, industrialized countries used the Congo as a source of raw materials. The Congo's ivory and rubber made Leopold astronomically wealthy even as its people suffered brutal treatment at the hands of the colonizers and their local employees.

By 1900, Morrison had grown so outraged at these atrocities that he began to systematically publicize them. He soon gained a reputation as the most fiercely determined opponent of Leopold's regime, successfully persuading such major world figures as Theodore Roosevelt, Booker T. Washington, Mark Twain, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (creator of Sherlock Holmes) to use their celebrity to help the people of Congo.

Morrison also formed a productive partnership with his colleague, William Henry Sheppard, an African-American missionary born and raised in Waynesboro. Sheppard himself was a larger-than-life figure who forged an extraordinary bond with the Kuba people of southeastern Congo. Morrison and Sheppard collaborated extensively in documenting and bringing to light the horrific situation in the Congo and in 1904 helped to create the Congo Reform Association (CRA), the first modern human rights organization.

A plaque honoring Morrison's tireless campaign against outrageous exploitation and oppression of native peoples can be found in the Lee Chapel. One of Dr. Jennings' classes has collaborated to create the William Morrison Project by researching these events and creating a website to preserve and more-widely disseminate the history of this remarkable man's extraordinary human rights accomplishments. The site is located at <http://history.wlu.edu/williammorrison/>.

# Lexington's Historic Tiles

## Lexington's Historic Tile Installations Recognized by the Tile Heritage Foundation

### Top

*The Ladies Habit entrance – 22 W. Nelson St*

### Second Picture

*Intimate U entrance – 21 W. Nelson St.*

### Picture 3 & Picture 4

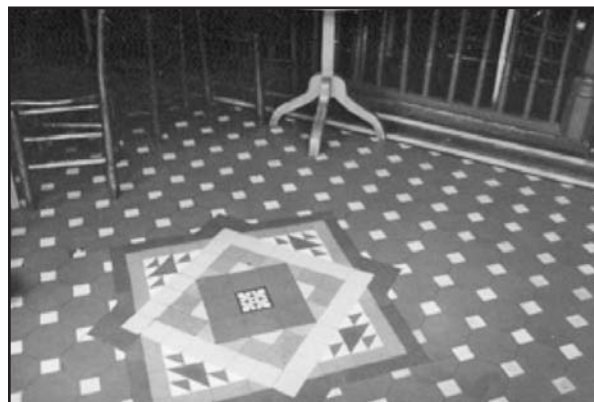
*Floor of R.E. Lee Episcopal Church built in 1885 and located at 123 W. Washington Street. Various size pieces of tile including squares, triangles, rectangles, and parallelograms make up this butt joint quarry tile installation.*

*Photo credit: Charlie Kay – Creative Tile & Marble*

When you think of Lexington, you might think of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Cyrus McCormick, Sam Houston and George C. Marshall, as well as Washington & Lee University and Virginia Military Institute. You might think of the majestic Natural Bridge. All play significant roles in Lexington and Rockbridge County's rich history of people and institutions, making Lexington a popular tourist destination for history buffs.

But there's a little-known history preserved on the floors of Lexington. Its homes and shops have numerous examples of antique tile installations in a variety commonly seen today only in major cities. By walking around just one square block of the charming downtown area, you can see at least a dozen antique tile installations. An expert on the subject of historic buildings in Lexington has suggested that John Champ, a local bricklayer, may have expertly and artistically laid these tiles, which have held up to at least a hundred years of foot traffic and weather, but this is yet to be conclusively confirmed.

Champ was an important figure in modernizing downtown buildings during the late 1800s and the early 1900s as materials became accessible with the completion of rail lines through the area. Around the time that the tiles were being laid, large plate glass windows were also being installed in many of the storefronts. These were common practices of the era, not unique to Lexington. What is nearly unique to Lexington is the long-running concerted effort to preserve the architectural integrity of its downtown. To view the entire color photo gallery visit: <http://www.creativetile.com/lexington.html>.



## Docent Opportunities

Rockbridge Historical Society's docent program will be revived in April. Current and former docents are strongly encouraged to participate. In addition to service as tour guides and hosts for our Campbell House Museum, there is a significant need for new volunteers for a variety of other activities. If you enjoy meeting new people and supporting a good cause, this program is for you.

Please contact Jane Brooke, Docent Chair, if you are interested in learning more.

Jane can be reached at 463-6566 or [jlbrooke@em-barqmail.com](mailto:jlbrooke@em-barqmail.com).

---

## Membership

### *The Importance of Dues/Donations*

Our members have always been a critical source of financial support for your Society's missions and stewardship responsibilities.

For new members, and for all members renewing for next year (2012), we have made some changes to reflect current interpretations of the IRS Code making the entire amount of contributions to RHS tax deductible.

#### New Categories of Annual Support

Minimum donation for:

Individual/Family – \$30 • Corporate/Business – \$50  
• Sponsor – \$100 • Patron – \$250 • Benefactor • \$500  
Angel – \$1,000 • Platinum Supporter – \$5,000

The Society is a 501 (c) (3) charitable foundation.

---

## Development

The ever-increasing cost of maintaining our three historic houses and grounds, plus the multitude of other activities we undertake, or sponsor, require financial support considerably beyond the income generated by membership dues and rental property revenues.

In addition to enhanced memberships and donations, RHS friends and supporters have arranged employers' matching gifts. Moreover, philanthropic individuals and private foundations are also contributing.

If you haven't had the opportunity to do so, please consider a gift and/or include RHS in your estate planning.

**For additional information and opportunities to support RHS, please visit our website at [www.rockhist.org](http://www.rockhist.org), or contact us at 540/464-1058 or by e-mail to [rockhist@hotmail.com](mailto:rockhist@hotmail.com).**

## Event Calendar



Monday • March 28th • 7:30 pm

Program: "Rev. William M. Morrison – Pioneer International Human Rights Crusader"

Presenters: Dr. Christian Jennings, Assistant Professor of African History at Washington & Lee University with participation from the following W&L students in the Class of 2011: Lauren Bohdan, Lebanon Township, NJ; Jay Kozak, Richmond, VA; Ruchira Ray, Milwaukee, WI

Location:

Nichols Engineering Auditorium, VMI Post



Tuesday • May 3rd • 7:30 pm

Program: W&L professors Kimberly Jew and Doug Cumming will discuss how they put together their upcoming *Letters to the Editor* theatrical event (based on 200 years of letters to Lexington's newspapers). Some of the cast will also give a sneak preview of scenes from the play

Location: Wilson Performance Hall, Lenfest Center

(The play itself will be presented at Lime Kiln on the 19<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> of May.)



SPECIAL SUMMER GALA  
TO CELEBRATE THE PUBLICATION OF  
**REMARKABLE ROCKBRIDGE**. Details: TBA



Monday • September 26th • 7:30 pm

Program: "The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Francis H. Smith: An Eyewitness Account of Hunter's Raid"

Presenter: Col. Ed Dooley

Location: TBA

***Scheduled events are subject to change. For confirmation check the RHS Website: [www.rockhist.org](http://www.rockhist.org) or call 540/464-1058.***

*Your Society is always interested in producing programs and events that are both enjoyable and instructive. Everyone is welcome to submit ideas at [rockhist@hotmail.com](mailto:rockhist@hotmail.com), or by calling 540/464-1058.*

## Other Events of Interest

### 2011 Spring Speaker Series

3-17 April

Lee Chapel – Washington & Lee University

**George Washington**

**Robert E. Lee**

#### Preparation for War, Preparation for Life

**3 April – William C. Calhoun, William C. Davis**

**10 April – Dennis J. Pogue, Keith E. Gibson**

**17 April – Edward G. Lengel, R. David Cox**

Free and Open to the Public. All Programs Begin at 2 p.m.

Sponsored by Lee Family Digital Archive and Lee Chapel and Museum

---

## 2011 Virginia History Forum

The Forum is an annual event, hosted by different universities and historical organizations throughout Virginia. It brings together historians, teachers, writers, archivists, museum curators, historic site interpreters, librarians, and others engaged in the study and interpretation of Virginia history to share their knowledge, research, and experiences.

The 2011 Virginia Forum, a two-plus day conference devoted to all aspects and time periods of Virginia history, will be held in Lexington Thursday through Saturday, 24-26 March 2011. Sessions on 24-25 March will meet at Washington and Lee University. Sessions on 26 March will meet at Virginia Military Institute.

For complete information, visit the Forum's official website at [www.virginiaforum.org](http://www.virginiaforum.org).

**For questions about the program, contact:**

**Associate Professor Ted DeLaney**

**Department of History**

**Newcomb Hall 103**

**Washington and Lee University**

**Lexington, Virginia 24450**

**(540) 458-8963**

**[delaneyt@wlu.edu](mailto:delaneyt@wlu.edu)**

**Conference check-in:**

Thursday, 24 March:

Washington and Lee University  
Elrod Commons 120 (Living Room)  
Noon to 4:00 PM

Friday, 25 March

Washington and Lee University  
Elrod Commons 120 (Living Room)  
7:30 AM to 5:00 PM

Saturday, 26 March

Virginia Military Institute  
Scott Shipp Hall 510  
8:00 AM to 2:00 PM

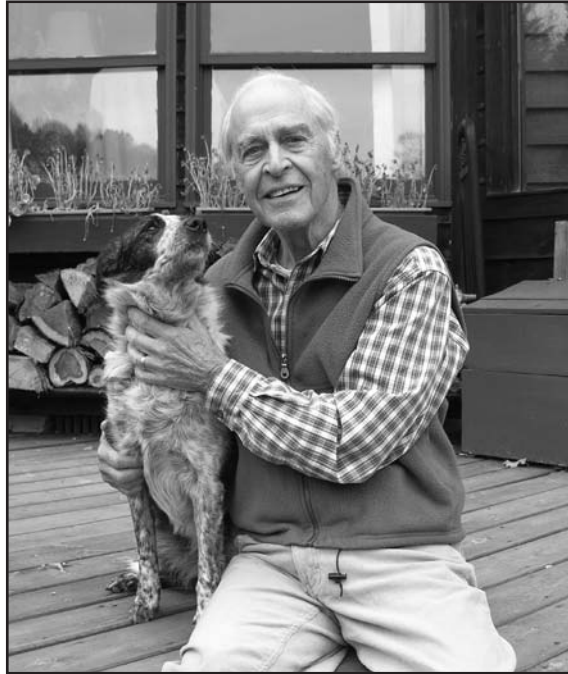
# President's Perspective

*By Charles A. Bodie, Ph.D. – President and Board Chair*

During the first weekend of March, my wife and I drove to the Outer Banks for a one-night stay. Yes, we enjoyed getting away, but our real interest was in the new exhibit at the North Carolina History Center in the Roanoke Island Festival Park at Manteo. It centered on the restoration of the iconic Bodie Island Light House. I've tried for years to claim that piece, that beacon of hope overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, as a family heritage. But alas, it is not possible. The earliest reference was on a map marked "body island," likely a connection to human habitation (but not ours). Well, we couldn't be everywhere back then. As for the exhibit, my thanks to RHS member and archivist at the North Carolina History Center, Tama Creef, Lexington native, and sister of local attorney, David Natkin.

The lighthouse was de-commissioned some years back; finally, after a section of iron fell to the ground, it attracted federal funding for restoration. The work is still not finished. The day will come though when visitors like you and me can walk to the top, inspect the Fresnel lens, and take in the wonderful view from all directions.

Look more closely at this project, and, as with so many other projects in our pinched times, you will find an army of volunteers lending a hand. That's how we get things done today. Find some seed money and put helping hands together to complete the project. I met some of the workers at the exhibit reception. They were both young and seniors, individuals with a strong interest and useful skills. Some



came from the Outer Banks Light House Society, a group that monitors the conditions of North Carolina's aging coastal light houses. With their cooperation, I am confident that the Bodie beacon will once again proudly cast its light.

Such dedicated people are all around us. How did the YMCA open its doors? It happened through a team of active supporters who raised the funds, cleaned out the building, and prepared it for opening. How does Habitat for Humanity erect

new houses for the needy? Helpers assemble and get the job done. How does RACC accomplish its annual clean-up of roadsides in our county? Teams select their own roads and devote a Saturday to picking up trash.

Most community efforts would go nowhere without volunteers. RHS certainly would not. We need them more than ever today! Docents schedule time to meet visitors. Administrative helpers stuff envelopes and help to get each *News-Notes* out on time. We need others to help process donated historical papers, and assist with museum exhibits. We also have some vacancies on our board. As a new board member, you can add your hand to the RHS tiller as we chart a course in 2011.

It is so easy to say that someone else can do the work. But then you will not share those good feelings earned when you help accomplish important things, things that can help improve our overall community. The folks on the Outer Banks are certainly proud of what they have done. Take time off and join our efforts.

**Winter Operating Hours**

Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday - Open 10-1  
Saturday – Open 1-4  
Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday – Closed

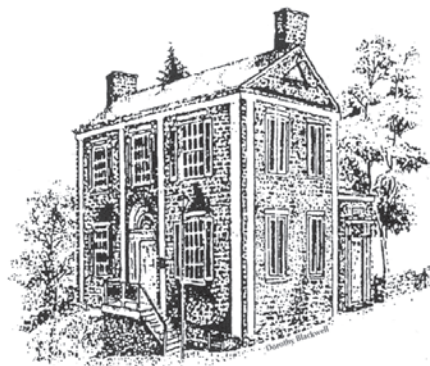
**Summer Operating Hours**

Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday - Open 10-4  
Saturday and Sunday – Open 1-4  
Monday and Tuesday – Closed

The Museum depends upon volunteer docents to provide access to its reference library and exhibits. Operating hours are subject to change without notice. Visitors should contact the director prior to arrival at 540/460-3046 or rochist@hotmail.com to confirm Campbell House will be open. Often an appointment can be made for a research visit days or hours the museum is otherwise closed.

**THE ROCKBRIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY***EST. 1939*

**Campbell House**  
**Washington & Randolph Streets**  
**P.O. Drawer 1409**  
**Lexington, Virginia 24450-1409**



*Is your membership up to date? Please check your label.*

## Director's Corner

*By George Wm. Warren, IV, Executive Director*



When I reflect upon the fact that I have just begun my tenth year of service to the Society as your Executive Director, I am just flabbergasted at the lightening speed at which this experience has passed. Nearly a decade of my life seems to have evaporated like a puff of smoke. The explanation, of course, is that “time flies when you’re having fun.” The unmitigated joy this job has brought me has seemingly shot

me through the calendar like a rocket, with little or no sense of the passage of time.

But time has passed, and with it I have been blessed by a wonderful opportunity to participate in many of this organization’s marvelous accomplishments – the restoration of our oldest building, the circa 1778 Castle; the publication of a brand new *Roads of Rockbridge*, which has been widely received with great favor; special events, such as our sold-out 70th Anniversary Gala, the museum’s annual exhibits, our traditional craft festivals, ice cream socials, living history, and our yearly Victorian Christmas Open House, not to mention

our ever-popular and well-attended bi-monthly public history programs. And, of course, the production of this newsletter – truly a labor of love.

At the end of this year I will be on the cusp of my 70th birthday, and just short of completing a full ten years of doing a job that has been anything but a job. The personal and professional satisfaction I have drawn from my position is beyond anything I could ever have anticipated. And the friends I’ve made as a result of my fortunate association with the Rockbridge Historical Society constitute a blessing beyond measure.

I look forward to the pleasure of seeing the publication in the near term of *Remarkable Rockbridge: The Story of A Virginia County*. This will be one of our most spectacular accomplishments, which will add immeasurably to the already substantial canon of local history, replacing the nearly century-old *Morton’s*.

There’s more to come, as we continually partner with local organizations to share the excitement of history with the community we serve. Meanwhile, my heartfelt thanks to all those wonderful folks, without whose help we could never have made it this far.