



A brief look  
at

# ZENDA

An African American  
Community of Hope

by  
Dale MacAllister  
2010

Sunday, March 17, 13



# THE ZENDA COMMUNITY

Sunday, March 17, 13

# Zend

- A mostly African American community between Melrose and the Massanutten Mountain near the intersection of Fellowship Road and Fridleys Gap Road.
- The Zenda name was chosen for the post office located at the intersection mentioned. Tradition is that the postmaster's daughter suggested it.
- Other names used for the community were “Athens” and “Little Africa.”
- Rockingham County Schools always called the school for the community “Athens Colored School.”

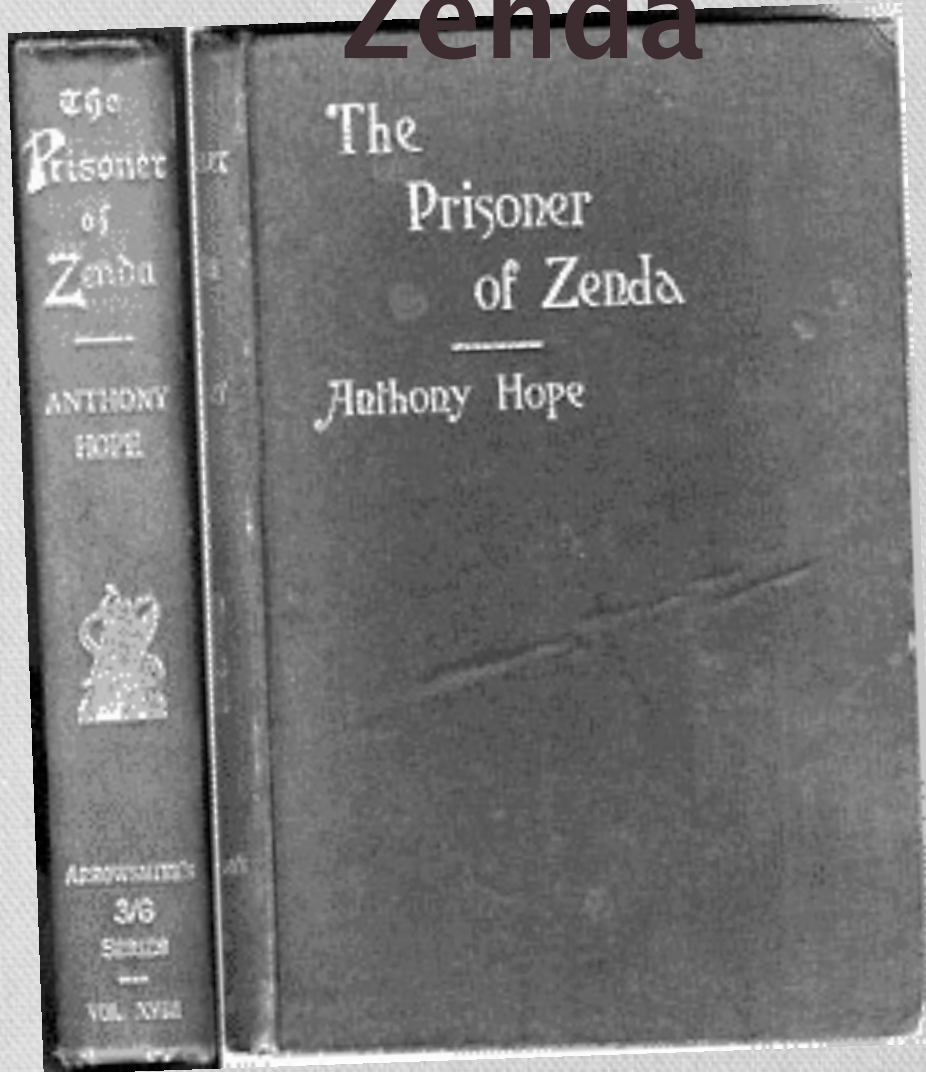
# Zenda Store and Post Office



**Harrison's store, then Reid's, served both white and black families in the Zenda area. The Store's single entrance was open to both races. The C. E. Long house is on the left. The enclosed buggy is the local mail wagon.**

*Photo courtesy of Ray*

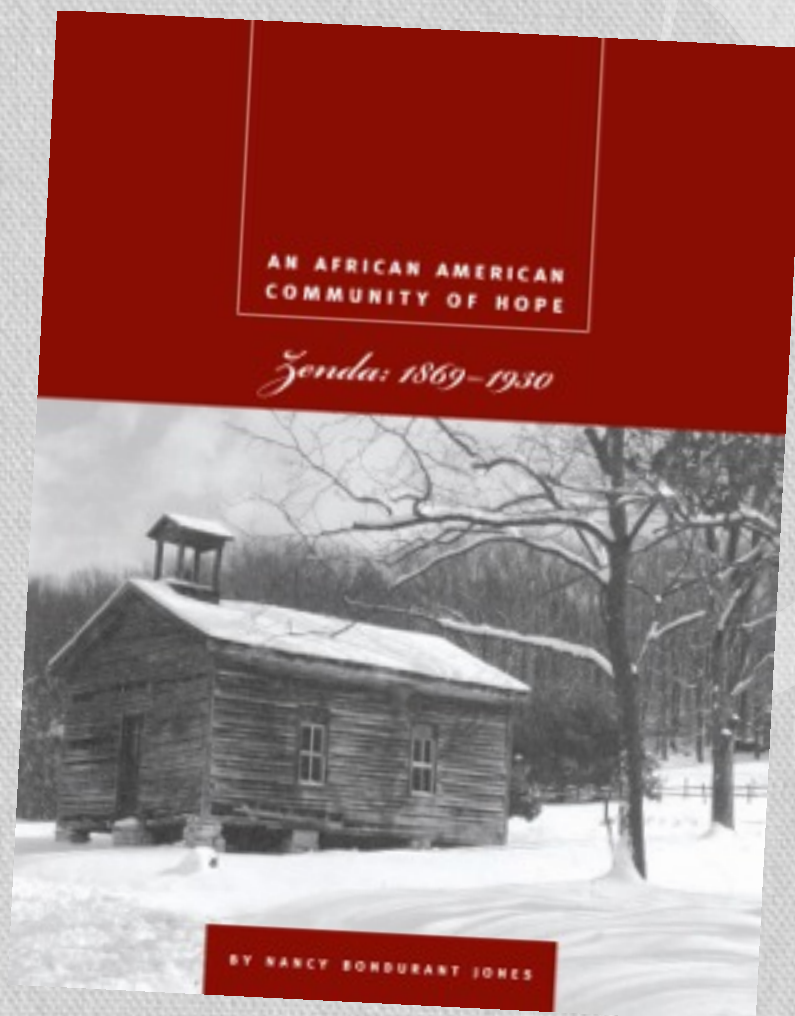
# The Prisoner of Zenda



The popularity of Anthony Hope's book, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, warranted seven printings and two movies based on the story. It remains a best seller today.

# An African American Community of Hope, Zenda: 1869–1930

This book about the Zenda community by Nancy Bondurant Jones was published in 2007.



# Major slave owners in Rockingham County

Slave ownership, real estate values and occupations for Rockingham County<sup>21</sup>

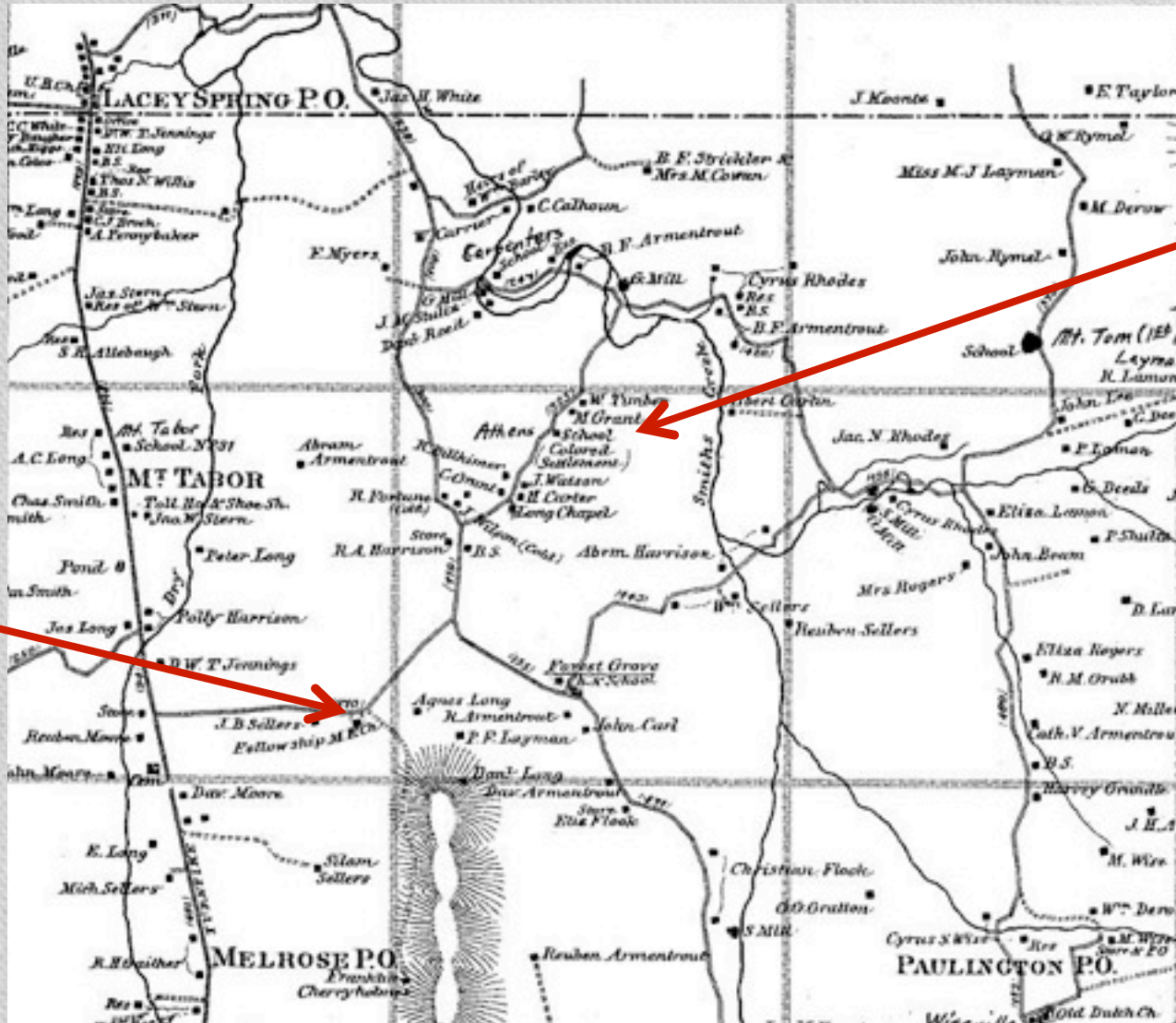
	Slave Owner	No. of Slaves	Value of Real Estate	Occupation
Twenty or More Slaves	St. Clair D. Kirkley	54	\$15,000	Lawyer
	John Miller Jr.	42	2,443	Iron Master
	Charles Yancey	40	9,428	Farmer
	Jacob Strayer	30	30,671	Farmer
	John Hedrick	26	11,358	Farmer
	Jacob Williamson	26	46,000	Farmer
	John Miller	21	5,000	Farmer
	John Cook	20	13,828	Farmer
	George Conrad	20	30,000	Farmer
Fifteen to Nineteen Slaves	Jacob Ammon	19	\$14,049	Farmer
	John Hopkins	18	25,000	Farmer
	Jacob Miller	18	16,160	Farmer
	A.S. Gray	17	16,000	Lawyer
	Robert Gray	17	50,000	Farmer
	Abraham Lincoln	17	28,000	Farmer
	James Fulton	16	7,320	Farmer
	Stephen Harnsberger	16	18,903	Farmer
	John Herring	16	14,000	Farmer
	James Land	16	Not given	Not given
	Daniel Dovel	15	Not given	Not given
	Margaret Gambill	15	Not given	Not given
	Robert Grattan	15	45,000	Farmer
	Jeremiah Harnsberger	15	10,280	Farmer
	Henry Kisling	15	Not given	Blacksmith
Samuel Lewis	15	15,061	Farmer	

Slave ownership tables in Rockingham County from "Dismissing the Peculiar Institution: Assessing Slavery in Page and Rockingham Counties, Virginia" by Charles C. Ballard.

The men listed here owned 15 or more slaves, and the number ranged from 15 to 54.

The Abraham Lincoln shown with 17 slaves was the cousin of the

# Zenda area as shown on Lake's 1885 Atlas of Rockingham County



Zenda  
community

Fellowship  
Church



# In 1885—

**R. A. Harrison** ran the store, and there was a blacksmith shop across the road from it.

**R. Fortune** (colored) and **J. Wilson** (colored) lived down the road to the north.

“**Long Chapel**” is up the hill to the east and the school which had been separate from the church for some years is farther up the hill.

Others living up the hill included **C. Grant**, **H. Billhimer**, **H. Carter**, **J. Watson**, **M. Grant**, and **W. Timber**.

The community is labeled “**Colored Settlement.**” I added the name **Athens**, the name the county used for the school.



# Zenda People



Zenda resident Tony Watson is tending to Dot Maddox (in the wagon) and her brother Travis who lived along what is now Martz Road north of Zenda, in the lovely house pictured.

Photo courtesy of Gene and Jane Holsinger

# Death of a Zenda resident

U. S. V. A. Form No. 12, 2002-6-16-13

STATE OF VIRGINIA  
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

County of *Rockingham* Registration District No. \_\_\_\_\_ File No. *4455*  
 District of *Lincolnton* Primary Registration District No. *823 & B* Registered No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Inc. or Town of \_\_\_\_\_ City of \_\_\_\_\_ (No. \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ Ward \_\_\_\_\_)

2. FULL NAME *Marthie Madden* Residence In City \_\_\_\_\_ Yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Mos. \_\_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_\_

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

3 SEX *Female* 4 COLOR OR RACE *Colored* 5 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED *married*

6 DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_ (Month) \_\_\_\_\_ (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Year)

7 AGE *about 46* yrs. mos. \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ (Year) *1* day, \_\_\_\_\_ hrs. or \_\_\_\_\_ min.

8 OCCUPATION (a) Trade, profession, or service kind of work *Housewife*  
 (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer)

9 BIRTHPLACE (State or Country) *Va*

PARENTS

10 NAME OF FATHER *Joseph Jones*

11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or Country) *Va*

12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER *Dora Jones*

13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or Country) *Va*

14 THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE (Date and Signature) *D. M. Rountree*  
 (Address) *107 S. Harrisonburg*

15 LOCAL REGISTRAR (Name and Address) *W. B. Risher*  
*107 S. Harrisonburg*

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

16 DATE OF DEATH *Feb 13, 1915*  
 (Month) (Day) (Year)

17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, that I attended deceased from *Feb 11, 1915*, to *Feb 13, 1915*, that I last saw her alive on *Feb 11, 1915*, and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at *5:20* a. m. The CAUSE OF DEATH\* was as follows:  
*Chronic myocarditis*

Contributory *Preparatory T. tubercula*  
 (Secondary) *Conjunctivitis*  
 (Signed) *And. Brown* M. D.  
*Feb 15, 1915* (Address) *Farmington*

\*State the DISEASE CAUSING DEATH, or its source from *Violence*, *Accident*, *Poison*, *Self*, *Others*, *Infancy*, and (2) whether *Accidental*, *Contracted*, or *Toxic*.

18 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (For hospitals, institutions, transient, or recent) At place \_\_\_\_\_ yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ mos. \_\_\_\_\_ (State) \_\_\_\_\_ yrs. \_\_\_\_\_ mos. \_\_\_\_\_ (City) \_\_\_\_\_

Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death? Former or usual residence \_\_\_\_\_

19 PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL *Zenda Va* DATE OF BURIAL *Feb 14, 1915*

20 NAME OF BURIAL TAKER *W. B. Risher* ADDRESS *107 S. Harrisonburg*

WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING BLACK INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD.  
 MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING

\*Every item of local data should be carefully verified. Acc should be stated EXACTLY. PHYSICIANS SHOULD BE SPECIFIC AS TO CAUSE OF DEATH AND SHOULD BE PROPERLY CLASSIFIED. Exact statement of OCCUPATION IS VERY IMPORTANT. See INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK of certificate.

This death certificate was for Zenda resident Marthie Madden, colored. She was buried at Long's Chapel on Valentine's Day in 1915. There is nothing marking her grave in the cemetery. Her husband Abraham was later buried in Harrisonburg's Newtown Cemetery.

Courtesy of Sue Propst

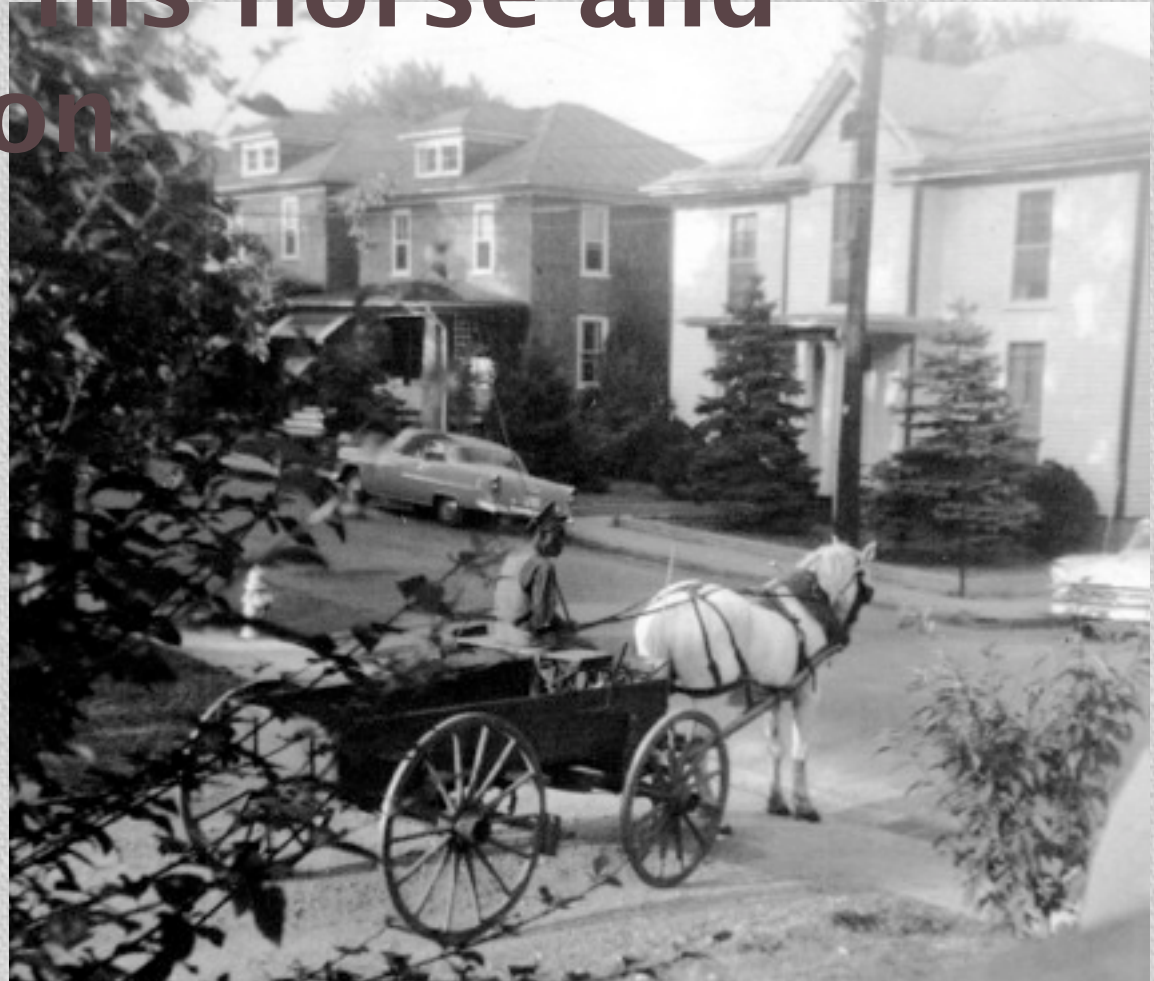
# Charles Newton Strother with his horse and wagon

Before Charles Newton Strother moved to Harrisonburg from Zenda, he relied on the “horsepower” of an earlier day.

From this photo we can see that he did not give up his familiar mode of travel.

Here he waits to enter High Street from West Elizabeth.

Photo courtesy of Robert J. Sullivan, Jr.



# Former homes of black families at Zenda



These three houses still stand today within half a mile of Long's Chapel. They were the homes of former black families in the Zenda community.



Photos by Allen

Sunday, March 17, 13

A stylized, monochromatic illustration of a plant with several large, pointed leaves and a cluster of small, round buds or flowers, rendered in a dark brown color against a lighter brown background.

# LONG'S CHAPEL

Sunday, March 17, 13

# Long's

- **Located on the south side of Fridleys Gap Road northeast of Melrose in the Zenda community.**
- **It was named for Jacob Long, a white member of the United Brethren in Christ church at Lacey Spring. Long helped African Americans in the area realize the dream of having their own church.**
- **William W. and Hannah Carpenter deeded a lot “for the purpose of a church, burial ground, and School house lot” for \$30 in Sept. 1869.**
- **The original trustees for the church were John Watson, Henry Frazier, and Reuben Dallard.**
- **Tradition tells that the church was built in 1871.**

# The Cemetery at Long's

**Chapel**  
When Robin and Al Jenkins first visited Zenda, the overgrown and fallen headstones reflected years of neglect. Sunken areas with no tombstones bore silent witness to forgotten burials at the site.

Allen Litten





# The cemetery at Long's

- **Family names in the cemetery include:**

**Bibbs**

**Billhimer**

**Broadus**

**Brock**

**Grant**

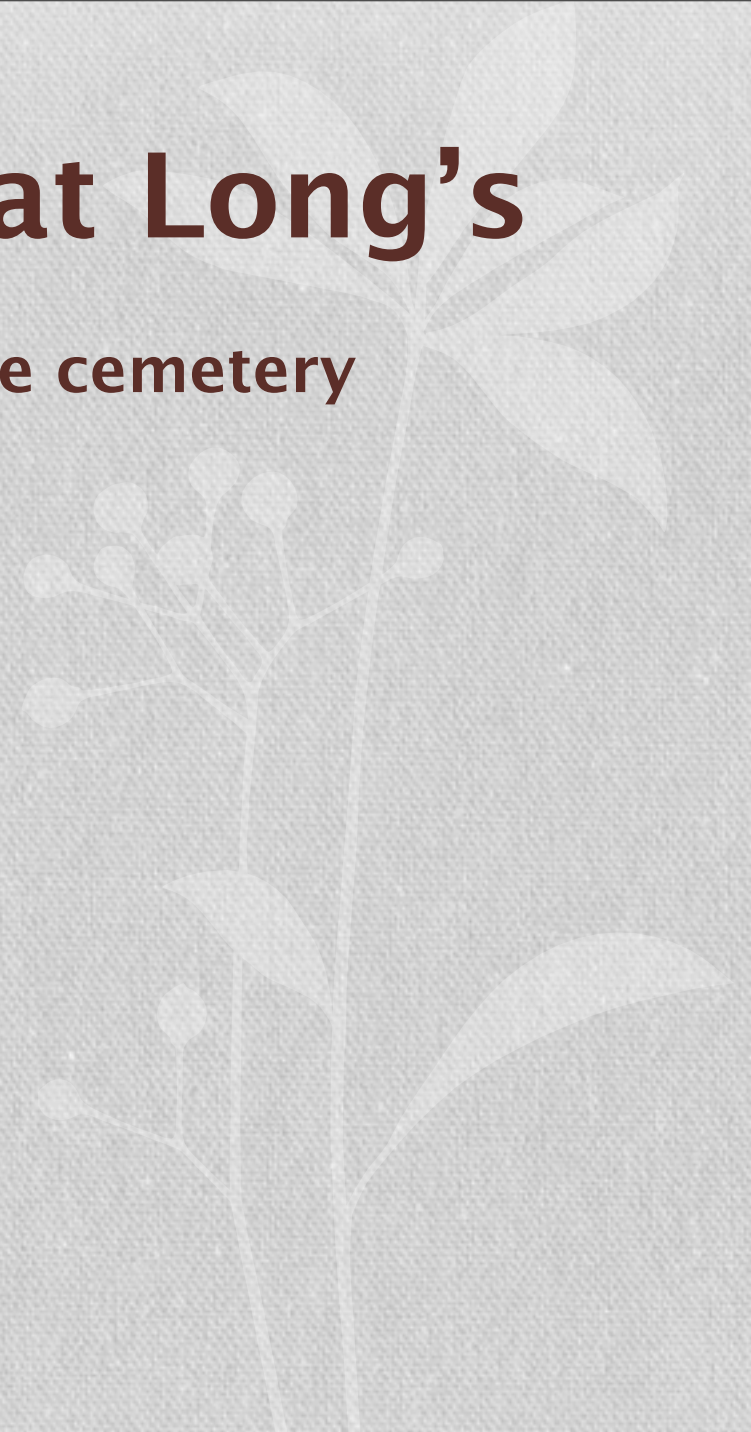
**Jackson**

**Johnston**

**Richardson**

**Strother**

**Wilson**





# **AFRICAN AMERICAN ISSUES**

Sunday, March 17, 13

# A reconstructed slave cabin



Photo courtesy of the Booker T. Washington National Monument

# Aunt Lucy

Photo of a Harrisonburg “house mammy.”

The prominent Gray family of Harrisonburg called this slave “Aunt Lucy.” She was an important servant in the Gray household and a notable influence on the Gray children, including writer Orra Gray Langhorne.

Speculation has suggested that this Lucy was the mother of Jane Simms and the grandmother of Lucy Simms, the innovative African-American educator of Harrisonburg.

Photo courtesy of Charles E. Wynes



# The Civil War Courthouse in Harrisonburg



The deed for the Long's Chapel land was signed and recorded in this Courthouse, Harrisonburg's third, that was built in 1833 and replaced in 1874 when it had become too small for the growing county.

Photo courtesy of Eastern

# A post-Civil War marriage license for a black couple

**MARRIAGE LICENSE.**

VIRGINIA, ROCKINGHAM COUNTY, To Wit:  
To ANY PERSON LICENSED TO CELEBRATE MARRIAGES:  
You are authorized to join together in the Holy State of Matrimony, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of your Church or Religious Denomination, and the Laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

*Edward Watson Col<sup>d</sup> and Louisa Trummell*  
of said County. Given under my hand, as Clerk of the County Court of Rockingham County, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of *April* 1876.

*J. T. Wells* CLERK.

**CERTIFICATE TO OBTAIN A MARRIAGE LICENSE,**  
As to the License, Required by the Act Passed March 15, 1861.

Time of Marriage, *April 17<sup>th</sup> 1876*  
Place of Marriage, \_\_\_\_\_  
Full Names of Parties Married, *Edward Watson Col<sup>d</sup> & Louisa Trummell*  
Age of Husband, *22* years, \_\_\_\_\_ months, \_\_\_\_\_ days.  
Age of Wife, *20* years, \_\_\_\_\_ months, \_\_\_\_\_ days.  
Condition of Husband (widowed or single), \_\_\_\_\_  
Condition of Wife, (widowed or single), \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Husband's Birth, *Rockingham Co. Va.*  
Place of Wife's Birth, \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Husband's Residence, \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Wife's Residence, \_\_\_\_\_  
Names of Husband's Parents, *J. C. Watson & Sarah Birch*  
Names of Wife's Parents, *Jessie Ann Trummell & James Rhodes*  
Occupation of Husband, *Planter*

Given under my hand, the *17* day of *April* 1876. *J. T. Wells*

**Minister's Return of Marriage.**  
I CERTIFY, That on the *17* day of *April* 1876, at my house *in Rockingham State of Va.* *S. T. Wells*  
I united in Marriage the above named parties, under authority of the annexed License

NOTE.—The Minister officiating a Marriage is required, within TEN DAYS hereafter, to return to the Clerk of the County who issued the same, with an acknowledgment of the FACT of such Marriage, and of the TIME and PLACE of officiating thereon.

This is an example of the marriage license required by law beginning in 1861, but then only for whites. After the Civil War, black couples could legally marry as well.

In this example Edward Watson, colored, married Louisa Trummell (?) in 1876.

S. T. Wells, who performed the marriage in his house, was a black United Brethren in Christ minister



**ATHENS  
COLORED  
SCHOOL AT  
ZENDA**

Sunday, March 17, 13

# Athens Colored

- **Black children in the community first attended school in Long's Chapel.**
- **Lucy Simms spent her first year (1877-78) teaching school at Zenda. Of this experience Miss Simms wrote:**
  - **"I had a very pleasant school, in a very pleasant neighborhood but not very pleasant pay."**
- **A separate schoolhouse was built in 1882.**
- **The final year the school was in session was 1925.**
- **Students were then transferred to Effinger Street School in Harrisonburg.**



# Athens Colored School



**An unidentified teacher stands with her pupils outside the school at Zenda. It was officially called “Athens Colored School.” By this time the schoolhouse was a separate building from Long’s Chapel.**

Photo courtesy of Floyd Temple

# Monthly School Report

Form T—No. 1

Rockingham County  
Linville District

MONTHLY REPORT  
 OF  
Miss Annie Grant Wilson  
 Teacher of Public Col'd Pub. School No. 6  
 (White or colored)

For Calendar Month  
 Ending January 31st, 1913

Number of days school was open during month 20  
 Number of days school was taught by substitute 1

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

	Boys	Girls	Total
1. Number pupils on roll	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>
2. Average daily attendance	<u>660</u>	<u>390</u>	<u>1050</u>
3. Number over 20 years of age	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
4. No. new pupils entered this month	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
5. No. dropped from the roll	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
6. No. from other districts in county	—	—	—
7. No. from other counties	—	—	—
8. No. days taught by teacher during month	<u>20</u>		
9. No. days taught during the session	<u>45</u>		
10. No. of days teacher was tardy	—		
11. No. of days absent	—		
12. Why absent or tardy?	—		
13. Monthly salary from public funds	<u>\$ 10.50</u>		
14. Amount of same due for said month	<u>7.60</u>		
15. Monthly salary from other sources	<u>26.00</u>		
16. Have you received pay for last month?	<u>yes</u>		
17. Seating capacity of schoolroom	<u>116</u>		
Received	191		
Receipted	191		
Receipt No.	for \$		

This is a monthly report for the school at Zenda—Athens Colored School—when Annie Grant Wilson taught there in January 1913.

Her 12 students, 7 boys and 5 girls, were not the required minimum number to keep the school open. That is why the Linville District School Board paid her only \$10.50 a month. She received an additional \$60.00 from other sources.

Courtesy of Rockingham County Public Schools

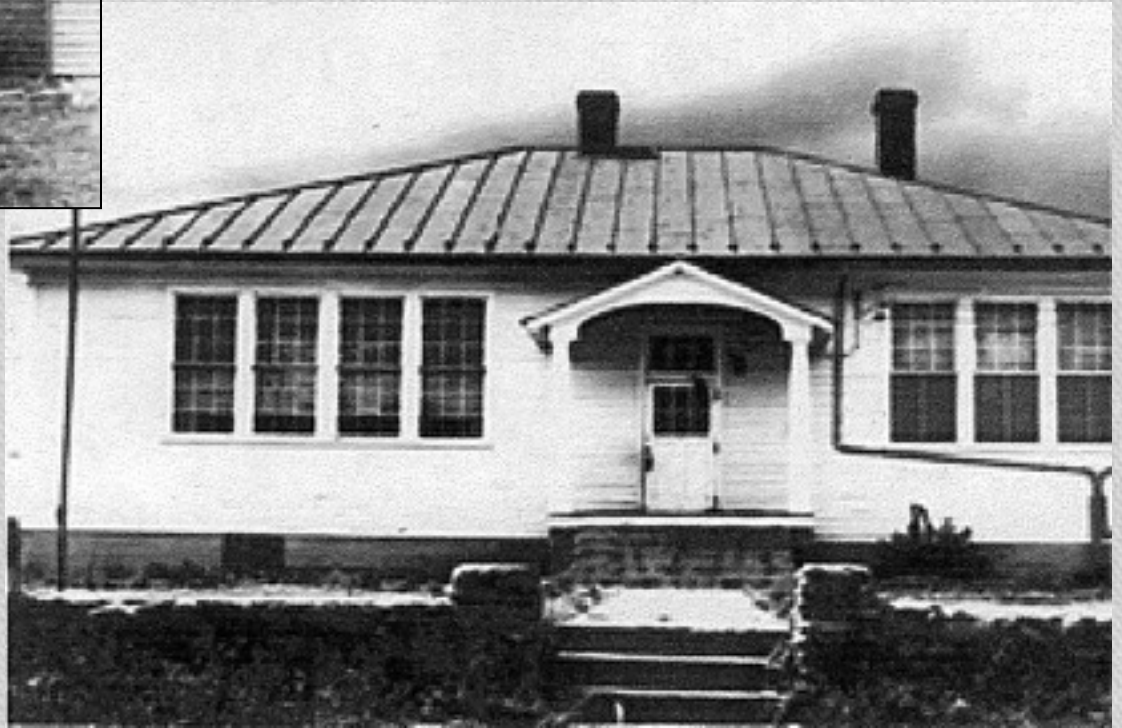
# Newtown Colored School, old and new, at Elkton



An example of another African American school in Rockingham County.

Black residents in Elkton's Newtown community called the newer school on the right the East Elkton Rosenwald School.

Financial assistance from the Julius Rosenwald Fund




# Manual



**Since blacks were primarily destined for jobs of manual labor, African American schools emphasized manual training more than schools for whites.**

Photo courtesy of the

Harrisonburg–Rockingham Historical Society



**UNITED  
BRETHREN IN  
CHRIST EFFORTS  
AMONG THE  
FREEDMEN**

Sunday, March 17, 13

# **The United Brethren in Christ Church and African Americans in Rockingham**

- **The denomination was nicknamed “German Methodists.”**
  - **Begun in Pennsylvania in 1767.**
- **The denomination was antislavery.**
- **Following the Civil War, mission efforts of the United Brethren church in Rockingham focused on improving the plight of the Freedmen.**

# **African American United Brethren in Christ Churches**

- **Seven churches were established  
in Rockingham County.**
  - **Beasley's in Mountain Valley**
  - **Broadway near Main Street**
  - **Dungeon's Chapel near Pleasant Valley**
  - **Harrisonburg on Kelley Street**
  - **Keezletown (unknown location)**
  - **Linville on Main Street**
  - **Long's Chapel at Zenda**



**AL JENKINS  
AND HIS WORK  
AT ZENDA**

Sunday, March 17, 13



# Dungeon's Chapel



As with Long's Chapel, this was another United Brethren in Christ church for African Americans. It was located near St. Jacobs-Spaders Church in the Pleasant Valley neighborhood. Al Jenkins is shown here in a contemplative mood as he reflects about his own project at Zenda. Unfortunately this dilapidated structure was not saved. It completely collapsed during a windstorm in May 2007.

# Long's Chapel and Al Jenkins

- Alfred “Al” Jenkins, Jr., lived in Goose Creek, South Carolina, near Charleston when he first visited Long’s Chapel.
- He and his wife Robin bought the half-acre parcel of land containing the chapel in late 2004.
- An adjoining acre-and-a-half was donated to the project.
- In 2005 Al and Robin Jenkins set up the Long’s Chapel Preservation Society.

# The Long's Chapel site before restoration



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# The cemetery



Sunday, March 17, 13

# The Long's Chapel before



Sunday, March 17, 13

# Interior views before the restoration

**Apse addition**



**An apse is a recessed area, generally semicircular, built off a sanctuary. This one at Longs' Chapel was a later addition to the church.**

# Duplex slave quarters at “Manheim”



**These were the surviving slave quarters at Manheim, the Coffman farm on Linville Creek at Wengers Mill. One of these brick buildings has been dismantled and taken to Zenda for eventual restoration near Long’s Chapel as an example of local slave quarters.**

Photo courtesy of Carl & Agnes

# Long's Chapel and Manheim slave



**This was a proposed architectural rendering of Long's Chapel and the slave quarters after the buildings were to be moved farther from the road. The Chapel was actually restored without moving it.**

Courtesy of Lineage Architects, Verona, VA



# The restoration begins



Sunday, March 17, 13

# Long's Chapel receives grant June



**The Virginia Foundation for the Humanities awards a \$7,500 grant to help with the restoration efforts and fund a workshop to make local teachers aware of Zenda and other African American sites in Rockingham County.**

# Job Corps students help with restoration work



These students were from Horizons Youth Service and came from California, Kentucky, and Texas.

# Repairing the siding on Long's Chapel



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# The restored Long's



Sunday, March 17, 13

# A banner on the church advertises the Society's tax-



Sunday, March 17, 13

# Volunteers pose for a group photo



Sunday, March 17, 13

# Long's Chapel and Zenda





# The restored church sitting



Sunday, March 17, 13

# The cemetery today



Sunday, March 17, 13

# A memorial stone in the

*This Memorial is for  
The Named And the Nameless.  
Who labored, suffered and endured are now at rest.  
Well Done, Good and Faithful Servants... Matt. 25:23*

*July 4, 1776*

*All men are created equal, they are endowed by their Creator  
with certain unalienable rights. That among these are  
Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.*

*USA*

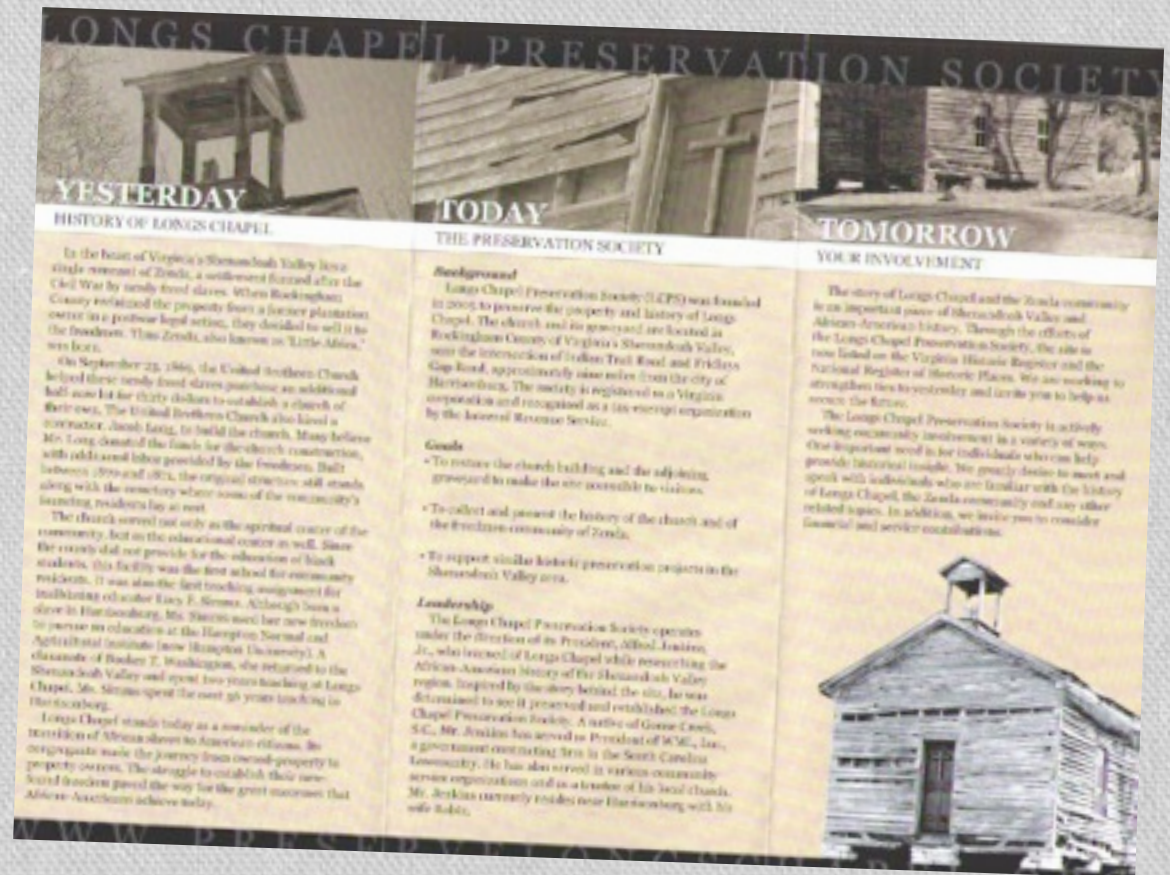
*LCPS 5 - 2010*

A stylized, monochromatic illustration of a plant with several large, pointed leaves and a cluster of small, round buds or flowers on a stem, set against a dark brown background.

# **LONG'S CHAPEL PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

Sunday, March 17, 13

# Long's Chapel Preservation Society brochure



# Long's Chapel Preservation

- **Founded in 2005 as a Virginia non-profit corporation with these objectives—**
  - **To preserve the property at Long's Chapel and the cemetery.**
  - **To preserve the history of the Zenda community.**

# Long's Chapel Preservation

- **Goals—**

- **To restore the church building and the adjoining graveyard to make the site accessible to visitors.**
- **To collect and present the history of the church and of the freedmen community of Zenda.**
- **To support similar historic preservation projects in the**

# Long's



Has come  
from  
this—

to  
this—







—for now,  
but there's more to  
come—