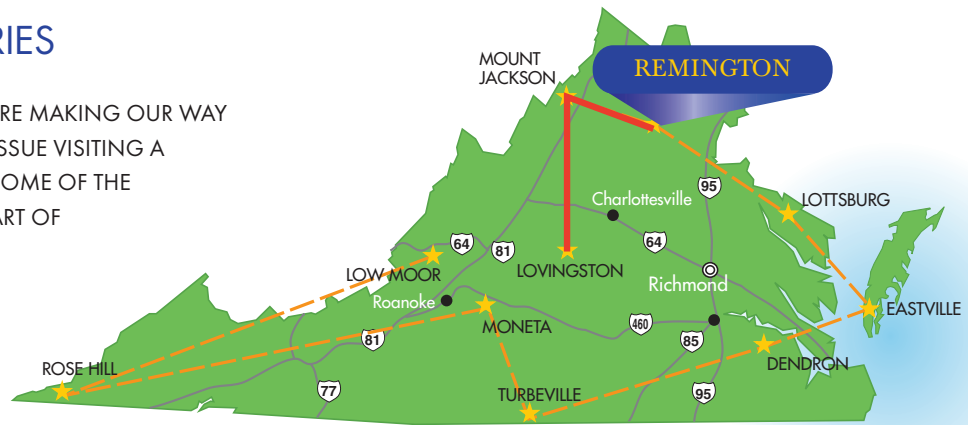


DOWN HOME SERIES

AGAIN IN THE YEAR 2009, WE'RE MAKING OUR WAY AROUND THE REGION, EACH ISSUE VISITING A SMALL TOWN AND MEETING SOME OF THE FOLKS WHO MAKE UP THE HEART OF ELECTRIC CO-OP COUNTRY. ON THIS THIRD STOP, WE'LL BE ...



DOWN HOME IN

REMINGTON

Story and photos by Hilary Lewis, Contributing Writer



This plaque recognizes the Battle of Kelly's Ford, which took place on March 17, 1863, a key battle in the Gettysburg Campaign.



This railroad bridge crosses the Rappahannock River and was built during the Civil War by Union troops.

Rich in Civil War history and southern charm, the town of Remington has endured nearly two centuries of change, yet has somehow retained its identity. Located in southern Fauquier County on the banks of the Rappahannock River, Remington is a community whose story has been repeated in small towns across the Commonwealth.

First founded in the early 19th century as the village of Millview, the area grew due to its proximity to the river and its location between Charlottesville and Manassas. Around 1850, it was renamed Bowenville after a prominent family in the community.

When the Orange and Alexandria Railroad laid tracks through the developing town during that time, Bowenville quickly became known as Rappahannock Station. The railroad contributed to the town's early prosperity as milk, grain, and passenger trains stopped there daily.

The presence of both the railroad and the swift Rappahannock River waters grew in strategic importance during the Civil War as fighting slowly led north from Virginia's southern small towns. Soon the developing town became the site of some of the fiercest fighting of the war.

The first Battle of Rappahannock Station took place between Aug. 22 and 25, 1862, as part of the Northern Virginia Campaign. Over several days of fighting, the two armies met in a series of conflicts along the Rappahannock River, resulting in a few hundred casualties.

AT A GLANCE ...

POPULATION: 650 residents

LAND AREA: 0.2 square miles

FOUNDED: Officially became known as Remington on March 3, 1890

ELEVATION: 457 feet

FACTOID: Old Dominion Electric Cooperative's (ODEC) Marsh Run Power Station is located near the town of Remington on Lucky Hill Road in Fauquier County. ODEC recently donated \$3,800 to the Remington Police Department and \$3,200 to M.M. Pierce Elementary School.



(CLOCKWISE, FROM UPPER LEFT) Known as Rappahannock Station during the Civil War, the town of Remington is said to have gotten its name in honor of a popular Southern Railway conductor, "Captain Remington." • Located at 300 N. Franklin Street, this colorful home was built in 1888 by Luther M. Allison. It became known as the "Soule House" for Allison's grandson Floyd Soule. • Developer Chat Hughey with his daughter in front of the original Remington Farmer's Co-op, which he's working to restore for retail and office space. Built in 1903, the building was a store and pharmacy, then played host to a poolroom and dance hall on the second and third floors during the 1920s and '30s.

In the spring of 1863, the battle raged on again as the two armies met at Kelly's Ford in Culpeper County, only seven miles down the Rappahannock from Remington. This clash set the stage for the largest cavalry battle of the Civil War, the Battle of Brandy Station, also in Culpeper.

The war continued and in the fall of 1863, fighting returned to Rappahannock Station as 1,600 Confederate troops were captured in a surprise attack by Union troops crossing the river at dawn. Traces of the war's presence can still be seen in Rem-

ington, as a bridge built by the raiding troops still stands today.

The years that followed the Civil War were some of the finest times for the budding town.

"Remington has been around a long time," says current Mayor **Gerald Billingsley**. "It was a pre-Civil War community and then developed more after the war. It probably saw its best times economically between 1890 and the Second World War."

Rappahannock Station became Remington in 1890, after a request by the Post Office

Department, which frequently confused mail with Rappahannock and Tappahannock.

According to one story, the town is said to have been named after a Southern Railroad conductor, a Capt. Remington. Although some locals swear the story is a myth, Remington resident **Elizabeth Hoffman** says it's true.

"This gentleman worked on the passenger train and he was so good to the ladies," says Hoffman. "He had a nice little stepstool so they could pull up those long skirts and climb into the trains. People used to



The Remington Drug Company was built in 1908 and still contains glass cabinets and a marble-top soda fountain.

IF YOU GO...

Remington Farmer's Market — Opening just in time for spring harvest, Remington's weekly farmer's market features vendors from farms across Culpeper and Fauquier counties. Strawberries, tomatoes, plants, and baked goods are just some of the treats blooming at the Main Street market, open 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. every Friday, April through October.

The Farmer's Wife — Offering a wide variety of products such as homemade breads, pastries, organic produce, and deli meats and cheeses, a visit to Remington is not complete without browsing this quaint grocery. Located at 204 E. Main Street, the Farmer's Wife is the perfect place to support the "buy fresh, buy local" movement. For more information and store hours visit www.thefarmerswifemarket.com.

The Corner Deli — A favorite local hangout, The Corner Deli serves up everything from cold sandwiches and hot subs to southern-style fried chicken, cheeseburgers, and homemade potato salad. Stop in before 11 a.m. for breakfast or stay for daily lunch specials and top it off with a piece of pie. This small-town classic is open Monday through Saturday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and is located at the corner of Rt. 15/29 business and Rt. 651 in Remington.

Remington Fireman's Carnival and Parade — Complete with Ferris wheel, cotton candy, and beauty queens, Remington's annual Fireman's Carnival and Parade is what small-town living is all about. Held each June by the volunteer fire and rescue department, the event spans four days and is a treat for children and adults alike. For more information on this year's carnival, visit www.remingtonfirerescue.org.

The Inn at Kelly's Ford — Situated amidst the historic Kelly's Ford Battlefield, The Inn at Kelly's Ford is a must-stop for anyone visiting Remington. Experience elegant dining prepared by Chef Jean Paul Pessaint in the inn's intimate, 30-seat restaurant. Downstairs, discover Pelham's Pub, serving your favorite beverages and live entertainment every Friday and Saturday night. The inn is also ideal for a weekend getaway, wedding, or family reunion. Visitors can enjoy hiking, canoeing, and biking, and the inn's



Located on the historical site of the Kelly's Ford Civil War Battlefield, The Inn at Kelly's Ford is set on 150 acres, part of a larger 500-acre estate.

Equestrian Center offers horseback-riding lessons and hosts equestrian events. For more information or to book a reservation, call 540-399-1779 or visit www.innatkellysford.com.

Remington Community Variety Building

— This unique shop along Remington's Main Street literally has something for everyone. Whether it's baseball cards, antique glassware, electronics, or jewelry, the variety of collectibles will astound visitors. Run by local merchant and former Town Councilman Joseph Korpsak, the variety building at 225 E. Main Street holds a treasure for all.

Remington Fall Festival — Each October, the streets of Remington fill with vendors, music, and food during the annual Fall Festival. For vendor application or general information contact the town of Remington clerk at: 540-439-3220 by phone, 540-439-9702 by fax, or e-mail townofremington@verizon.net.

Bicycling Tours — Pedal through history on one of Remington's bicycle trails and see why the small town is on the crossroads of history. Trails marked for three-, six- and 12-mile rides take visitors through the beautiful Virginia countryside surrounding Remington. For more information, visit www.remingtonva.org/biking.html.

Remington Drug Company — Located at 207 E. Main Street, this old-fashioned pharmacy features a marble-top soda fountain complete with ice cream cones and floats. The shop was built in 1908 as A.W. Smith's Dry Goods and Notions. In 1913, it became Will H. Ashby's pharmacy, who died in the Great Flu Epidemic of 1918. The pharmacy is now run by Wilbur Heflin. ■

dress and go down there on Saturday evenings to see who was coming in on the train.”

Hoffman was born in nearby Bealeton and has lived in Remington since 1945. At the age of 92, she’s witnessed her fair share of goings-on in the town.

“When I was a youngster, we had two or three grocery stores, a doctor and a dentist, and even a movie theater. But when the roads got better, people got automobiles. It was mostly a horse-and-buggy town when I was little,” Hoffman says.

She recalls a fire that burned down many of the wooden buildings along Main Street in 1924, when she was only eight years old. According to Hoffman, the fire originated in the oven of a bakery and burned to the ground all the buildings along the street.

“There were no fire trucks, so they had to bring a fire engine from Culpeper and even brought one down on the railroad from Alexandria,” she recalled.

With the town’s proximity to the Rapahannock River — it’s only a half-mile from Main Street — Hoffman has seen two floods cross the streets of the town in her lifetime. The first was in April of 1937, when floodwaters reached the steps of the Remington Drug Company. In 1942, Hoffman witnessed floodwaters rushing across the railroad tracks on Main Street “like a waterfall.”

YESTERYEAR’S CHARM

The Remington of today has changed very little and still looks much like it did in the 1940s. Its small-town tradition is reflected in some of the downtown shops, such as the old-fashioned grocery and deli, The Farmer’s Wife.

Owned by Remington native **Lorie Andes**, the shop opened in 2004. Andes became its owner in January of this year. The grocery sells organic foods, milk delivered in glass bottles once a week, fresh baked goods, and Boar’s Head deli meats, with prices comparable to grocery stores. Remington business owners stop in the shop for a bite to eat and to chat with friends while enjoying a cup of coffee.

“It’s a fun place to shop, but it’s also peaceful. We have a variety of items, such as flour and sugar, but we also have the old-time candy. People want things now that remind them of times when things were maybe a bit simpler,” Andes says.

Another stop along Remington’s peaceful Main Street is Archer’s House of



1. From left, Farmer’s Wife owner Lorie Andes with Melissa Goodnough and Danielle Seely showing off the Main Street grocery’s pie display. 2. Once home to a second-floor movie theater, the Groves Hardware building was built in 1905 as a poultry house where local farmers sold butter, eggs, and poultry. 3. Mayor Gerald Billingsley, resident of Remington since 1981, stands in front of Town Hall, where the seven members of Town Council meet. 4. Remington Fire and Rescue Department is home to nearly 70 volunteers. 5. Built in 1884, Remington Baptist Church features a classic bell tower.



Flowers. Owned by retired Methodist minister **Ashton Archer**, the flower shop is both welcoming and enchanting, with the smell of fresh-cut flowers and a friendly face behind the counter. Having lived in Remington since 1975, Archer knows just about everyone in town, like most of his Main Street colleagues.

Just down the street, former Town Councilman **Joe Korpsak's** Variety Building houses anything and everything. On the first floor of the building, a consignment and antique shop shelves electronics, sports memorabilia, coins, glassware, and just about anything else under the sun. Next door, Korpsak operates a small jewelry store and an art gallery around the corner. The second floor of the building is used for apartments and storage.

On the next block is Remington's new and improved fire department. Assistant Fire Chief **Sam Haught, Jr.**, has lived in Remington all his life, and is a proud third-generation fireman. Haught boasts about being a fireman, especially his department's new home, now the biggest building in town.

The recent addition to the fire department was completed last year and a renovation to the original fire station built in 1952 is currently being completed. Remington's fire and rescue department covers much more than the small town: It covers a total of 72 square miles through Fauquier and Culpeper counties.

The fire department's main fundraising event each year is also one of the town's biggest. The first week in June, Remington opens its doors to thousands during the Fireman's Carnival and Parade.

During the four-day event, vendors, rides, and musicians file into town, followed by a parade on Friday night, complete with fire engines, blushing beauty queens, and local bands. On Wednesday night, the carnival welcomes children of all ages, while Thursday is a night of good old-fashioned bluegrass music.

"It's one of the main attractions in the town during the year. A lot of people look forward to it," Haught says. "This is a tight-knit community where everybody knows everybody, so it makes the carnival like a reunion."

RESTORATION ON THE HORIZON

Although Remington stays true to its small-town traditions, some changes have recently occurred, too. McLean developer **Chat Hughey**, who owns property

in the Remington area, is working to restore some of Remington's oldest buildings, which sit near the train crossing on Main Street.

"I'm glad we are able to do something to help the town, because when you look at the town, it's really one of the few in Northern Virginia that hasn't been restored. When you go to Culpeper or Warrenton, everything there has been restored," says Hughey. "Hopefully over the next 10 years or so, we'll have everything in Remington restored."

Hughey bought the buildings two years ago and has been working to restore them for the past 10 months. The most prominent of the three Hughey is reviving is the former Farmer's Co-op, which was built in 1903 by Sanford Embrey, known as the cattle baron of Northern Virginia because he owned 7,000 head of beef.

The Main Street building has housed a variety of businesses over the decades, such as a hardware store, pharmacy, and even a hotel. The second and third floors of the building played host to Frank Hoff's pool room and square-dance hall during the 1920s and '30s. They have been unoccupied since 1948. Hughey hopes to bring life back to the building by leasing it out as office and retail space.

Perhaps the building's most majestic feature is its white cast-iron-and-zinc storefront, which arrived from St. Louis on the train. Hughey power-washed the façade with walnut shells to take the rust off the iron without damaging it.

"I think it will be a very nice building, one of the first that's been restored here in a long time," Hughey says. "Hopefully, it will spark things up here a bit."

Mayor Billingsley is glad that the town has remained small, but is happy to see the changes that Hughey's restoration will bring.

"The economic downturn that we've seen recently has certainly impacted development," Billingsley says. "So we are for now still a very small town."

"My perception is that it's going to add to the economic base and create more traffic, because the buildings being vacant are not doing much for the town," says business owner Joe Korpsak. "Remington is really in a time-capsule from the 1940s or '50s. It's one of the few towns that has basically been held intact over the past 50 years."

For more information on the town of Remington, visit www.remingtonva.org or www.fauquiertourism.com. ■