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Government by Families In Botetourt County

By Sally A. Eads

Fincastle originated around the Mill Place built by Johannes Muller prior to 1745. After the creation of Botetourt County in 1769, and the choice of Miller's Mill, by this time a thriving establishment, as the county seat, the community became known as Botetourt Court House. Not until 1772 was the community chartered as the Town of Fincastle.

As a political body the Town of Fincastle was powerless, not governed by its own residents. When one looks at who governed or who was considered the dominant social and economic group, one has to look outside Fincastle proper to the surrounding estate holders and to the County government as a whole. In trying to describe the socio-economic structure, one then must look at a greater Fincastle community.[1]

Why then did the early settlers bother to charter towns at all? Judging from the statutes, letters, and court minute books, towns served several purposes. One was simply speculative; a chartered town near or on someone's land would increase the land's value, particularly as it was divided into lots and sold. Secondly, the sale of town lots and the revenue generated by town business might defray the cost of court houses, jails and other government buildings. Thirdly, if one accepts at face value the statute establishing Fincastle, protection was needed from the Indians.[2] Finally, counties simply needed a county seat.

The events leading to the creation of Botetourt County and the chartering of Fincastle transpire between 1767 and 1772 in Augusta County itself and the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg. The first reference to any attempt to divide Augusta County occurred in March, 1767, in a petition "from sundry inhabitants of the County of Augusta, praying a division thereof," which was referred to the Committee on Propositions and Grievances. A second petition in April, 1767, cited the inconvenience of living so far from Staunton, the county seat.[3]

Apparently, however, not all the settlers felt the inconvenience since an opposing petition was also filed on the second date.[4] Thomas Lewis, living near Staunton, and his brother, Andrew Lewis, living

An in-depth study of "government by families" in Botetourt County was done by Sally Eads, assistant professor of history at Virginia Western Community College. She is a graduate of Agnes Scott College and she holds a master's degree from the University of Virginia. She and her lawyer husband, J. Harold Eads, live at Fincastle.

in the present City of Salem, both wrote to William Preston, opposing the division of Augusta and requesting that any action on the petitions be postponed until the next session.[5] They were, in fact, postponed. Israel Christian, whom Preston had unseated as a burgess in 1765, favored dividing the county, but John Madison, clerk of Augusta County, opposed it, saying that Christian's friends, then out of power in Augusta, just wanted a new county so they could fill all the offices.[6]

In 1769, several different plans to divide Augusta were presented to the House of Burgesses and the Committee on Courts and Justice recommended that the previous petitions be discharged. In November 1769, both the favorable and unfavorable petitions were reported to the floor of the Burgesses for action. The bill for division was passed by the end of November by the Burgesses and the Council and signed by the governor.[7] Apparently the Burgesses expected the new Botetourt County to be divided because they specifically exempted the residents of southwestern Botetourt from levies to build the new court house.[8]

It is clear that the Burgesses were quite willing to create new counties when areas under consideration had 800 tithables and could build the church and court house.[9] The frequent divisions of counties avoided many problems within the colony, particularly since many of the new counties in Western Virginia were different in religion and ethnic character.[10]

In the second meeting of the justices of Botetourt County, the court recommended to the governor a tract of land east of Miller's Mill owned by Israel Christian for a county seat. Christian conveyed to the court forty acres for consideration of twenty shillings, but retained the mill itself. The sheriff, Richard Woods, was directed to lay off ten acres for prison bounds, and a courthouse and jail were to be built under the direction of Israel Christian, John Bowyer, William Fleming, and Stephen Trigg.[11] John Bowyer alone opposed the choice of site for the county seat. It may be conjecture, but Bowyer may have held land on which he wanted the courthouse located. His marriage to the widow of Benjamin Borden Jr., did bring him land within a few miles of Fincastle. His dissent is also rooted in a continuing feud with Christian left over from Augusta County. He, Bowyer, must have acquiesced in the location enough to bring in a bill, along with Edmund Pendleton, albeit on orders from the Burgesses, for establishing a town adjoining the courthouse of Botetourt. The bill passed on March 16, 1772, and the new town was named Fincastle. That same year, Botetourt lost most of its territory to the new Fincastle County.[12]

The ethnic basis for the Fincastle community appears to have been a combination of English, Scotch-Irish, German, and African. In contrast with Tidewater Virginia, the Fincastle community was not predominantly English, though the government structure was English in origin.

The Germans began to settle the area quite early; John Miller in 1745 reflects this as does Jacob Peck Sr., of Wurtemburg, and later Adam Peck. The majority of Botetourt Germans, however, came after 1780. The earliest recorded Valley German settler is Jost Hite about 1731 near present Winchester. These Germans in the northern end of the Valley were militia men, voters and major office holders as early as the 1750's and 1760's.[13] In the Fincastle community, however, the Germans voted, appeared on militia rolls but rarely held major offices. Most Germans were small farmers, millers, or other craftsmen and did not take an active part in politics. Jacob Peck Sr., is exceptional as a large landholder, but even he held no political office. There were also indications that the Botetourt Germans did not actively serve in combat but were exempted because of conscience, i.e., pacifism. These Germans had little in common with Tidewater Virginia; George Washington visiting in the Valley in 1748 was not impressed with the Germans at all.[14]

The most influential ethnic group was the Scottish or Scotch-Irish settlers.[15] Of the original justices, at least nine were Scot or Scotch-Irish, though two can be identified as English.[16] It is significant that a number of these justices were European-born, showing that they moved rapidly into leadership positions. Many, in fact, achieved far greater power and standing than would have been possible in the old countries. Most also were literate when they arrived. A few settlers were already rather substantial gentlemen before they left Europe.

William Fleming was a college trained physician and the Lewis family left substantial enough holdings in Ireland to require a return visit by one family member to settle an estate. John Lewis did have to leave Ireland rather hurriedly after killing an Irish laird; however, he remained sufficiently proud of the deed to have it inscribed on his gravestone.[17] William Preston, James Patton's nephew, and the son of a poor ship's carpenter, immigrated only in 1740, but was a burgess by 1765. Further confirmation of the origins of many who originally settled Augusta and then Botetourt may be found in the description of Beverly Manor, near Staunton, as the "Irish Tract," meaning the Scotch-Irish, whose numbers included Breckinridges, Lockharts, Christians, Skillerns, and McClanahans.[18] In addition, the Scotch-Irish and Presbyterian origins are reflected in the substantial number of the first justices and vestrymen who had belonged to the Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church south of Staunton.[19] Most colonial born residents of Botetourt appear first in Augusta, generally having migrated from Pennsylvania. A few, like Thomas Posey, came from Northern or Eastern Virginia.

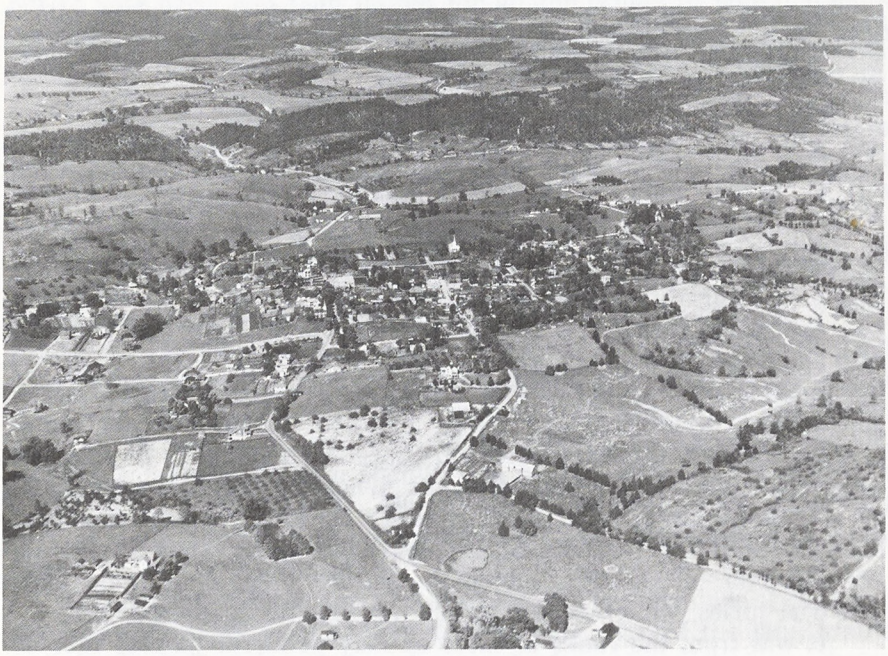
Communal migration or settlement by extended family groups seems the dominant pattern for the leaders of Botetourt as a whole and Fincastle in particular,[20] such as the Breckinridge, Lewis, Preston,

Christian, Bowyer, and McClanahan families. Some, like the Lewis, Lynn, Patton, and Preston families had intermarried and left in groups from Ulster in Ireland.[21] These settlers appear in Augusta, hold most major positions, civil and military, and stake out extensive land claims. Sons and occasionally fathers continue migrating down the Valley of Virginia as new settlements and then counties appear. This nucleus of settlers with its myriad intermarriages and connections serves as the Commission of Justices in Augusta, Botetourt, Fincastle, Montgomery, Washington, and Kentucky Counties.[22] Israel Christian, who gave the land for Fincastle, illustrates the point by his children. His daughter, Anne, married William Fleming, a Botetourt justice; Rosanna married Caleb Wallace, who became a judge in Kentucky; Mary married Stephen Trigg, a justice in Botetourt, Fincastle and Washington Counties; Elizabeth married Col. William Bowyer of Botetourt; his son William, married Patrick Henry's sister, Anne.[23]

Later, Alexander McClanahan of Augusta married John Lewis' daughter, Margaret; William Madison married William Preston's daughter, Elizabeth; Thomas Posey, a Botetourt justice, married George Matthews' sister. Matthews lived in Fincastle; his father, Sampson, lived in Augusta. William Preston's sister, Leticia, married Robert Breckinridge, a Botetourt justice. Henry Bowyer, Botetourt clerk of court from 1788 to 1831, married Thomas Madison's daughter. Madison, whose father had been clerk in Augusta, married the sister of Patrick Henry. Andrew Lewis' son, William, married in succession a McClenechan and a Madison.[24] These rather involved family relationships do not reflect the American myth of rugged individualists hacking their way through the wilderness, but a pattern of almost tribal migrations of restless wandering family groups.

The above discussion of family and ethnic origin of Botetourt County leadership indicates that family connection was a major ingredient in the formation of an upper or governing class. Another significant factor was large-scale land owning; however, these men are not just simple farmers, they are more hustling businessmen. A cursory glance at the records of Augusta and Botetourt County deeds shows Israel Christian in 1770 owning singly or with his son, William, or sons-in-law, William Fleming, Stephen Trigg, or Caleb Wallace, over 3,300 acres.[25] Included in the survey was Miller's Mill, an income producing establishment, and the Stone House near Cloverdale which had been his base of operations as a frontier merchant since the early 1760's. John Bowyer, Christian's nemesis on the County Court, married the widow of Benjamin Borden Jr., and while administering that vast estate also owned over 1,000 acres himself. William Preston, county surveyor for Augusta, Botetourt, and Fincastle counties, before 1767, owned 3,000 acres, including the Preston place, Greenfield, near Fincastle,[26] and bought more land later.

Land alone could not put one in the governing class, but land combined with civil and military office-holding, business dealings, some resulting from the office-holding, clearly put a person in the establishment. By land holding, one does not always mean farming; it may mean wholesale speculation. Once a man became a justice, however, he was considered a "gentleman" since the two terms were virtually synonymous at this time, and it was difficult if not impossible to remove him. This was made more difficult by the sons and sons-in-law who followed in their fathers' footsteps.[27] Even outrageous behavior, conflict of interest, and abuse of position could not destroy a man socially or politically. John Bowyer, for instance, while a justice and later the sheriff in Augusta, was fined for gaming in the Court Room while court was in session, and in 1763 was fined for gaming in public and assaulting Israel Christian in the latter's performance of duty, namely, citing Bowyer.[28] In later years as a Botetourt justice, Bowyer appears to have remained contentious and difficult, refusing to vote for paying the surveyor 10 pounds above his regular fee for clearing the line between Botetourt and the new Fincastle County. Bowyer, Preston, Robert Breckinridge, and John Howard refused to vote for



Fincastle was only a cluster of homes amid rolling countryside in this aerial photograph of 1924, as it is today and was when it was established two centuries ago.

Israel Christian and three other candidates for sheriff in 1770 when the rest of the Court approved the recommendation. This division also had roots in the long feuds and political battles between Preston and Christian, and Bowyer and Christian in Augusta. Of course, Christian himself was not living an entirely blameless life, being fined for insolence and contempt for the court and the king's attorney. In 1772, John Madison sued George Skillern for threatening his life. Skillern had to post 40 pounds bond and get two securities at 20 pounds each.[29]

The position of justice of the peace was perhaps the most crucial post in county government. The justices, once in office, could be dislodged only by death, resignation, or removal from the territory. Most scholars generally agree that the justices were recruited from the wealthiest men of the county. When new counties were created, new justices had to be chosen. Generally, the new justices were men who had held similar posts in the parent county. For instance, in 1763 Augusta County had a new Commission of the Peace; among the justices were John Buchanan, Andrew Lewis, James Lockhart, father of Patrick, Richard Woods, Robert Breckinridge, William Preston, John Bowyer, Israel Christian, John Maxwell, and Benjamin Hawkins.[30] Every one of these gentlemen or their sons were justices on the Botetourt County Commission. In a sense, one could say that the act of creating a county meant that a social structure complete with a governing class was already in existence. The justices were appointed by the governor and any additions to the commission were also chosen by the governor, but only on the recommendation of the existing justices. The original commission, then, completely controlled access into its ranks on the part of those who would become part of the governing class.

Once on the justices' commission, a man had enormous power of course, but being a justice also signified that he already had power. The justices also influenced the economic life of the county. The body had executive, legislative, and judicial functions. They set rates for inns and ordinaries, issued licenses for merchants, and ordinary keepers, appointed men to take tithables' lists and to collect levies, appointed constables, overseers of the roads, and had numerous other duties. The county justices acted as the court, meeting monthly to preside over cases involving debt or civil complaints. When the court was constituted as a Commission of Oyer and Terminer, it functioned as a quarter sessions court for criminal cases where the penalty did not involve life and limb.[31] They also ordered the sheriff to summon grand juries and trial juries, when needed, usually for quarter sessions court.

It was from the ranks of these already powerful justices that the governor chose the majority of other county posts. In the appointment of sheriffs, the governor chose one of three justices recommended by the justices themselves, usually the one they specified. The appointee

was usually the senior member of the justices who had not previously held the post.[32] The sheriff also posted bond with two men to serve as security; the bond covered any breach of duty such as law suits, jail-breaks and failure to collect tax levies. Any justice refusing to serve as sheriff was fined 3,000 pounds of tobacco and another choice was made. The sheriff was barred from serving as a burgess during his two-year term and for two more years afterward.[33] The earliest sheriffs of Botetourt included Richard Woods, Israel Christian, John Maxwell, George Skillern and Benjamin Estill.[34]

The sheriff not only had tax collection duties and the duty of summoning grand and trial juries. He also supervised the election process; he set the election day, sent around writs of election to all churches to be read, giving time and place of the election, opened and closed the polls when he wanted, decided who was qualified to vote, and recorded the votes cast, either by voice vote or signing under the proper candidate's name. The actual voting was done publicly with poll watchers present.[35]

The justices could and did influence the voting on the part of the freeholders. By law any man with fifty acres or a house and twenty-five acres or a town lot and house could vote by attending the polls on election day, usually at the court house.[36] The justices usually turned out to vote early and then waited for all the others to vote.[37] Gentlemen also profited from a law barring the solicitation of votes with gifts or drinks to the voters since they were already well known.

The enormous influence of the justices over elections is seen in the election for the House of Delegates in 1783. Two weeks before the election, Justice George Skillern gave a party over near Buchanan to which most of the gentlemen of the county were invited. At this party, Archibald Stuart, a young Revolutionary War hero from Rockbridge, who had just been defeated in that county for the House of Delegates, made a stirring toast to the recent victory over the British. He so impressed those in attendance that he was urged to run for the House of Delegates from Botetourt. Protesting that he had no land in Botetourt to make him a free-holder, Stuart was offered a house and lot in Fincastle. All the gentlemen went to their homes and told everyone that Archibald Stuart, their friend and son of Alexander Stuart, was the candidate. William Hamilton, a justice, sold him the house in Fincastle on April 10, 1783, Election Day; the justices all turned out to vote early and do some campaigning. Stuart was elected, and re-elected in 1784 and 1785.[38]

The county surveyor was also a justice. In the early days of counties, the surveyors were very important since they charted the land grants and deeds and made up the plats, and often also picked up choice parcels of land. William Preston appears to have gotten quite a bit of land in this way.

Once a justice, a man might be able to seek higher office such as the House of Burgesses, later the House of Delegates, or the Senate. Israel Christian, William Christian, William Preston, John Bowyer, Andrew Lewis and numerous others were all elected to higher office.

Being a justice in colonial times also generally meant filling militia posts as well as the other civic duties previously mentioned. Virtually all the Botetourt justices were militia officers; naturally enough gentlemen were officers, not ordinary soldiers. Such Fincastle area notables as John Bowyer, James Cloyd, William Preston, David Robinson, Patrick Lockhart and others later on held the rank of lieutenant, captain, major and colonel.[39] The position of colonel signified the head of the county militia. The militia, of course, pulled some strictly military duty from time to time, in addition to other activities. Botetourt militiamen along with those from Augusta, Fincastle and other frontier counties fought at the Battle of Point Pleasant in October, 1774. There Charles Lewis and Robert McClenechan were killed and William Fleming wounded.[40] While the Indians who fought at Point Pleasant generally lived outside the Valley of Virginia, at least a week's march or more from Fincastle, and few Indians were seen anywhere near the area in the 1770's, memories of Indian troubles lingered on enough to warrant some preparedness by the militia. As recently as 1764, the Cloyd family had been massacred near Amsterdam; this, however, was extremely unusual.[41]

The concept of marcher lords holding frontier lands in troubled border areas, filling civilian as well as military roles, had existed in England against the Welsh, Scots and Irish raids or rebellions. The Botetourt justices in a sense were filling much the same function in guarding the Virginia frontier. They might also be compared to the ancient Roman citizen soldier manging his lands and taking up arms whenever called on to do so. Obviously, the Revolution called most of these men to duty as soldiers and commissaries.[42]

Militia officers were also responsible for taking the lists of tithables. The tithable lists were not merely lists of soldiers by rank, trade and location; such a list would be a simple militia list. The tithable lists enumerated almost all taxable properties such as land, houses, barns, livestock, slaves, and carts or carriages. In other words, these lists, like later census bureau reports, provided the basis for colonial taxation. The militia companies, which were the units for the tithable lists, were distributed on a geographic basis and were led by the captains.

While land and office holding were both very important, the governing gentlemen did a lot more. They were land speculators, merchant traders, Indian agents and farmers. In other words, they were totally immersed in the economic as well as political life of the county. Israel Christian again serves as a pertinent example. A commissary for Col. William Byrd's regiment in the French and Indian

War, Christian was also operating out of the Stone House in Cloverdale as a merchant. His managers and agents included Anthony Bledsoe, Stephen Trigg, and Walter Stewart. Christian also was a state subsidized agent selling goods to the Cherokees.[43] Preston, Bowyer, George Matthews, William Hamilton, Robert Harvey and others speculated in land. Hamilton, Harvey, and Henry Bowyer were all well-known merchants.

These men also served as guardians to orphans, administrators of the estates of men away at war or prisoners of war and often acted as executors of estates for widows. On occasion this service proved not only very lucrative, particularly if the estate was large and prosperous, but also very hard to give up. Israel Christian was sued more than once by men who wanted to resume the administration of their own estates.[44] Such positions often led to future purchases of property. In August, 1766, Israel Christian and Andrew Miller qualified as administrators of John Miller's estate. In 1768, Christian bought for 100 pounds eighty-one acres of that estate, the Miller's Mill, site of the future Botetourt County Courthouse. He sold the Mill alone for 13,000 pounds Virginia currency to Andrew Henry in 1783.[45] The justices also served as security on each others' bonds for sheriff, guardians, ordinary keepers and such.

Apparently, church affiliation was of little or no consequence in holding public office in the Valley even though office holders were required to take oaths of allegiance to the Church of England. It was well known that most of the vestry and Commission of the Peace of Augusta had been Presbyterian dissenters.[46] These included such later Botetourt and Town of Fincastle citizens as the Prestons, Christians, Breckinridges, Flemings, McDowells, Buchanans, Woods, and Lewises.[47] This pattern of dissenter government follows in Botetourt; in the first vestry in 1770 were William Fleming, James Rowland, William Ingles, Bryan McDonald, John Bowyer, John Armstrong, John May, Thomas Barnes, Luke Bowyer, Anthony Bledsoe, Thomas Rowland and Philip Love, most of them Presbyterian.[48] The dissenter influence on the vestry is especially noted in 1777 when the House of Delegates dissolved the vestry and ordered the election of a new one because of that dissenter control. But in 1778 there was still no vestry and commissioners of the tax had to see to the care of the poor on orders of the General Assembly.[49] Generally, however, the governor, council and Burgesses tacitly consented to the dissenter controlled government and not until attempts were made to incorporate the Episcopal church during the Revolution was there much controversy.[50] The vestry was initially elected, but once elected was as self-perpetuating a body as the justices.

The governing or upper class, then, was composed of a landed gentry who held a majority, if not a real monopoly, of county offices,

civil and military, and who participated fully in the trade, commerce, and other activities of the county. The Commission of the Peace was an oligarchic, not a democratic, form of government. These men considered themselves the "gentlemen" of the county and were accepted by both the middle and lower classes of Botetourt as such and, perhaps more important, by gentlemen elsewhere.

It is apparent that a nucleus of the Augusta County Court formed the upper class of Botetourt County. It is also clear that Fincastle County and its successors, Montgomery, Washington, and Kentucky counties, follow the same pattern. On the first county court of Fincastle County, January 5, 1773, appear:

William Preston, William Ingles, John Montgomery, Stephen Trigg, Robert Doack, Walter Crockett, Anthony Bledsoe, James McGavock, and Benjamin Estill, all formerly members of the Botetourt County Court.[51] Many of the same gentlemen show up in the newer counties. These men occasionally made public pronouncements of their intent to migrate down the Valley. Israel Christian in *The Virginia Gazette* advertised his intent to move from Fincastle in Botetourt County to the new Fincastle County and invited anyone who had any business to transact to meet him at Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg on a certain date.[52] The Fincastle Resolves of 1775 display a list of names that were formerly Botetourt notables: Col. William Preston, Col. William Christian, Capt. Stephen Trigg, Maj. William Ingles, Capt. John Montgomery, Capt. James McGavock, Capt. Thomas Madison, plus, of course, others not from Botetourt.[53]

The upper class remaining in Botetourt County was reflected in a new Commission of the Peace in 1778 composed of William Fleming, George Skillern, Benjamin Estill, Philip Love, Andrew Woods, Adam Smyth, William Madison, William McClenechan, William Christian, also in Montgomery County, Patrick Lockhart, Thomas Lewis, George Rutledge, Jonathan Taylor, William Hamilton, Thomas Rowland, John Armstrong, Robert Poage, and James Barnett.[54] Of these, only Patrick Lockhart, William Hamilton, Adam Smyth, George Rutledge, and William McClenechan lived in or near Fincastle itself. In the newly truncated Botetourt the old pattern of justices serving as sheriffs, surveyors, and commonwealth's attorney prevailed.[55]

The Town of Fincastle, even with this new Commission of the Peace in 1778, remained powerless as a political entity. The gentlemen justices authorized to sell off town lots in Fincastle were not generally residents of the town, nor were those authorized to collect money due from lots necessarily living there. This group of gentlemen justices, at one time or another, included Fleming, Skillern, Richard May, Adam Smyth, Thomas Madison, William McClenechan, Patrick Lockhart, James

Rowland, Robert Harvey, and David May. Of these, only Smyth, Lockhart, and Harvey actually lived in the town, though McClenechan lived nearby. John May, clerk of court until 1778, lived in Fincastle, but his successors, David May and Henry Bowyer III, did not. Even the trustees of the town of Fincastle, named in 1789, were not all residents. James Breckinridge, Henry Bowyer III, Robert Harvey, George Hancock, Mathew Harvey, Philip Speckard, and Patrick Lockhart were all trustees,[56] but only Lockart, the two Harveys and Hancock lived in town; the others lived two to five miles away.

It would be inaccurate not to mention that as town lots were sold, men who could be considered as governing class through other lands and offices they held, bought into Fincastle. Lockhart, Hancock, Hamilton, Harvey, and Smyth have been mentioned. William Bowyer, colonel in the militia and son-in-law to Israel Christian, lived on Main Street.[57] Thomas Bowyer, major in the Continental Army, had a house on Main Street with four fireplaces and a brick chimney and also had extensive holdings near the town.[58]

It should be noted, also, that greater Fincastle was an active, busy, and growing community in the 1770's and 1780's. This is especially evident during the Revolution. Gentlemen such as Col. John Bowyer who lived in or near Fincastle actively participated as recruiters of rangers. Bowyer also organized a troop which saw action on the Ohio River in 1778.[59] Patrick Lockhart served as commissary to the militia, transporting arms to Williamsburg, later serving in the same capacity for the Continental Army.[60] Thomas Posey, a newcomer to the Fincastle community in the early 1770's, deserves his inclusion in the upper class as a militia major. He led a company at Point Pleasant in 1774 and continued leadership of an active company in the Revolution at the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey, and other battles. Numerous Fincastle residents supplied Posey's company in 1776, including John Bowyer, Andrew Wallace and John Gilmer.[61] Posey had a substantial home and lots in Fincastle and later moved on to Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois to take important positions.[62] Captain Michael Bowyer, a Fincastle merchant, also led a company of militiamen for Virginia.[63] Col. William Bowyer, a Main Street Fincastle resident, served in the Continental Army.

In the Town of Fincastle itself there is also ample evidence of a thriving middle class and lower class community. Generally speaking, nongentlemen ranking officers in the militia, tenants leasing land, small planters who owned a few slaves and men who were called for jury duty could be defined as middle class. This definition also would include craftsmen, store keepers and the like who did not own large estates.[64] Further, if one could vote according to the 1736 Election Law, which enfranchised those owning town lots with a house 12 x 12

A shirt-sleeved crowd heard Gov. Mills Godwin speak at dedication of Botetourt County's fourth courthouse on June 14, 1975. The new building replaces the structure which burned in December 1970, the county's 200th anniversary year.

feet in dimension, he was middle class. If a man served as constable, he also fit the definition. Generally, laborers, indentured servants, and apprentices were lower class, but the latter two categories were, of course, temporary situations.

Within this rather broad definition most of Fincastle's residents through the 1790's could be considered middle class. Those who owned for any period of time property in the town comprise not too lengthy a list. In 1777, the justices sold to John Todd, a lawyer introduced to the county by William Preston,[65] two lots on the south side of Main Street,[66] to Henry Shrider in 1778, three lots, to Adam Peck two lots, [67] to John Grattan and George Rutledge, one lot, Pledge Palmer one lot, Jesse Clark, one lot,[68] to Samuel Kennerly, two lots, William Miller, two lots, to Richard Thomas, two lots, and to Thomas McMakin,

two lots.[69] These men served on juries, served as constables, and surveyors of the road.[70]

About 1780, there is some property transfer when Archibald Kyle, Jacob Mifford, Nichols and Jacob Carper, Stephen May, William Miller and George Hancock moved into town. Hancock, from his work as commonwealth's attorney, obviously was a member of the governing class. Most of these men, as mentioned, performed minor governing tasks and also ran small businesses such as ordinaries. Many became merchants, or craftsmen, although there is no mention of merchants' licenses until the late 1780's when Thomas King was licensed as a retailer. The existence of a merchant-craft community was evident from men like Michael Bowyer, who was a merchant long before licenses were granted, and Posey was a known saddler.[71] In the late 1780's and 1790's more people settled in the town such as Thomas King, Isaac Dawson, Robert Harvey, and Mathew Harvey.[72]

That many of these men were not only property owners but built homes indicates that not all transfers of property were for speculative purposes. The home owners included Kennerly, Nicholas and Jacob Carper, Dawson, John Grattan, George Rutledge, Stephen May, Jacob Mifford, Adam Peck, James Roberts, and Fiat Wysong.[73] Some of these men also participated in the down-the-valley migration mentioned earlier.[74]

Several comments need to be made in conclusion. First, the creation of new counties was recognition that a social structure complete with gentlemen to govern already existed; this is amply illustrated in the example of Botetourt and her successor counties. Second, the governing classes west of the Blue Ridge Mountains were generally not English nor, except when it suited them politically, were they Anglican. Third, those who governed the "Fincastle Community" were obviously the Botetourt justices, some of whom lived in the area; most lived some distance from the town. Finally, additional research is needed on the interrelationships of these governing justices and their families in Ireland and before that in Scotland, since it is entirely possible that family and business connections may have been imported virtually intact from the counties of Ireland settled by the Scots and others dissenting Protestants.

1 F. B. Kegley, KEGLEY'S VIRGINIA FRONTIERS: BEGINNING OF THE SOUTHWEST: THE ROANOKE OF COLONIAL DAYS, 1740-1753 (The Southwest Virginia Historical Society, Roanoke, Virginia, 1938), p. 121. Kegley generally follows such a plan in his selection of documents for Fincastle, Roanoke, the James River communities and others in Southwest Virginia.

2 Lewis Preston Summers, ANNALS OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA: 1769-1800 (Abingdon, Virginia, 1929), p. 66. Hereafter cited as Summers, ANNALS.

THE STATUTES AT LARGE BEING A COLLECTION OF THE LAWS OF VIRGINIA, ed., William Waller Hening (J. & G. Cochran, Richmond, Virginia, 1821), VIII, 616. Hereafter cited as Henings.

3 JOURNALS OF THE HOUSE OF BURGESSES OF VIRGINIA, 1766-69. ed., John Pendleton Kennedy (Richmond, Virginia, 1906), pp. 84, 102. Hereafter cited as BURGESSES' JOURNALS.

4 Ibid., p. 102

5 Letters of Thomas and Andrew Lewis to William Preston, February 24, 1767, and March 19, 1767, Draper Manuscripts, Microfilm. Publication of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Madison, Wisconsin, 1951). 2QQ100.101. Hereafter cited as Draper MSS, and number. William Preston was a burgess from Augusta, 1765-69, and from Botetourt, 1769-1772. John

Wilson was also a burgess from Augusta and served on the Committee on Propositions and Grievances to which all petitions for new counties were referred.

6 Robert E. and Katherine Brown, VIRGINIA: 1705-1786: DEMOCRACY OR ARISTOCRACY? (Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, Michigan, 1964), p. 223. Brown cites the Draper Manuscripts, 3-1-1767—4-4-1770. (I have to take their word for it because there is no reference in the Index to these manuscripts to letters from John Madison.)

7 BURGESSES' JOURNALS, 1769, pp. 197, 201, 204, 238, 240-1, 251, 298.

8 Brown, p. 223, HENINGS, VIII, 395.

9 Brown, p. 219.

10 Freeman H. Hart, THE VALLEY OF VIRGINIA IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: 1763-1789 (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N. C., 1942), pp. 64-65.

11 Summers, ANNALS, pp. 66, 77.

12 BURGESSES' JOURNALS, 1772, pp. 189, 201, 248, 304.

13 Klaus Wust, THE GERMANS OF VIRGINIA (University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1969), pp. 35, 49, 63.

14 Ibid., pp. 51, 74, 75, 98.

15 Thomas Perkins Abernethy, THREE VIRGINIA FRONTIERS (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1940), pp. 58-59.

16 Robert Douthat Stoner, A SEEDBED OF THE REPUBLIC: EARLY BOTETOURT (Roanoke Historical Society, Roanoke, Virginia, 1962), pp. 285, 289, 294, 298, 277, 312, 301, 316. The Scot or Scotch Irish Justices were Andrew Lewis, Robert Breckinridge, William Preston, Israel and William Christian. Patrick Lockhart, George Skillern, James McGavock, Richard Woods and Thomas Madison were English.

17 Patricia G. Johnson, JAMES PATTON AND THE APPALACHIAN COLONISTS (McClure Press, Verona, Virginia 1973), p. 7.

18 Kegley, pp. 41, 45.

19 Howard McKnight Wilson, THE TINKLING SPRING: HEADWATERS OF FREEDOM: A STUDY OF THE CHURCH AND HER PEOPLE: 1732-1954 (Fishersville, Virginia, 1954), pp. 113, 115.

20 Charles Ambler, SECTIONALISM IN VIRGINIA FROM 1776 TO 1781 (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1910), p. 13.

21 Johnson, pp. 6, 10.

22 See below for justices of other counties, p. 13.

23 Hugh Blair Grigsby, THE HISTORY OF THE VIRGINIA FEDERAL CONVENTION OF 1788 (Virginia Historical Collections, Richmond, Virginia, 1890), II, p. 43.

24 Stoner, pp. 69, 275.

25 Kegley, pp. 85, 298. 304, 486. 513. 520, 493. 543, 475.

26 Lyman Chalkley, CHRONICLES OF THE SCOTCH-IRISH SETTLEMENT IN VIRGINIA, EXTRACTED FROM THE ORIGINAL COURT RECORDS OF AUGUSTA COUNTY: 1745-1800 (Genealogical Publication Co., Baltimore, 1966), III, 27. 284, 297, 331, 357, 362, 444. Hereafter cited as AUGUSTA CHRONICLES. Also, Summers, ANNALS, pp. 547, 548, 549, 552, 554, 560, 564, 568.

27 Brown asserts that the only hereditary office was the clerk, but in Botetourt and Augusta circles, justices, militia officers and surveyors appear to be held in close family groups. He also fails to account for the Valley migrations. Brown asserts that it is impossible to tell whether men with the same last name were related or have the same political philosophy. Such a task is not all that difficult since upon investigation of wills, deeds, minute books, and other records of local courts, as any good genealogist can testify, it is patently obvious that many of these men are related. It is also not all that hard to discover political philosophy through careful study of letters and papers. Brown, p. 217.

28 Kegley, pp. 141. 142; AUGUSTA CHRONICLES, I, 99, 125.

29 Summers, ANNALS, pp. 91, 153, 203, 205. Also, see above, p. 3.

30 AUGUSTA CHRONICLES, I, 82. 104. 107.

31 Charles S. Sydnor, GENTLEMEN FREEHOLDERS: POLITICAL PRACTICES IN WASHINGTON'S VIRGINIA (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N. C., 1952), p. 85.

32 Ibid., p. 84.

33 Albert Ogden Porter, COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN VIRGINIA: A LEGISLATIVE HISTORY: 1607-1904 (Columbia University Press, New York, 1947), p. 70.

34 Stoner, p. 456.

35 Porter, pp. 54-5; Sydnor, p. 71.

36 Henings, 1762 law, VII, 520-22.

37 Sydnor, pp. 73-4.

38 Grigsby, II, 13. Also, Botetourt County Deed Book3, p. 136.

39 Kegley, pp. 383-4. There were, of course, many more militia officers throughout the county.

40 William Fleming was initially reported killed at Point Pleasant. THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE, 10 November, 1774, p. 4, col 1 (microfilm, Purdie and Dixon edition, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1950)

41 Summers, ANNALS, p. 79.

42 See Below, p. 14.

43 Christian was apparently attacked on one such venture and the Cherokees stole all of his wares. He was ordered to repay the colony £202-9-12. Burgesses' Journals 1766 pp. 29-30.

44 AUGUSTA CHRONICLES, I, 78-79. See suit by John Smith to recover his own estate. March 20, 1758.

45 Ibid., I, 128. Kegley, p. 475. Stoner, p. 323.

46 Wilson, pp. 108-9. 115, 171.

47 Henings, VIII, 438.

48 Summers, Annals, p. 74.

49 Kegley, p. 394. Porter, p. 146.

50 One exception is the repeated dissolution of the Augusta vestry in 1769, 1771, and 1773 because of heavy dissenter influence, Hart, p. 48.

51 Summers. ANNALS, pp. 588, 689.

52 THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE, 4 February, 1773, p. 2, col. 3. (microfilm, Purdie and Dixon edition, Williamsonburg, Virginia, 1950).

53 William C. Pendleton, POLITICAL HISTORY OF APPALACHIAN VIRGINIA (Shenandoah Press, Dayton, Virginia, 1927), p. 18.

54 Some of these men are newcomers to the governing class like Taylor, Barnett, and Armstrong. Summers, ANNALS, p. 269.

55 Stoner, pp. 443, 456, 457, 465.
56 Kegley, pp. 407-9, 411.
57 Stoner, pp. 233, 286.
58 Summers, ANNALS, pp. 232, 393. Stoner, p. 233. Kegley, p. 478.
59 JOURNAL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE STATE OF VIRGINIA, ed., H. R. McIlwaine (Richmond, Virginia, 1931), I, 17, II, 80. Hereafter cited as COUNCIL OF STATE.
60 Ibid., I, 17.
61 Ibid., I, 29, 36, 73, 232.
62 Stoner, pp. 311, 312.
63 COUNCIL OF STATE, I, 232.
64 Brown, pp. 43, 48, 216.
65 Letter to Preston, Draper MSS, 2QQ124.
66 Summers, ANNALS, p. 557.
67 Botetourt County Deed Book 2, pp. 355, 406.
68 Ibid., pp. 451, 452, 455, 456.
69 Ibid., pp. 524, 545, 560, 367.
70 Jury lists show Roberts, McMakin, and Todd. Constables were Roberts, Thomas King, Samuel Kennerly, and numerous others. This information is gleaned from Summers, ANNALS, records of court sessions.
71 Stoner, pp. 275, 312.
72 Botetourt County Deed Book 4, p. 255.
County Deed Book 3, p. 373.
74 See above, pp. 12, 13.
73 Stoner, pp. 233-5. Wysong bought a lot from George Hancock in 1776 Botetourt

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(Continued on page 37)

Indians Retreat From Virginians At Battle of Point Pleasant

by JOHN G. MORGAN

CAMP POINT PLEASANT, Va., Oct. 10, 1774 — The fierce, day-long battle between red warriors and white frontiersmen ended just after sundown today.

The turning point came at about 1 p.m. when gunfire subsided, and the Indians began a long, slow, strategic retreat from the Virginians.

Trees, bushes, old logs, embankments and the general terrain beside the Ohio River were used to great advantage by the Indians as they moved backward under all available cover.

They put up occasional shots to discourage immediate pursuit and to shield their efforts to remove the dead and wounded.

Until about 4 p.m. there was a genuine lull in the battle. Shooting almost ceased as the two sides stared and cursed at each other. Indians clearly showed that they had lost their enthusiasm for fighting

At this time, Col. Andrew Lewis decided on a diversionary tactic to hasten the retreat. He pulled veteran captains John Stuart, Matthew Arbuckle and George Matthews, and Lt. Isaac Shelby from the front, and gave them specific orders.

Accordingly, they dropped behind the Kanawha River bank with a detachment of men and moved upstream a quarter of a mile to the mouth of Crooked Creek.

They proceeded up the eastern edge of the creek with intentions of firing at the enemy from the rear. Although they were discovered before the mission was accomplished, they succeeded in dislodging the Indians.

Perhaps thinking that reinforcements had arrived for the enemy, the Indians swiftly vacated the premises. Although they released a low yell, as if they were about to fight again, they extended their retreat to Old Town Creek, about two miles up the Ohio River.

At this point, the Indians were well protected by heavy undergrowth. They chose to make a stand right there. "Come on," they shouted at the advancing Virginians.

But the Virginians, suspecting a trick, chose to halt their advance. They maintained a quiet battle line until nightfall.

An 18-part series on the Battle of Point Pleasant and events leading up to it was written in the fall of 1974 by John G. Morgan, staff writer for the Charleston Gazette, in newspaper style as if he had been present when that historic battle was fought at the forks of the Kanawha and Ohio rivers 200 years earlier. This part describes the battle of Oct. 10, 1774.

The Indians disappeared into the night. Scouts reported that they were last seen going back across the Ohio.

The final withdrawal of the Indians was regarded as a fine display of generalship on the part of Chief Cornstalk.

Why did the Indians lose the battle under a chief of his caliber? One of the reasons given is that they failed to keep their guns in top condition. Another is that too many braves recklessly exposed themselves to danger in the hope of getting prize scalps or plunder.

When all the firing had ceased today, a voice was heard on the darkening Ohio River shore:

"You may come out now, Andy. All is safe."

It was the voice of an old Dutchman named Andrew Kishioner Sr., calling out to his son, Andrew Jr.

The two, attached to the Virginia Militia, left camp after the first alarm of approaching Indians and spent the day under piles of driftwood.

At day's end the weary army of backwoodsmen returned to camp, which has been turned into a crude field hospital, practically without medicine or skilled attendants.

Col. William Fleming, rated as the best surgeon, remains among the critically wounded.

Poultices of slippery elm bark are applied to wounds. Broth, made from beef or wild game, is offered as nourishment.

Groans of the wounded pierce the night in a manner that is heart-rending to other officers and men.

At nightfall the official count of dead frontiersmen stood at 46, including nine commissioned officers. More were expected to die. Counts of the wounded varied from 80 to 92.

No reliable information is available on how many Indians were killed. Officers insist that the total must be higher than that of the Virginians.

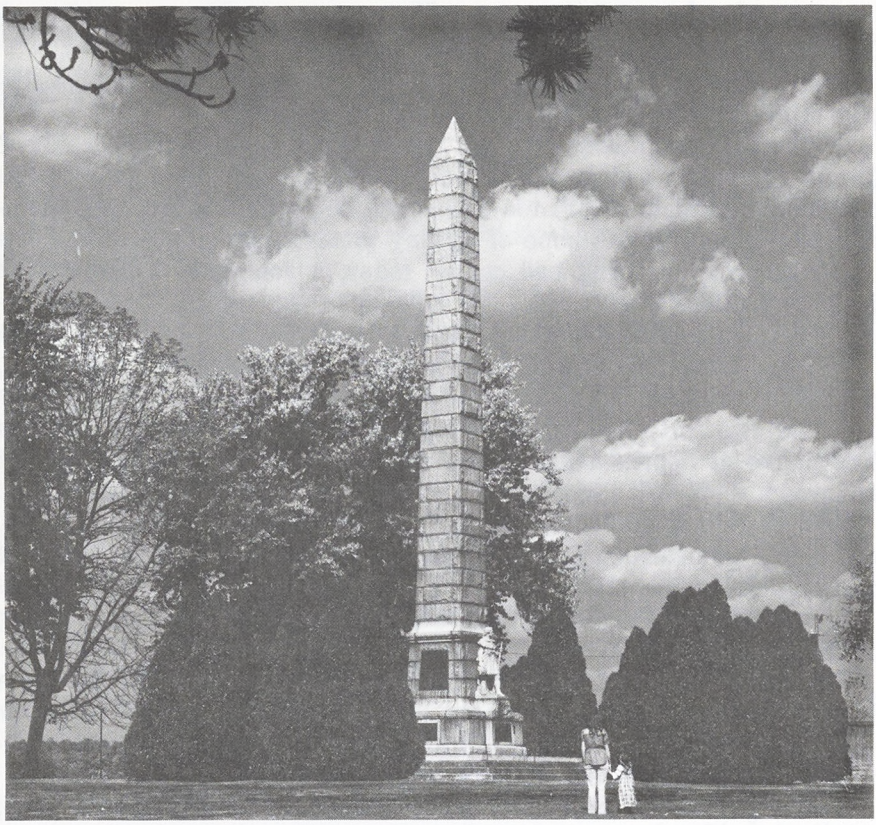
Indians were seen putting many of their dead in the Ohio River. They also scalped some of their own to keep Virginians from getting them. Traditionally, Indians don't like to leave their dead for the enemy to mutilate.

Officers counted 18 to 20 scalps of Indians taken during the day. They were certain the Indians got only a few scalps of Virginians, and those only from stragglers away from the main battle scene.

Left on the battlefield as the Indians hastily departed were 23 guns, 80 blankets, 27 tomahawks and several skins, shot pouches, powder horns and war clubs.

Earlier today Lewis sent a messenger to meet Col. William Christian, ordering him to make a forced march to Camp Point Pleasant.

Christian already was en route to camp from the mouth of Elk River with 220 men in a convoy of cattle and supplies. When met by



The colorful battle waged by Virginia frontiersmen against the Indians at the fork of the Ohio and Kanawha rivers was marked by a granite monument honoring those who fought and died. The monument stands at Point Pleasant, W. Va., in Tu-Endie-Wei (Indian for a point between two waters) Park.

the messenger about 15 miles from here, Christian and most of his men left the convoy and continued toward camp with all possible speed. They reached here about midnight.

Arrival of Christian and his men, including captains William Campbell, James Harrod and John Floyd, brought new feelings of hope and security throughout this military establishment.

A heavy guard was placed around camp tonight. The password is "victory." But some think it is a hollow victory in view of the heavy losses of courageous men.

Thus ended a long day of battle from sunup to sundown, followed by a little happiness and much misery in the night at this camp on "tu-endie-wei" (Indian lingo for a point between two waters).

Revolution on the Frontier

The Fincastle Resolutions: Southwest Virginia's Commitment

by Dr. Thad Tate

The Fincastle Resolves of January 20, 1775, the two-hundredth anniversary of which we are commemorating today, are at once a familiar and a neglected episode in the history of the American Revolution. As the first statement to come from the far western and most recently settled area of Virginia in the course of the Revolutionary crisis, they have, of course, deservedly received a great deal of notice from local historians of that region. Some of that attention has filtered through into more general accounts of the Revolution in Virginia, but not, I suspect, very much—at least in a quick check of several standard works I found the resolves themselves cited in a footnote or two but not clearly identified, much less explained in any way as the significant development that I think they were. And as one of literally several hundred of such statements that various county and local meetings all over the colonies adopted in late 1774 and early 1775, one cannot much expect them to have been singled out in any of the more general histories of the Revolution.

Nevertheless, I am convinced—almost certainly more convinced than I was when I started my all too sketchy preparation of these remarks—that the action of the Fincastle freeholders did represent a development of some consequence in the progress of Virginia toward revolution, a development that, moreover, had its parallel in every other colony or geographic region of the colonies with a remote frontier area.

Before we can say what that importance was and place the Fincastle Resolves in some adequate historical setting we need, however, to ask ourselves what was the state of the Revolutionary crisis not only in Virginia but throughout the American colonies at the end of 1774. How were colonists reacting everywhere? What specific events prompted such resolves as those of Fincastle? Why did the county convention meet when it did in the middle of winter at a difficult time for travel? Was the situation so urgent?

Even the briefest glance at the history of the American Revolution

Dr. Thad W. Tate, director of the Institute of Early American History and Culture, gave this talk on the Fincastle Resolutions and the revolutionary movement in Western Virginia at a ceremony marking the 200th anniversary of their signing, Jan. 19, 1975 at Fort Chiswell High School in Wythe County. A colorful reenactment of the signing was staged.

will remind us that 1774 had indeed been a critical year, probably the most critical one since the opening of the conflict with Great Britain a full ten years earlier. American resistance to the Stamp Act of 1765 and the Townshend Duties of 1767—the great outcry against Parliamentary taxation and other invasions of colonial autonomy—had run its course; the British government had partially retreated by 1770; and tension had perceptibly lessened. Nothing could easily dissipate the mutual suspicion that had developed on both sides, but for more than three years colonies and Mother Country had generally gotten along.

Then the calm had abruptly ended in what must have seemed at first a small enough incident: The Boston Tea Party of December 1773. That well-known event, in which a number of Bostonians half-heartedly disguised as Indians had thrown a consignment of tea shipped by the East India Company into Boston harbor, was the response to new British legislation designed to give the hard-pressed company a better position in the extensive colonial market for tea. The Tea Act did not directly add a new tax, but it did appear to bargain compliance with an old one for a cheaper price for tea and thereby inadvertently reopened the entire imperial controversy. The British determined to suffer no more of Massachusetts intransigence and countered the Tea Party with a series of new laws—the Coercive or Intolerable Acts, as Americans labelled them. One of the laws penalized the port of Boston by closing it on June 1 to all commerce until the East India Company had received payment for the destroyed tea. Of considerably more long-range effect were other measures that amended parts of the Massachusetts charter by withdrawing several features of self-government and jury trial in the colony. In a word, the Coercive Acts appeared as an even more fundamental invasion of at least one colonial government than any of the taxation or regulatory measures of the 1760s had been.

From the approach of June 1, the date on which the port of Boston would be closed, the colonies launched a renewed opposition to British authority that found its ultimate focus in the convening of the first session of the Continental Congress at Philadelphia in September of 1774. With all of the thirteen colonies except Georgia represented, the Congress signalled the mobilization of a continent-wide opposition and the creation of an agency capable of giving central direction to a movement that was so far dispersed and localized. The Congress hammered out a political position on which most of the supporters of the colonial cause throughout America could agree. Expectedly, the delegates at Philadelphia took their stand against the Coercive Acts and in favor of a broad definition of colonial constitutional rights. But in late 1774 they still stopped short of endorsing

armed resistance and reflected a continuing American hope of reconciliation. At the same time the members of Congress completed the organization of a less violent form of resistance, the economic weapon of stopping imports and exports to and from Britain and reducing American consumption of foreign manufactures.

The details of the economic boycott were embodied in a document that the Congress named the Continental Association, and it became the chief monument of the first Congress. The Association set December 1, 1774, as the effective date for nonimportation and the fall of 1775 for the beginning of nonexportation of American products, should the conflict still be unresolved. Enforcement would rest on a network of provincial and local committees extending throughout the colonies. As the Congress closed, the immediate task was to gain the widest support for the Association and to establish such committees throughout the colonies. If that step were successful, the Americans would, in effect, have built a wide revolutionary organization capable not only of enforcing the economic restrictions but potentially able to organize other forms of resistance.

Except for the Georgia colony, which had been unrepresented in the first Congress, there was not much doubt that at the level of the central government of each colony, support for the Continental Association would be strong. The members of Congress themselves were for the most part leaders of the pro-American elements in these governments and could be expected to return and take the initiative in forming the necessary provincial committees. In Virginia the process had already gone far in this direction in the spring and summer before the Congress met. A great deal had happened at the end of May just after the news of the closing of the port of Boston had arrived. The Virginia Assembly happened to be in session at the time and as a first move a small group of burgesses, including Jefferson and Henry, planned a day of fasting and prayer for June 1. On May 24 they unanimously carried a resolution establishing the day. They were undoubtedly preparing to move on to other forms of action when Governor Dunmore dissolved them on May 26, whereupon 89 of the burgesses—something more than two-thirds of the total membership—met informally the next day and adopted an agreement that endorsed the idea of a continental congress and the use of the economic weapon—the Virginia leaders, as well as those of several other colonies had in effect already prepared the way for Philadelphia. Before the month was out the Virginians agreed as well on a convention for August 1 to extend the preliminary nonimportation agreement to which they had subscribed on May 27.

In the succeeding weeks of early summer something approaching two-thirds of the Virginia counties adopted resolutions generally en-

dorsing the August 1 convention and in all but one instance, that of Middlesex County, approving the proposed boycott. At the August convention at least 107 of over 150 present and former Burgesses eligible to attend are known to have been present. Over the course of the first six days of August the assembled delegates agreed to support the call for a Continental Congress, elected and instructed a seven-man delegation to represent the colony, and adopted and signed an association that anticipated in almost every respect the one to be adopted by the Continental Congress. With other colonies moving in a similar direction, perhaps the principal function of the Congress was to make the Association the concerted act of all the colonies rather than a series of separate acts, but that was in itself a significant step.

When the Virginia delegates returned from Philadelphia, it is hardly surprising, then, that they received a warm approving welcome. The merchants of the colony, it is true, were apprehensive, so much so that four or five hundred of them gathered in Williamsburg in November for an explanation of the economic restrictions from Peyton Randolph and the other delegates, after which they agreed—how reluctantly we may guess—to sign the new Association. But the most important development was the rapidity with which the establishment of local county committees went forward—the *Virginia Gazette* recorded 23 in November and December. Rigorous enforcement of the Association began as well. The colony staged its own mini-tea party in November at Yorktown, numerous merchants and others were publicly denounced, and some were forced to recant their criticism of the Association. By the end of 1775 the colony had both evolved a more complete revolutionary organization and shown signs of developing a revolutionary mentality that could allow no place for opposition.

It may have occurred to you by now that in all of these momentous steps of 1774 I have not yet mentioned a single specific event that took place within the newly-created frontier county of Fincastle. There is, for instance, no record that any of the Fincastle men—William Christian, Robert Doak, or Stephen Trigg—who would have been able to sit in the convention of August 1774 were in fact present. The county was one of only five in the whole colony, including Bedford, Pittsylvania, Botetourt, and Augusta, for which no representation at the convention can be definitely established. Nor is there any clearer evidence of the involvement of Fincastle inhabitants in any earlier phase of the Revolutionary crisis. Settlers in the area had lived first during the 1760s under the jurisdiction of Augusta County, then from 1769 to 1772 within Botetourt until the organization of Fincastle in the latter year. During most of that period from 1766 on, William

Preston, one of the major Fincastle leaders, had represented Augusta and then Botetourt in the Burgesses and must have taken his stand in such events as the protest of the House against the Townshend duties, but there was no reason to think he was a major actor or that the western counties were the scene of any activity beyond the discussion that the no doubt belated receipt of newspapers from Williamsburg and elsewhere must inevitably have occasioned.

There was nothing surprising about this circumstance. It was a more or less common feature of the Revolutionary movement in all the frontier areas of the colonies that residents of those distant and recently settled areas came actively into the Revolutionary movement no earlier than 1774 and 1775. The events of the 1760s centered very much in the larger coastal towns or the immediately surrounding countryside. The reasons are hardly obscure—the western areas were still at a beginning stage of development. Those who had gone there faced the more immediate problems of protecting themselves, carving out a home from the wilderness, and finding the means of livelihood. They were moreover too distant to receive news quickly and to react before the crisis had passed. Often the threat of Indian attack seemed far more real than that of regulation by distant imperial officials, officials who moreover had in their power the means of pacifying the Indians and protecting the frontier. For that very reason many historians have thought of the colonial west as a region where the possibility of remaining loyal to Britain and resisting the Revolution held a real attraction for many, especially if the settlers also felt that they were denied their full weight in the affairs of the provincial government by the same dominant colonial politicians who often led the Revolutionary cause.

It is a plausible theory and there are areas for which it contains some truth, but there was not a great deal to suggest that western Virginia felt the same degree of hostility toward its own "eastern establishment." The recent creation of Botetourt and Fincastle counties were in themselves evidence of a willingness on the part of Virginia leaders to extend county organization, including institutions of local government and representation in the House of Burgesses, to newer regions of the colony. Indeed much of what we know of William Preston's career in the Burgesses between 1766 and 1771 suggests, if anything, close support of its old leaders against those who sought to shake up its power structure.

The threat of Indian attack was, however, especially acute in Fincastle by 1774, so much so that before the year was over the conflict known as Dunmore's War, because of the Virginia governor's personal leadership of a force of provincial troops sent against the Indians, had broken out. The men who might otherwise have been

present for the Convention at Williamsburg in August were also leaders of the county's militia forces and almost certainly too much needed at home to be able to make the long trek to Williamsburg.

The essential fact remains, however, that at the end of 1774 Fincastle had not yet come formally into the Revolutionary movement that had by now proceeded very far in many older sections of the colony. Under the circumstances the action taken by the freeholders of the county early in the next year in creating a county committee to enforce the Association and in adopting an address to the Virginia delegation to the first Congress becomes the more remarkable. In a single step the January meeting brought the county inhabitants fully into the Revolution, not necessarily ahead of where others stood but certainly abreast of those older counties that had by now been experiencing the crisis for a decade. And if much of what the Fincastle freeholders did and said on that day mirrored what had transpired elsewhere, it nonetheless displayed as well something of the distinctive response of a distant, frontier region.

The successful conclusion of Dunmore's War and the consequent relief from Indian raids are what permitted the freeholders finally to gather at the Lead Mines to consider the outcome of the Continental Congress of the preceding fall. All over the colonies the move to endorse the Continental Association and organize local Revolutionary machinery continued to gain momentum. Within a few days of the Fincastle gathering, for example, provincial conventions in Pennsylvania and New York, county committees in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, and Charles and Frederick counties, Maryland, and a town committee in Jamaica on Long Island had also assembled to record their acceptance of the Continental Association. To be scrupulously accurate we should also observe that at the same time a group of Dutchess County, New York, inhabitants and a convention of Pennsylvania and New Jersey Quakers were meeting to register their objections to it. So enthusiasm for the Association was not unanimous, but a strong impulse toward revolution was not easily to be denied.

Of the two steps taken at the Fincastle meeting, that of choosing a county committee to enforce the Continental Association was in some measure the more consequential, even though we have tended to look with more interest at the address to the Virginia delegation, or the resolves, as they are often termed. Forming the committee was, after all, a concrete step toward resistance, the beginning of a revolutionary political structure.

The committee membership, however, looked strangely like the group of men who were already the active and established leaders in Fincastle County. The revolution was directed against a more distant authority. If there are any surprises, it would be, at least for a modern observer, the appearance on an essentially political panel, one really

with extralegal police powers, of the leading Presbyterian clergyman of the county, the Rev. Charles Cummings. Otherwise every member bore a military title indicating that he was an officer in the county militia. William Preston and William Christian, both colonels and easily the most important men in Fincastle, appeared as did one recent burgess, Stephen Trigg. Of the fifteen committee members—fourteen if we exclude Cummings from our calculations—ten were members of the panel of county justices for Fincastle and therefore holders of the major county offices.

The formation of the Fincastle committee, even though in one sense a routine step that was being duplicated all over the colonies, in other respects signalled a major advance toward revolution. In the particular case of Virginia it means that the mobilization of support for resistance to Britain, which had remained incomplete in the western parts of the colony as late as the preceding summer, was now accomplished. A network of leadership and communication now stretched from Congress to the twelve—and soon thirteen provincial governments—and on to the counties and localities. The system was not yet geared to armed resistance, but that advance along the road to revolt would come in a very few months. To some extent I would judge the same mobilization of the colonial frontier went on everywhere, but not in every case as completely as it did in the Fincastle area. The success of Dunmore's War had doubtlessly helped in western Virginia—to that extent the Governor's greatest achievement while in Virginia had also sealed his fate as a man who would be driven out of office. But of at least equal importance in the effective mobilization of Fincastle was the extent to which the whole body of local leaders had come actively into the structure of revolutionary organization. There was simply no rallying point around which loyalists or dissidents might easily have gathered. This process, then, symbolized by the establishment of the Fincastle committee, strikes me as the most enduring significance of the events of January 20. Without it Virginia might have entered the Revolution with its Revolutionary effort less than completely organized and with its western frontier more exposed.

My emphasis upon the formation of the Fincastle committee to enforce the Association should not suggest that we may neglect the address to the Virginia delegates to the Continential Congress, for its contents provide the best measure we have of the attitudes and frame of mind with which Fincastle's population approached the conflict. We have no way of knowing, of course, whether the address spoke for the entire body of citizens or whether it represented the views of a few more articulate leaders. The freeholders approved the statement unanimously, but a meeting under these circumstances was not likely to have been an occasion on which dissent would have

A bronze medallion was struck by the Wythe County Bicentennial Commission to mark the bicentennial of the signing of the resolutions at the old courthouse at the Lead Mines on the banks of New River, now Austinville.

been encouraged. The pressures for conformity would have been undeniably great. Still, the unanimity of the response of the county leaders, the relative homogeneity of the population, the lack of any evident opposition outside the county meeting itself all argue for the address as an authentic expression of the mood of the far western part of the Virginia colony.

Local historians have, I judge, often attributed the writing of the Fincastle address to Charles Cummings, which could well explain his presence on the committee. There are one or two characteristics of the statement itself that tend to support his probable authorship. For one thing, despite the address' apology for its "unpolished sentiments of liberty and loyalty," it had a finished quality that suggested the work of a better educated, more literate man than some of the leading political figures would necessarily have been. Too, the address' long, explicit praise of George III for his support of the Protestant religion and its declaration of the desire of the people to "enjoy the free exercise of our religion as Protestants," while sentiments to which most colonists would have readily subscribed, reveals a somewhat unusual degree of preoccupation with the subject and may have owed something to the sentiments of the Irish-born Presbyterian cleric.

You may wonder, however, why an address adopted to proclaim opposition to British policy should contain words of praise for a British monarch. Indeed, in another passage the freeholders expressed a willingness to risk their lives in his service. The address was conciliatory in several respects, not only expressing this sense of loyalty to the king himself as the protector of constitutional liberty but also

praising Governor Dunmore's conduct of the recent Indian war and expressing the strongest desire "to see harmony restored on an equitable basis."

If a sense of loyalty to the British Empire, its constitution, and its king ran deep, so did a sense of outrage at what the address termed a "venal British Parliament" and "the will of a corrupt Ministry." In other words, the freeholders of Fincastle, as the great body of citizens is prone to do in any age, laid the blame for the crisis on bad politicians. Apart from one reference to the old issue of Parliamentary taxation, the address did not specifically enumerate the misdeeds with which it charged British politicians, contenting itself instead with the general accusation that the colonists had suffered the violation of their constitutional rights and liberties. One can only speculate whether the specific issues raised by the Coercive Acts still seemed a remote and distant matter or whether in an address of approbation to the Virginia delegates a detailed statement of grievances seemed unnecessary. In this respect, however, the Fincastle address does differ a good bit from many others of the same period.

Expressing, then, the hope of reconciliation but protesting equally the threat of imperial policies, the address concluded by observing that if the British would not propose "pacifick measures" but would "attempt to dragoon us out of those inestimable privileges, which we are entitled to as subjects, and to reduce us to a state of slavery, we declare that we are deliberately and resolutely determined never to surrender them to any power upon earth but at the expense of our lives." This was a strong commitment, assuming, as I think we can in the light of what followed over the next months, that it was something more than patriotic rhetoric. It was so strong that it seemed to some to foreshadow armed resistance or the assertion of independence, perhaps earlier than any other body of citizens in the colonies had done. At least one will find that claim advanced in some of the old regional histories of western Virginia.

But, just as we sought to establish the relationship of the formation of the Fincastle committee to the wider process of organizing the Revolutionary effort, we should now make the same effort to fix the ideas and attitudes expressed in the address, or resolves, in their proper place. What is the nature of the tone and spirit of the address when we place it alongside other declarations, resolutions, and addresses that colonists were making throughout North America in the fall of 1774 and spring of 1775? In what way are its contents distinctive and in what way do they demonstrate that Fincastle was simply moving into the mainstream of Revolutionary thought?

From the strength of their opening words of praise for Dunmore and King George, the Fincastle statements can be read as perhaps rather more strongly conciliatory than many such resolutions. One

might seem to find, especially in the praise of Congress for its efforts at reconciliation, which was hardly the major theme of the Philadelphia meeting, an implication that the Revolution was proceeding too fast and too far, that there were genuine benefits in the British connection that ought not to be lightly thrown aside. Are some historians correct in thinking that the frontiersman saw the British government with its channels of Indian diplomacy, military forces, and ultimate title to the next tier of unsettled western land a better protector of their interests than their fellow colonists along the seaboard? Perhaps, but I think one has to recall first that loyalty to Britain, and particularly to the King himself, who was often seen as the victim of deceit by bad ministers and corrupt politicians, was a conventional sentiment in almost all the colonial statements of the period. Had not the James City County committee to enforce the Association, meeting in Williamsburg itself, concluded the task of organizing and then drunk its first toast to "The King"? In late 1774 and early 1775 Americans everywhere by and large still wanted reconciliation. Allegiance to the monarch as the symbolic and constitutional link of Empire died hard. It was a sentiment that Fincastle shared, but in no exceptional way.

It is also possible, as I have suggested, to look in the opposite direction and think the Fincastle statement might have gone somewhat beyond conventional claims to constitutional rights and liberties by expressing much more explicitly than any comparable document the determination to defend those rights to the end, by armed resistance and death if necessary. But, of course, this, too, was a frequently expressed sentiment. Americans varied by temperament and the nature of the occasion of their statements in the degree to which they made it explicit, but it was a fixed principle of the characteristic Anglo-American ideology upon which the colonists drew, that armed resistance to political oppression was the final response, morally justifiable when all else had failed, as, for instance, in the English Revolution of 1688 against the Stuart monarchy. A few months remained before Patrick Henry would reduce it to the ultimate simplicity with his cry, "Give me liberty or give me death!", but already in the preceding summer, in the first round of county resolutions preceding the August 1774 convention, the Fairfax County resolves had been no less direct when they observed that if all the petitions and protest went unheeded, "there can be but one Appeal." The Fairfax freeholders had to say no more to be completely understood. At its first opportunity Fincastle had added its concurrence.

In their strong sense of loyalty to the Empire, and especially to the King himself, in their consequent desire to see the imperial conflict resolved, and in their determination to stand fast if it were not, the Fincastle freeholders, then, largely gave expression to the ruling

sentiments of the day among American colonists. In another respect, however, there is a more distinctive tone to the contents of the address, one that strongly reflects the particular geographical and environmental situation of the Fincastle settlers. This passage will, I think, convey the flavor of what I am referring to:

> Many of us and our forefathers left our native land, considering it as a kingdom subjected to inordinate power and greatly abridged of its liberties; we crossed the Atlantic, and explored this then uncultivated wilderness bordering on many nations of savages and surrounded by mountains almost inaccessible to any but those very savages, who have incessantly been committing barbarities and depredations on us since our first seating the country. These fatigues and dangers we patiently encountered, supported by the pleasing hope of enjoying those rights and liberties which had been granted to Virginians, and were denied us in our native country, and of transmitting them inviolate to our posterity; but even to these remote regions the hand of unlimited and unconstitutional power hath pursued us, to strip us of that liberty and property with which God, nature and the rights of humanity have vested us.

Again those who approved the address claimed essentially the same political rights as all other colonists—so much so that they did not apparently feel it necessary to spell them out in any detail. Yet the address reflected a sense that those rights had been secured in a rather special way, at greater cost and effort perhaps, and through a different experience from their fellow colonists on the Atlantic seaboard. Just as the establishment of the Fincastle committee had served to bring the important frontier region of Virginia fully into the Revolution, so the address served to filter traditional and widely held political values through the frontiersmen's historical experience and give them, if not added meaning, at least a heightened relevance. In words as well as in deeds, then, the Revolution may be said to have reached the frontier in the events of January 20.

Spirited resolutions, even deeply felt ones, do not win a revolution, however—they only begin them. So there were many hardships and uncertainties ahead for the Fincastle region. Given the Indians' understandable preference for British rule, the frontier, far from being remote and protected, became a vigorous and sometimes savage theatre of combat. And the Fincastle area was not only involved in its own defense but in the larger aspects of the war as well, through battles fought out of state by its troops and through the supply of men and materiel under requisitions from the state. If its energies flagged at times of particular hardship, nevertheless there was no real

turning back from the commitment that had been made when the meeting of Fincastle freeholders had settled which way southwestern Virginia would go in the great contest of the American Revolution.

The Resolutions

In obedience to the resolves of the Continental Congress, a meeting of the Freeholders of Fincastle County, in Virginia, was held on the 20th day of January, 1775, who after approving of the Association framed by that august body in behalf of the Colonies, and subscribing thereto, proceeded to the election of a Committee to see the same carried punctually into execution, when the following gentlemen were nominated: The Reverend Charles Cummings, Colonel William Preston, Colonel William Christian, Captain Stephen Trigg, Major Arthur Campbell, Major William Ingles, Captain Walter Crockett, Captain John Montgomery, Captain James McGavock, Captain William Campbell, Captain Thomas Madison, Captain Daniel Smith, Captain William Russell, Captain Evan Shelby and Lieutenant William Edmondson. After the election the committee made choice of Colonel William Christian for their chairman and appointed Mr. David Campbell to be clerk.

It was also ordered by the meeting that an address expressing the thanks and congratulations of the people of Fincastle County be prepared and sent to the citizens who had represented Virginia at the recent session of the Continental Congress. The address was promptly written and addressed as follows:

"To the Honorable Peyton Randolph, Esquire, Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Junior, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton, Esquires, the Delegates from this Colony who attended the Continental Congress at Philadelphia:

Gentlemen, — Had it not been for our remote situation and the Indian War which we were lately engaged in to chastise those cruel and savage people for the many murders and depredations they have committed against us, now happily terminated under the auspices of our present worthy Governor, His Excellency, the Right Honorable Earl of Dunmore, we should before this time have made known to you our thankfulness for the very important services you have rendered to your country, in conjunction with the Worthy Delegates from the other Provinces. Your noble efforts for reconciling the mother country and the Colonies, on rational and constitutional principles, and your pacifick, steady and uniform conduct in that arduous work entitle you to the esteem of all British America, and will immortalize you in the annals of your country. We heartily concur in your resolutions, and shall, in every instance, strictly and invariably adhere thereto.

We assure you, gentlemen, and all our countrymen, that we are a people whose hearts overflow with love and duty to our lawful Sovereign, George the Third, whose illustrious House for several successive reigns have been both the guardians of the civil and religious rights and liberties of British subjects, as settled at the glorious revolution; that we are willing to risk our lives in the service of his Majesty for the support of the Protestant religion and the rights and liberties of his subjects, as they have been established by the compact, law and ancient charters. We are heartily grieved at the differences which now subsist between the parent state and the Colonies and most ardently wish to see harmony restored on an equitable basis and by the most lenient measures that can be devised by the heart of man. Many of us and our forefathers left our

native land, considering it as a kingdom subjected to inordinate power and greatly abridged of its liberties; we crossed the Atlantic and explored this uncultivated wilderness bordering on many nations of savages and surrounded by mountains almost inaccessible to any but those very savages, who have incessantly been committing barbarities and depredations on us since our first seating the country. These fatigues and dangers we patiently encountered, supported by the pleasing hope of enjoying those rights and liberties which had been granted to Virginians, and were denied in our native country, and of transmitting them inviolate to our posterity; but even to these remote regions the hand of unlimited and unconstitutional power hath pursued us, to strip us of that liberty and property with which God, nature and the rights of humanity have vested us. We are ready and willing to contribute all in our power for the support of his Majesty's government, if applied to constitutionally, and when the grants are made by our own Representatives, but cannot think of submitting our liberty or property to the power of a venal British Parliament, or to the will of a corrupt Ministry. We by no means desire to shake off our duty or allegiance to our lawful sovereign, but, on the contrary, shall ever glory in being the loyal subjects of a Protestant prince, descended from such illustrious progenitors, so long as we can enjoy the free exercise of our religion as Protestants, and our liberties and properties as British subjects.

But if no pacifick measures shall be proposed or adopted by Great Britain, and our enemies will attempt to dragoon us out of these inestimable privileges, which we are entitled to as subjects, and to reduce us to a state of slavery, we declare that we are deliberately and resolutely determined never to surrender them to any power upon earth but at the expense of our lives.

These are our real, though unpolished, sentiments of liberty and loyalty, and in them we are resolved to live or die.

We are, gentlemen, with the most perfect esteem and regard, your most obedient servants.

The Fincastle County courthouse site is marked by a stone monument.

Who the 15 Signers Were

by Mary Kegley

The only minister to sign the Fincastle Resolutions and the name appearing first on the list of 15 signers was the Rev. Charles Cummings. There are those who suggest he was the author of the resolutions, but there is no evidence to support this, and any one of the men could have done the work, or it could have been a joint or committee effort.

Cummings was born about 1746 in Donegal, Ireland and came to Pennsylvania on his arrival in America. He attended college in Carlisle, taught school and studied with the Rev. James Waddell. He was licensed to preach in 1767, the year he married Millicent Carter. He served at North Mountain Church in Augusta County until 1772 when he was called to the Sinking Spring Church on the Holston. He lived the rest of his life in Washington County, where he served the Presbyterian Church and his country. He was known as the "Fighting Parson," serving in the Cherokee expedition of 1776. He died in 1812. He was about 29 when he signed the resolutions.

Col. William Preston, born 1729 in Ireland, came to Virginia about 1740. He was educated by his uncle, Col. James Patton, and the Rev. John Craig. He married Susanna Smith in 1761, moved to the New River settlement about 1772-73 and named his plantation "Smithfield."

The house has been restored and is located near the VPI campus at Blacksburg. Preston was a captain of a troop of rangers, surveyor, coroner, escheator, member of the House of Burgesses, sheriff and a justice of the peace, as well as colonel in charge of the frontier militia. He served with the troops in North Carolina during the Revolution. He had 12 children, whose descendants are well known in the political history of the United States. Preston was about 46 when he signed the resolutions. He died in 1783.

Col. William Christian was born about 1743 near Staunton. His ancestors were from the Isle of Man. He came with his parents, Israel and Elizabeth Christian, to Fincastle in Botetourt County where they gave the land for the courthouse. William ran the ordinary, studied law, served in the House of Burgesses and married Anne Henry, sister of Patrick. He served as a justice of the peace, and was in the House of Delegates from Botetourt and Fincastle Counties. He was in the militia during the French and Indian War. He moved to the New

Mary B. Kegley, newly employed in the archeology section of the State Library in Richmond, has been involved in research and writing of Southwest Virginia history for more than 10 years.

River about 1772, settling at Dunkard Bottom in present Pulaski County. He was in command of the troops in 1774 that went to Point Pleasant. He was chairman of the Committee of Safety in 1775, signing the resolutions when he was about 32. Shortly after, he resigned to accept a military commission as lieutenant colonel of the First Virginia Regiment. He served on the Cherokee Expedition of 1776, was elected a state senator, and moved to Kentucky about 1784 where he was killed by Indians in 1786.

Stephen Trigg, born about 1742, was the son of William and Mary Trigg of Bedford County. He married Mary, the sister of William Christian, about 1768. He was a merchant first at the town of Fincastle, later at New Dublin in Pulaski County, and had other trading centers on Reed Creek and Little River. He served as a justice in Augusta, Botetourt, Fincastle and Montgomery counties. He was a delegate to the Virginia Assembly in 1774. He became chairman of the Fincastle Committee of Safety when his brother-in-law, Col. Christian, resigned. He was about 33 when he signed the resolutions. He moved to Kentucky in 1777 where he became a member of the land court. His home was at Trigg's Station, near Harrodsburg. He was killed by Indians in the Battle of Blue Licks, Kentucky in 1782. He had four children, Stephen, Fleming, Polly and Elizabeth.

Arthur Campbell, was born about 1743 in Virginia. His grandparents came from the north of Ireland to Pennsylvania and to Augusta County. He married Margaret Campbell, a sister of Col. William Campbell, who was a relative. At 15, Arthur Campbell was captured by the Indians and taken to the Great Lakes, where he remained about three years. After his escape and subsequent marriage, he moved to Royal Oak, present site of Marion. He was a major in the militia and about 32 when he signed the resolutions. He served in the General Assembly in 1776, was county lieutenant of militia for Washington County, served against the Cherokees, was a justice of the peace, helped raise troops for the Battle of Kings Mountain, and following the death of William Campbell served as guardian for his daughter. On her behalf he managed the saltworks at present Saltville. He moved to Yellow Creek, Middlesboro, Ky. and died there at 73.

Major William Ingles, the son of Thomas Ingles of Ireland, settled on the North Fork of Roanoke River prior to 1746 and moved to the New River about 1754. He married Mary Draper, who was captured during an Indian massacre at Draper's Meadows in 1755.

Ingles served as an officer in the militia during the French and Indian War, as justice in Augusta, Botetourt, Fincastle and Montgomery counties, was sheriff, and operated the first licensed ferry across New River, beginning about 1762. He was about 46 when he signed the resolutions, and he continued to serve in the militia during the Revolutionary War until his health forced him to resign. He died

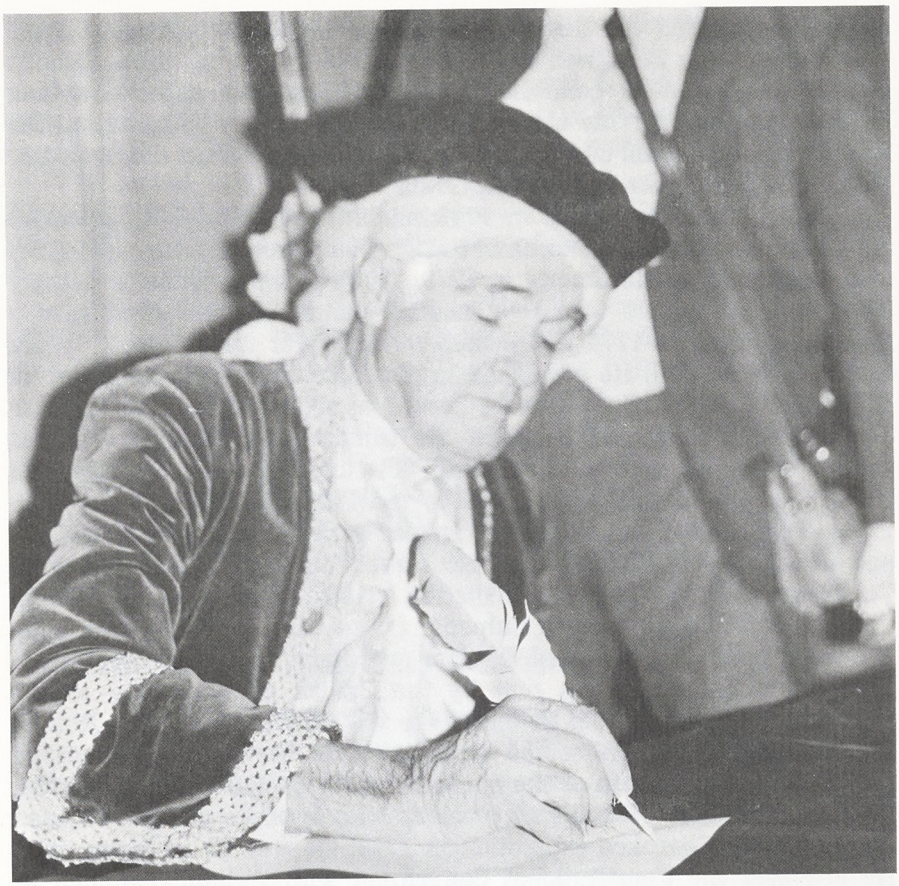
at his home at Ingles Ferry, present Radford, in 1782.

Walter Crockett, born in the 1730's, served in the French and Indian War in William Christian's company. He lived in Crockett's Cove, Wythe County, before 1770. He served as a justice in Augusta, Botetourt, Fincastle and Montgomery counties. and was clerk of court for Wythe County. He was captain of the militia in 1770-75 and was often called upon to lead his rangers along the Clinch and Bluestone rivers. He was probably about 40 when he signed the resolutions. He continued in the militia and became a lieutenant colonel, also serving in the Virginia Convention of 1778 and in the House, 1777-79, and again in 1789. He was called upon to put down the Tory insurrection in the vicinity of the Lead Mines, at Wythe County in 1780 and was successful. He moved to the Poplar Camp community nearby about 1801 and died there about 1811.

Capt. John Montgomery was born 1717 in Donegal, Ireland. He was living on Reed Creek near present Fort Chiswell sometime prior to 1755. He married a Crockett and had eight sons and six daughters. He served as a justice of Augusta, Botetourt, Fincastle, Montgomery and Wythe counties. He was about 58 when he signed the resolutions. He was in the French and Indian War, helped raise troops for the Cherokee Expedition of 1776, served in the General Assembly and as sheriff. He died in 1802, and is buried not far from the Fort Chiswell mansion house.

Capt. James McGavock, born in Antrim, Ireland in 1728, came to Virginia in time to serve in the French and Indian War as a captain. He married Mary Cloyd and had 11 children. He served as justice for Augusta, Botetourt, Montgomery and Wythe counties and he ran an ordinary in the town of Fincastle before moving to Fort Chiswell in the 1770's. He had an ordinary, mill and trading post at the fort during the 1770's and 1780's. The Montgomery County court met at his home prior to the building of the Courthouse on his land. The first Wythe County court also met on his property. During the Revolution he served on the Committee of Safety, stored corn, lead and powder for expeditions in Southwest Virginia at his home. He was about 47 when he signed the resolutions. He moved to present Max Meadows in the 1790's and died in 1812 in the log house still standing on the Main Street.

William Campbell was born about 1745 in Augusta County. His grandparents came from Ireland and his father was Charles Campbell of Beverley Manor. William moved to the Holston River settlement in 1769, served as a justice of the peace in Fincastle and Washington counties, was a captain of the militia in 1774 at the Battle of Point Pleasant, became a lieutenant colonel in 1777. He was about 30 when he signed. He married Elizabeth, the sister of Patrick Henry, was a brother-in-law of William Christian and Thomas Madison, who also



At a reenactment of the signing on Sunday, Jan. 19, 1975, Robert Preston of Botetourt County represented his ancestor, Col. William Preston, when he took up the quill pen. Waiting his turn to sign was Lloyd Matthews of Pulaski County, acting as Col. William Christian, chairman of the committee signing the document.

married sisters of Patrick Henry. He served against the Tories in 1779 and 1780, but is best known for his heroic action at the Battle of Kings Mountain. He became a brigadier general under Lafayette, suffered from pneumonia and died in Hanover County in 1781. His body was removed to the family cemetery in Smyth County in 1823 where an impressive marker has been erected. His widow, Elizabeth, married William Russell.

Thomas Madison, born about 1746, was a son of John Madison, the first clerk of Augusta County. He was a lawyer in Botetourt County and also served as sheriff, state's attorney and escheator. He was in the House of Delegates six different times and he served as captain of the militia in Augusta County. He was active in proceedings at the

Lead Mines during the Revolutionary period, and was probably living there at the time he signed the resolutions at 29. He married Susanna Henry. He served as commissary for the Cherokee expedition, and later as guardian for his niece, Sarah B. Campbell, who inherited the Salt Works in Smyth County. Madison spent some time there on her behalf. He died near Cloverdale, 1798.

Daniel Smith was born in 1748 in Stafford County. He attended William and Mary and became a certified surveyor, serving as deputy surveyor for Fincastle County in 1773. There is some evidence he may have lived for awhile with Dr. Thomas Walker. He was captain of a militia company in 1774 and served 98 days. He was about 27 years old when he signed. He continued in the militia, becoming a major in 1776, and a colonel in 1781. He served as a justice of the peace in Washington County and lived on the Clinch River. He and Thomas Walker were in charge of running the line between Virginia and North Carolina in 1780. He moved to the Territory south of the Ohio (later Tennessee), and became brigadier general of the Mero District and secretary of the territory. He served as a U. S. senator from Tennessee in 1798 and 1805. He died in 1818 in Summer County, Tenn.

William Russell, born in Culpeper County about 1735, was of English background. He attended William and Mary, served in the French and Indian War, and was sent by the British on a mission to the Cherokee Indians in 1765. He moved to the Clinch River, now Russell County, about 1770. He served as a justice of the peace in Fincastle County, and was captain of the militia, serving on the frontier in 1774. He was in charge of Fort Blair after the Battle of Point Pleasant, and served on the Cherokee expedition in 1776. He was 40 at the signing. He attended the Constitutional Convention with Arthur Campbell as representatives of Fincastle County. He went to the House of Delegates with Arthur Campbell and with William Christian to the Senate. He was a soldier of the Virginia line during the Revolution. He married Tabitha Adams first and after her death the widow, Elizabeth Campbell. He moved to the Salt Lick, now Saltville, in 1788 and lived in a log house. He too served as guardian for Sarah Campbell, but was considered too severe and was replaced by Arthur Campbell later by Thomas Madison.

Russell served in the House as a representative of Washington County in 1785, and requested a new county be formed from it. This was done in 1786 and named Russell in his honor. In 1792 enroute to the House of Delegates in Richmond, he became ill with the flu and died at the home of a son, Robert, who lived near Front Royal. He was buried there, but the body was exhumed in July 1943 and moved to the Arlington National Cemetery.

Evan Shelby, born 1720 of Welsh ancestry, came to Maryland in 1735 where he became a noted woodsman, hunter and Indian trader.

He served in the French and Indian War in Pennsylvania and Maryland, and was a captain at the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774. He moved to the Virginia frontier, near present Bristol, about 1771-72 and became a merchant, farmer and raiser of cattle. He was about 55 when he signed the resolutions. He served with the troops against the Indians in 1776, served as a justice of Washington County, served in the North Carolina Senate in 1781. He died about 1794 in Bristol and is buried there. His son, Isaac, became governor of Kentucky, and Shelbyville, Tenn. is named for the family.

William Edmondson was born in Maryland in 1734 but he moved with his parents to Rockbridge County, Va. He came to the Middle Fork of the Holston River, near Lodi, in the 1770's. He served as a lieutenant of militia on the Clinch River in 1774, a justice of the peace in 1777, a leader against the Tories in 1780, a captain against the Cherokees in 1776 and at Kings Mountain in 1781, where eight men named Edmondson participated in the battle. He also served as sheriff, and became colonel of the militia. He married twice and had 15 children. He died in 1822 at the age of 89. He was 41 at the time of the signing of the resolutions.

Botetourt Publications Planned

In Botetourt County, the Bicentennial Commission plans to publish letters and diaries written before 1900 and reproductions of old newspapers dating before 1915. Plans have been made to publish cemetery records and other accounts of Botetourt County history before 1880, as well.

Copies of letters and diaries and old newspapers should be sent to Mrs. Hellen C. Caldwell, chairman, Botetourt Bicentennial Publications Committee Fincastle 24090.

Government by Families

(Continued from page 15)

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MANUSCRIPTS AND MICROFILM

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DRAPER MANUSCRIPTS in Microfilm, Vols. I-VI.

THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE, Published at Williamsburg, Va., Microfilm covering 1768-1780.

Settlement, Defense of the Frontier

By Emory L. Hamilton

The earliest settlers of Southwest Virginia were generally one or two generations removed from immigrant ancestors. Many of the immigrants had landed at the port of Philadelphia in the early part of the eighteenth century, worked their way westward into Lancaster County and thence downward into the Valley of Virginia. From the valley some moved westward to the frontier, while others filtered down into North Carolina and westward from there to the Virginia frontier.

The cultural heritage of the early settlers was largely Scotch-Irish, with some of German extraction and a lesser number of English and other races. It would not be true to say that a certain percentage of the blood was Scotch-Irish in all Southwest Virginians, but we could safely say that it dominates, as can be easily traced through family names. The Scotch-Irish were a peculiar breed and usually dominated the communities into which they moved. This is easily proved again through the study of genealogy of the earlier settlements.

Who were the Scotch-Irish and why were they different? To answer this one must take a long look at the history of the British Isles. They were neither Scots nor Irish as we think of these two races today. They were a product of many races and had achieved a sort of homogenity over a period of some two milleniums of time. They were descendants of the earliest settlers of the British Isles who had been pushed back by countless invaders into the hilly country along the Scottish border. Perhaps in their veins flowed blood of the earliest invaders from the Roman Empire who pushed them back, but never totally conquered them. In their veins flowed the blood of Scotsmen and English, but also of other invaders who were in turn defeated and pushed inland. They were different in physical and mental qualities of other British people. Through their long period of travail they had become a kind of people who could survive on little and under adverse conditions — hence they were inured with the stamina and qualities fitting them for pioneers.

They were resourceful, hard-working, and used to self-denial which shaped their thinking and philosophy over many generations. They were stubborn troublemakers, participating in the movements

Emory Hamilton's paper on frontier forts in far Southwest Virginia was given at a meeting of the Virginia History Federation in Abingdon in October 1974. A longtime student of history, he teaches at the Wise Technical School and has been secretary of the Historical Society of Southwest Virginia for some years.

instigated by thinkers and reformers who were not in accord with the principles of the British crown, such as Cromwell, Knox and others.

At the time the British took control of Northern Ireland they found it a good place to resettle the troublesome Scotch-Irish. In Northern Ireland these people had a great opportunity to show their character. This they did by developing an industry, especially in linen goods that became a threat to the London merchants. They became successful farmers and set up an education system that made them the best educated common people in Europe. Becoming a threat to the established order of the British Crown through their industry and aggressiveness, many repressive laws were passed against them, much like the repressive laws later passed by Parliament against the American colonies. They soon began to hate the British bitterly. Then famines began to hit Ireland and mass migration started to the American colonies.

Upon arrival on these shores they found all the lands in the coastal areas already taken up by people largely of English extraction and a well established Church of England, both of which they hated. Their only recourse was to emigrate to the western frontier of Virginia where land was still available if it could be wrested from the Indians and wilderness. They came and conquered, and in the mountains and valleys of western Virginia, and later in Kentucky, they set up their culture — a culture that for more than a century remained almost identical to that of their immigrant ancestors. Here the language, the songs, the customs and beliefs lived on as in no other area in all of America. Even to this day our dialect is different in the Appalachians to that of our fellow countrymen. Today it is not unusual to hear an obsolete word that is pure Elizabethan English. This is a heritage of which I am deeply proud and feel no embarrassment when I am referred to as a mountaineer, for my roots are deeply embedded in the soil that cost my ancestors so much pain, heartache, tears and labor to claim and hold.

Along the border they carved out their isolated homes and fought back the Indians. During this time their habitations were referred to as the Western Waters. Then the Revolution broke and they were referred to as the "Over Mountain Men". After the Civil War they were called "Mountaineers," and with the coming of the Twentieth Century we have been disparagingly referred to as "Hillbillies."

When the Revolution broke, despite the fact that the western settlers had little in common with their sea coast brothers, they remembered their old hatred of the British. They did not need to be trained or conditioned as soldiers for they had been this since the settlement of the frontier with every able-bodied man and boy serving in the militia as a defense against hostile Indians.

With the outbreak of the Revolution they were almost to a man anti-British, and were in a more dangerous position than their coastal brothers who had only the British to fear. The "Over Mountain" men were not only endangered by the British, but were faced with Tories on New River and in the Carolinas, the Indians on the north and south, aided and abetted by British agents, inciting and paying them for the scalps of victims, including innocent women and children. Many names have come down to us through history of these infamous characters such as the British Colonel Henry Hamilton, and the notorious American renegade, Simon Girty.

The mountain men were not soldiers in the usual sense, but militia men who lived at home, men at stated intervals for drill, and were ready on call for any service or emergency. When the British Colonel Patrick Ferguson threatened the western settlements, the men of Southwest Virginia and western North Carolina gathered in Washington County and marched overland to the border of South Carolina to decisively defeat the British at Kings Mountain, in an unethical type of warfare which was nothing more than a sort of guerilla warfare. This battle is termed by many historians as the "turning point of the Revolution."

Generals William Russell, Arthur and William Campbell, Evan Shelby and many other military leaders of Scotch-Irish descent led the men of Southwest Virginia in many notable battles of the Revolution, until victory against the British was accomplished, but victory to secure the last frontier of Virginia was not secure until Captain Vincent Hobbs and a handful of men from Yokums Station in Lee County, Virginia, hastily gathered to defeat the half-breed Indian Chief Benge in Wise County in 1794, ending a war that had started in 1774. Many of the frontiersmen moved on to Kentucky and Tennessee and there fought the Indians until those states were secure.

The Scotch-Irish probably brought with them a higher degree of intelligence and education than any other race on the frontier and they assumed leadership in the communities even when they were a minority. They were of a fiery temperament, intensely jealous of their freedom and acutely aware of their personal honor. The literate Scotch-Irish, as was their ancient custom, set up early schools and taught the rudiments of an education to their children. The Civil War came on and the mountain people were divided in their allegiance, some choosing the North, yet a larger number favoring the South, despite the fact that not many were slave holders. It is possible that states rights was a greater issue with them than the slavery question. There were, also, those who wanted no part of either side, and these became a thorn in the side to both the Union and Confederate armies, not to mention the creation of animosities in the communities. In sheer exasperation, Confederate General Humphrey Marshall, who had

his headquarters at Wise in 1864, threatened and may have carried out martial law against the counties of Scott, Lee, and Wise, because of the rebellious, unruly populace.

As everywhere in the South, hard times hit the mountain settlers after the Civil War, and their education system broke down, compared to what it had been in earlier times. The censuses of 1880 and 1900 show a smaller percentage of literacy than eras prior to the Civil War.

So much for the background. Now, when and where were the very first settlements made in Southwest Virginia? To begin the history of the first settlers, one needs to go back to the first explorers who were the Long Hunters. This group of daring men had gone on hunts into this area and far beyond into what was to become Kentucky and Tennessee long before the first settlers came. They were forerunners of the first settlers. They traveled long distances on horseback, leading pack horses carrying food and supplies out, and furs and hides back. These hides, especially that of buffalo, were shipped to England for leather, but the market was lost at the outbreak of the Revolution, after which no more Long Hunters went out. No record remains to prove who the first Long Hunters were, or from what place they started. After 1769 they originated at the present site of Chilhowie.

Dr. Thomas Walker of Albemarle County, who made an exploratory trip through Southwest Virginia in 1750 for the Loyal Land Company entered in his journal on January 15, 1750 this statement: "This day I came to a river which I presumed to be Clinch, named for a hunter." The rivers, streams, gaps and mountains had been named by the Long Hunters long before the first settlers arrived. Powell Valley in Lee County was a buffalo hunting ground and Elisha Wallen, with other hunters, set up a hunting camp there in what historians think was the year 1761 and the creek and mountain still bear his name—Wallens Creek and Wallens Ridge.

The Long Hunters, returning after a winter's hunt, no doubt told glowing stories of the good land and hunting in the western wilderness. It is not hard to imagine land-hungry settlers hearing these wonderful stories and making up their minds to push westward, and westward they came in ever increasing numbers.

The first settlement west of the Alleghenies was Draper's Meadows in Montgomery County, under the direction of Col. William Patton, who along with most of the settlers was wiped out in a massacre by the Indians in 1755. At this time Mary Draper Ingles was taken captive and her escape from the Indians has become one of the classical Indian stories of the Virginia frontier. This settlement was made sometime prior to 1746.

About the same time, or shortly thereafterwards, a group of people of German extraction made a settlement slightly westward of

Church of the Brethren

the Draper's Meadows known as Dunkard's Bottom, of course named for their religious affiliation. This settlement also suffered much at the hands of the Indians at the same time as Draper's Meadows. There was, at least some contact with this settlement and the Moravian settlements in North Carolina. Records show that some from the area went to the Moravian settlements to find wives.

By the year 1769, settlers had pushed into Abingdon, then known as Wolf Hills, and into Cassell's Woods in present-day Russell County. These two sites were the beginning of the Scotch-Irish settlements of extreme Southwest Virginia. Settlers at these sites were largely from the Valley of Virginia and Western North Carolina. The North Carolina settlers had first filtered down from the Valley of Virginia to Carolina and thence westward through the counties of Orange, Rowan, Alleghany, Ashe and Surry, through Grayson County, Virginia, to the Southwest.

The Abingdon settlement was made on an 800,000 acre tract of land granted to the Loyal Land Company and Dr. Thomas Walker was agent for the same. A look at the Land Entry Books of old Fincastle and Washington counties will show by family names that these first settlers were largely of Scotch-Irish lineage.

The Castlewood settlement was named for Jacob Castle, who has become almost a lengendary figure, and about whom all sorts of legendary tales have been spun by past writers. One such legend claims he was an albino from Augusta County and had left the settlements to live in the wilderness because of the embarrassment of his physical disfigurement, and another states that he had traded a butcher knife and some other trifles to the Indians for all the land at Castlewood. There is no basis of fact in either legend.

The truth of the matter is that Jacob Castle was not a legendary figure, but one of real flesh and blood, and is about as well documented as many other early settlers. Records in Augusta County prove that he was living in the New River settlement in the early 1740's and was listed among the road hands at that place. I think there is little doubt that he was an Indian trader, and around 1746-47 he made some sort of threat about bringing the Indians down upon the settlement and courts-martial charges were lodged against him. Shortly after he disappears from the settlement and is not picked up again in the records. Where he went we do not know, but I think this date is certainly too early for his settlement at Castlewood, although we have no date for his settlement here and actually no proof that he ever did live at Castlewood, except that the place took his name. There has been found no record that he ever owned any land.

In the year, 1780, he was living someplace on the upper Clinch River for his son, Bazle Castle, states in a Revolutionary War pension statement filed in Flody Co., Ky., that he did not serve in the militia that year, having to stay at home because his father was away at King's

Mountain. Where Jacob Castle went after the battle of King's Mountain is not known.

In 1775, Colonel Joseph Martin from Henry County established Martin's Station in Powell Valley in present-day Lee County. Martin, with a group of men, had found and marked the site for the land upon which the station stood in the year 1768. They had become lost for several days and had much difficulty in finding the valley on their first trip, which shows the lack of knowledge of the frontier wilderness at this time. After these three sites had been settled the frontier settlements in all areas mushroomed with an ever-increasing number of newcomers, and soon the great Wilderness Road through these areas became the highway to the opening up of the western part of this great nation.

The actual military defense of Virginia's western frontier did not begin on a large scale, until the spring prior to the outbreak of Dunmore's War in the fall of 1774, more commonly referred to by historians as the Point Pleasant Campaign.

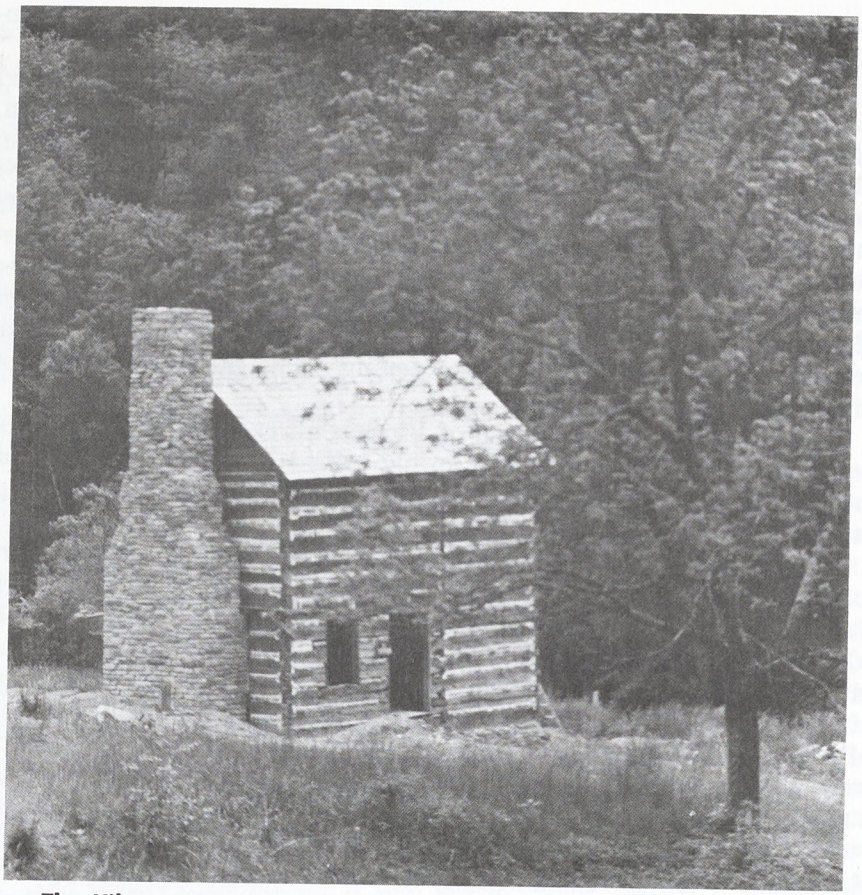
It has been stated by some writers that not a single palisade fort existed along the Clinch frontier until after the circulation of Lord Dunmore's order in the spring of 1774 requesting that forts be built when Dunmore had decided that war with the Shawnee Indians was imminent. Those making these statements used the argument that after the French and Indian war peace existed and there was no need of palisaded forts. It is probably quite true that prior to 1774 there were no real palisaded forts, the inhabitants depending on strongly built fort houses with portholes for warding off surprise Indian attacks. One of these, the old Kilgore Fort house built about 1785, still stands in Scott County. However, those who aver that prior to 1774 peace existed between the Indians and whites need to review their frontier history.

Admittedly, peace did exist on paper as the Treaties of Fort Stanwix and Lochaber prove, but a paper peace meant little to many of the savages who had probably never heard of it, or those who did not concur with it in the first place. It is well also to point out that the treaties, which prohibited further settlement of Indian lands, were violated repeatedly by the white settlers.

That peace did not exist, we might consider the killing of Boone's party on Wallens Creek on Oct. 10, 1773, almost a year prior to Dunmore's circular letter ordering the fortification of the frontier.

John McCulloch, whose father, Thomas McCulloch, had settled on Moccasin Creek in 1769, states that in June 1771, all of Moccasin Creek was evacuated for fear of Indians and remained so for more than a year.

On June 30, 1773, Col. Evan Shelby had a roster of 71 militiamen. Capt. William Russell also had four Indian scouts on patrol on April



The Kilgore Fort House, built about 1785, still stands near Nickelsville in Scott County, among the few of its kind in existence.

15, 1774, two months prior to Dunmore's letter, and again in 1773, Col. Shelby lists a group of four scouts on Clinch River. Does it not seem strange to aver that peace existed when we see a contingent of 71 militiamen, scouts on patrol and the massacre of five people on Wallens Creek?

After Dunmore's request for forts, they began to mushroom all along the frontier. The Clinch River frontier of 150 miles from Bluefield to Cumberland Gap was a vast wilderness to defend with the sparsely settled condition then existing. Every able bodied man and boy served in the militia guarding the forts and patrolling the war traces. Even 12-year-old boys who were large for their age became Indian scouts.

The Indians would swoop down from the north, suddenly kill settlers and vanish into the wilderness. Horse-stealing and killing of

livestock became common which hurt the settlers greatly because of their dependence on these domesticated animals for labor, food and clothing.

The dreaded time of Indian incursions was from April to October when the forests were clothed with leaves, making a screen for sudden attacks upon the settlers who were away from the forts trying to cultivate their crops. At times attacks were so frequent the people had to stay in the forts all summer and no crops could be cultivated, bringing on starvation conditions in wintertime whereby flour had to be brought in from the eastern settlements. Again, during the balmy days of late October and November was another good time for Indian attacks and from this has come down to us the term "Indian Summer."

Looking backward to this remote period it is hard to imagine the privation and suffering of the early settlers from the Indians, but some of the militiamen who lived long enough to draw Revolutionary war pensions paint a vivid picture of their hardships. Perhaps the ones who suffered most were the Indian scouts, commonly referred to as the Clinch scouts. These men who went out in groups of twos and fours, carried their food and blankets on their backs, slept on the ground without shelter or warmth, patrolled for periods of two weeks before returning to the forts. Sometimes after reaching their patrol grounds they would separate, patrol for the day and meet again at a prearranged site to spend the night. The scouts were not fighters and could not shoot at the Indians. They were simply scouts who upon seeing Indian signs or Indians hurried back to the settlements to alert the people so they could flee into the forts and to warn the militia to be on the alert. These scouts patrolled as far away as Floyd, Perry and Breathitt Counties in Kentucky.

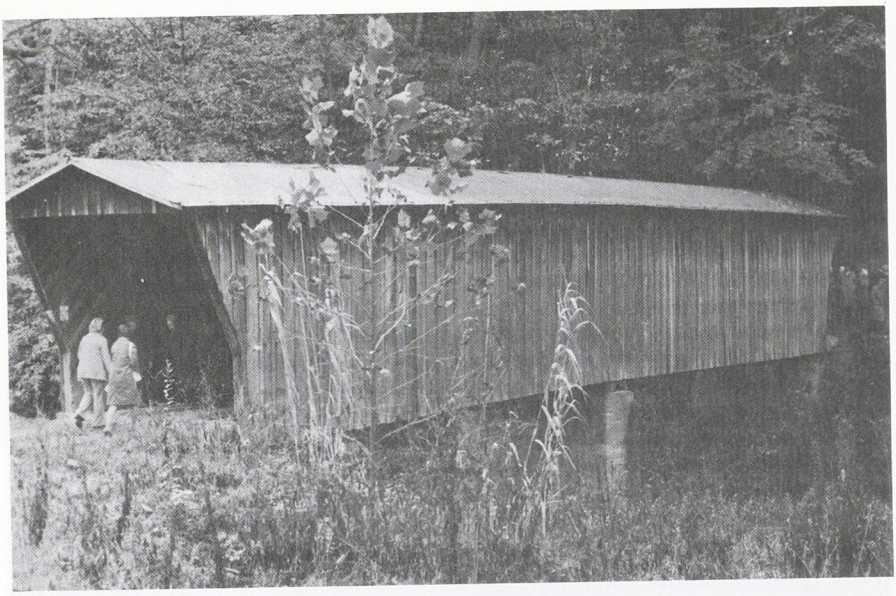
The pension statements of the Clinch scouts give the impression that the greatest suffering was from the rigors of the cold winters. They all tell of the terrible winter of 1779-1780, and James Farley says the "leaves were all off the trees by August." James Harvey Laughlin, in his diary written in 1845 and speaking of stories told by his parents and grandparents who were on their way to Kentucky in the fall of 1779, and who were captured in the Spring of 1780 and taken to Canada, tells the following: "Settlers caught on their way to Ky. had to go into camp into any sort of shelter that could be created or found . . . wild animals of all sorts starved to death by thousands for lack of food and from thirst because all the streams were frozen and people were forced to eat dead animals even of unclean type."

The militia stationed in the forts were often hard pressed to defend them because of few numbers. Frequently when the Indians made sudden forays they would kill part of a family and carry others away into captivity. These murdering parties were all followed by the

militia and sometimes overtaken when fights ensued and prisoners were rescued. Many of the early settlers were massacred in their fields while tending crops or often the women and children were killed in the homes when the father was away and the homes were burned down on the victims. On occasions it was hard to persuade men to leave their wives and children unprotected to go on campaigns against the Indians, and it was harder still to get militia from the interior who were comparatively safe to volunteer for frontier defense. The Clinch frontier was a barrier against the Shawnee for the settlements on the Holston. The Holston fortifications were more a barrier against the Cherokee to the South, but being less hostile than the Shawnee there never were as many depredations against the Holston as there were against the Clinch settlements, and many more people were killed and captured in the Clinch and Powell River settlements.

In 1775, Daniel Boone and James Harrod made settlement in Kentucky, both of whom had served in the militia on the Clinch frontier in 1774, and while here Boone was made a lieutenant and in turn a captain, which was the only military rank he ever held. During his stay on the Clinch, he was in command of Moore's and Blackmore's forts, his family spending their time in Moore's Fort. While living in Moore's fort, to Daniel and Rebecca Boone was born a son named William, who died and was buried in the Moore's Fort Cemetery in an unmarked grave overlooking Clinch River. Not many miles away in an unmarked and unknown spot on the head of Wallen's Creek, sleeps their son, James, side by side with Henry Russell and Joseph Drake's son, and Charles and John Mendenhall of Guilford County, N. C., victims of the cruel massacre of Oct. 10, 1773.

In 1780, the men of the Clinch and Holston settlements chopped a wagon road from the Holston, through Cumberland Gap to Crab Orchard in Lincoln County, Ky., guarded by the militia under Capt. John Snaddy, which opened up the great Wilderness Road over which many thousand pioneers traveled to settle Kentucky and the west. No doubt the Kentucky settlements relieved some of the pressure on the Clinch frontier, but on at least two occasions the Clinch Militia was ordered to the relief of the Kentucky stations. In 1777 they were sent to Harrodsburg to guard the settlers while they harvested their crops which they had not been able to do the previous year and in 1778 they went to Boone's assistance at the siege of Boonsboro.



Roanokers walk through Bob White covered bridge in Patrick County.

A Visit To Patrick County

Two of the comparatively few remaining covered bridges, the Reynolds Homestead and the 18th century Hamon Critz place were highlights of the Patrick County Tour of the Roanoke Valley Historical Society on Saturday, Oct. 19, 1974.

Starting on a cloudy morning punctuated by snow flurries along the Blue Ridge Parkway southward, two busloads of Society members and guests were charmed by the hospitality, history and scenery of the mountainous county resting between Southwest Virginia and the North Carolina line.

Named after Patrick Henry, first governor of the Commonwealth, who once lived at Leatherwood, near Martinsville, the county was created from Henry County in 1791. Most of its settlers were English and Scotch-Irish.

Stuart, the county seat, draws its name from Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, famous Confederate cavalryman, who was born and reared at Laurel Hill, a home no longer standing at Ararat, in the southwestern part of the county. Bicentennial efforts are being made to mark the spot. The county courthouse, a large brick building constructed in 1822 by Abram Staples, is one of the oldest in this part of the state. A log courthouse, first in the county, measured 24 by 36 feet when it was put up in 1794.

The bridges—Bob White and Jack's Creek—drew the undivided

Patrick County's 1822 brick courthouse.

A visit to the 18th century Hamon Critz place at Critz.

attention of photographers and Patrick County people served apples, punch and cookies. Located about a mile apart near Woolwine, both were built in the 1914-21 era.

The Bob White Bridge, one of only two covered structures still in the state highway system, unquestionably was designed to protect the oak flooring from the elements, according to J. Edward Weaver of Roanoke, who helped his father build it in 1921.

An extensive collection of mountain farm tools and other historical objectives given by Fred Clifton of Vesta was seen at the Patrick County Historical Society Museum located in Stuart since 1971.

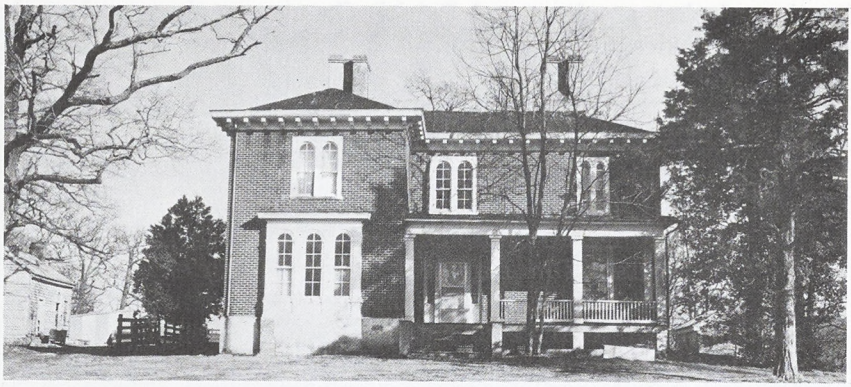
At Critz in the eastern part of the county, Mr. and Mrs. T. Linwood Ayers have restored an old family home built by Hamon Critz, great-great-grandfather of Mrs. Ayers, probably about 1786. Weatherboarding has been added to the log building but the interior is much as it was in frontier days.

The Reynolds Homestead, birthplace of R. J. Reynolds, the tobacco magnate, and 15 other children of Hardin William and Nancy Cox Reynolds, was built in 1843. Handsomely restored, the home stands atop a hill not far from the foot of Nobusiness Mountain. J. Sargeant Reynolds, late lieutenant governor, was buried in the family cemetery here. This home is open to the public.

Journals Wanted

Back issues of The Journal and the historical program of Roanoke's 1957 Diamond Jubilee are in short supply. Persons finding spare copies of either publication are urged to contribute them to the Society.

Any articles from bygone days should be considered for donation to the Society's collections. The address is P. O. Box 1904, Roanoke 24008.



Bleak Hill. Photo: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission (VHLC).

Bleak Hill, A Handsome Farm House

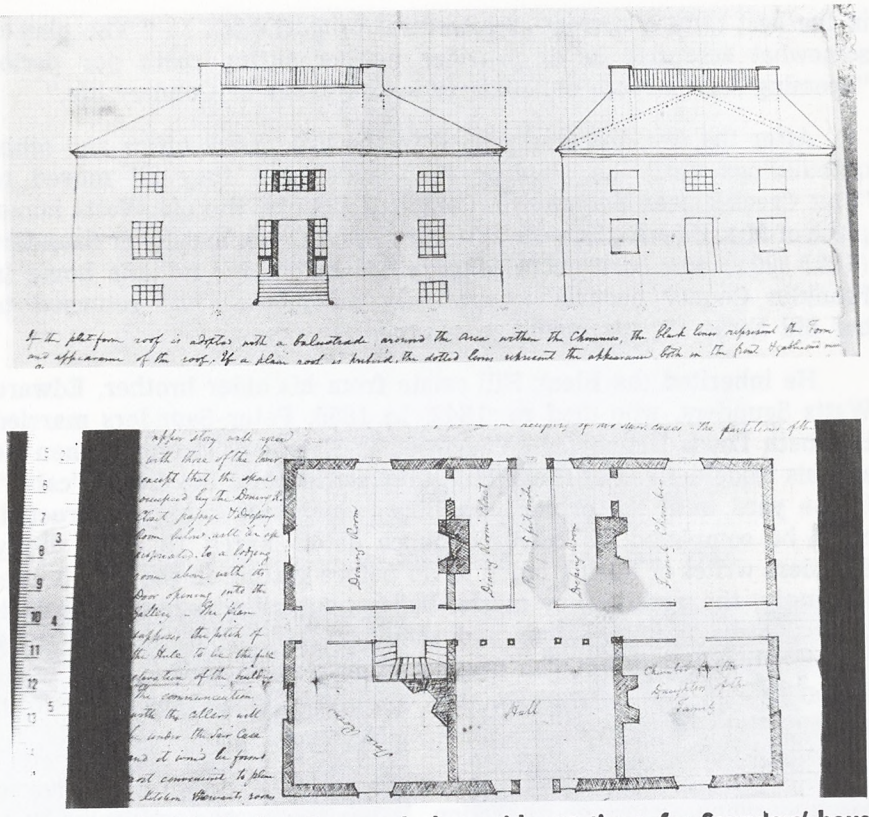
By Anne Carter Lee

Set atop a high knoll and looking out onto the encircling Blue Ridge Mountains, Bleak Hill is a handsome Italianate farm house situated between Ferrum and Callaway in western Franklin County. Now the center of a large dairy, it is owned by a great-great-grandson of Judge Fleming Saunders (1778-1858) who settled on this farm in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

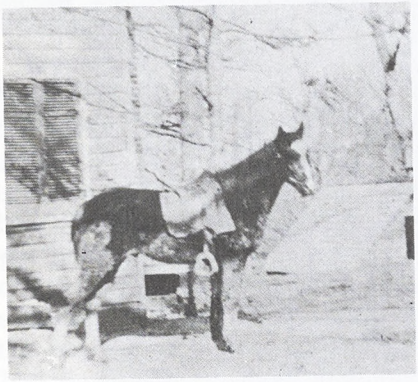
Judge Saunders first lived some distance from the present house site in a plain two-room frame dwelling, aptly referred to as "Hardfare" by his fellow lawyers in nearby Rocky Mount. After his marriage in 1814, he built a brick dwelling on the site of the present Bleak Hill. Although it burned ca. 1830, by great good fortune the anonymous master-builder's project elevations and plan, along with his notations, are still at Bleak Hill.

Of particular interest is his suggestion that most of the windows of the east and west sides be sham in order to keep out the summer sun and to avoid extra expense. He also advises sash windows for the lower story and casement windows for the upper ones because, astonishingly, he deems it impossible "to have a house of two full stories

Anne Carter Lee of Rocky Mount, an authority on regional architecture, earned a master's degree in architectural history at the University of Virginia. She has worked with the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission. Her cousin, Bill Lee, lives at Bleak Hill. She presents here an unusual amount of information about a 19th century house.



Master-builder's elevations and plan, with notations, for Saunders' house built ca. 1815-20 and burned ca. 1830. Typescript of notations can be found in the Appendix. Photos: Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. W. D. S. Lee and VHLC.



Cabin, left, in which Peter and Elizabeth Saunders lived while the present Bleak Hill was constructed. Icehouse at right. Ca. 1900. Photo: Lee, VHLC.

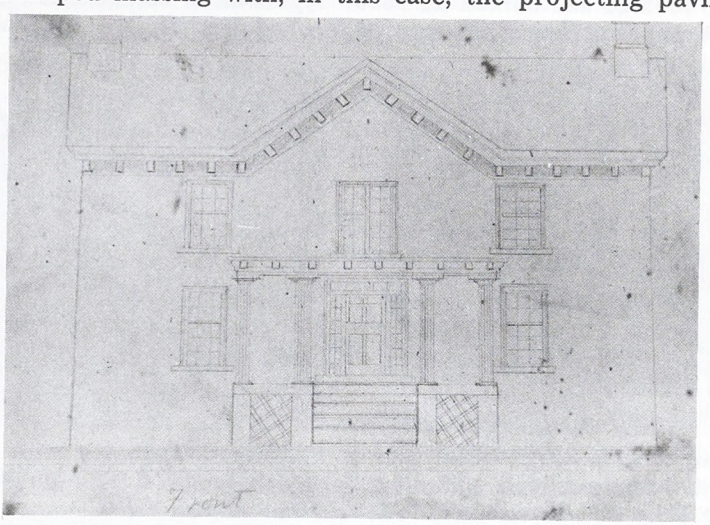
Early 19th century brick office in which family lived after the 1830 fire. Photo: VHLC.

in the best taste & correct architectural proportions . . . " The plan is somewhat eccentric for it provides neither sitting room nor parlor "deeming such a room unnecessary in the habits of Country life."

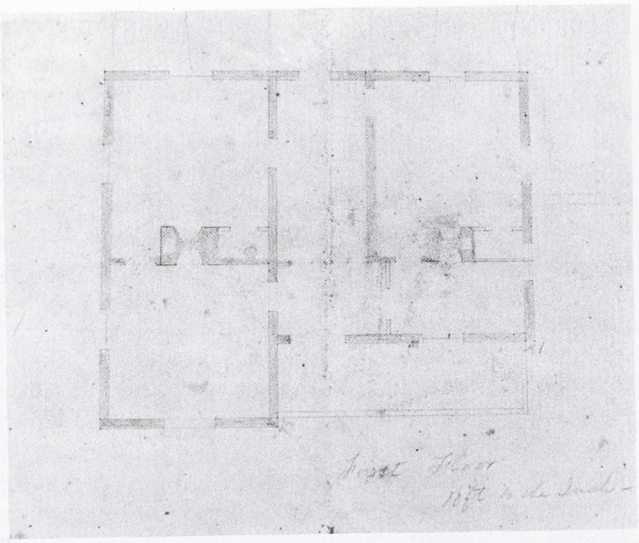
After the fire, the family lived in the little brick office and other outbuildings until the children grew older and they all moved to "Flat Creek," near Evington in Campbell County, the old Watts homeplace of Mrs. Fleming Saunders. It was at Flat Creek that Peter Saunders (1823-1904) was born about seven years before his father's home in Franklin County burned. (Apparently his mother had returned to her old home for his birth.)

He inherited the Bleak Hill estate from his older brother, Edward Watts Saunders, who died ca. 1842. In 1855, Peter Saunders married Elizabeth Lewis Dabney of "Vaucluse" in Campbell County. When he and his bride arrived at Bleak Hill, they settled into the frame "cabin" in the yard until the present dwelling, which was being constructed, could be completed. In correspondence dated March 18, 1857, Betty Saunders writes of having much to do before getting in the new house. Evidently, the architect or master-builder submitted a number of alternate plans and elevations and these are still at Bleak Hill along with what appears to be the original floor plan as well as the bill of timber signed by F. Gravelly. The architect's plans and elevations, unfortunately, are not signed.

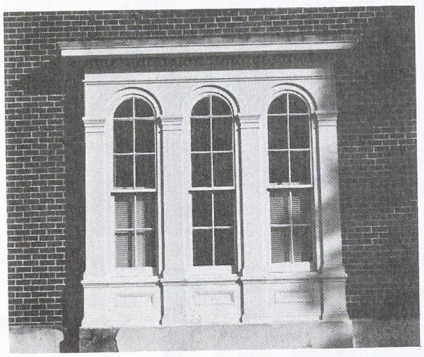
Since its construction in the mid-nineteenth century, the house has undergone almost no alteration. It has the characteristically Italianate L-shaped massing with, in this case, the projecting pavilion on



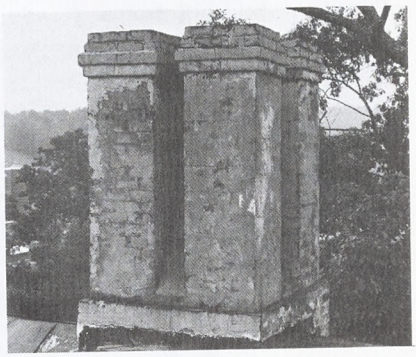
One of a number of unaccepted proposals for the mid-19th c. construction of Bleak Hill. Photo: Lee, VHLC.



Original floor plan for Bleak Hill. Photo: Lee, VHLC.

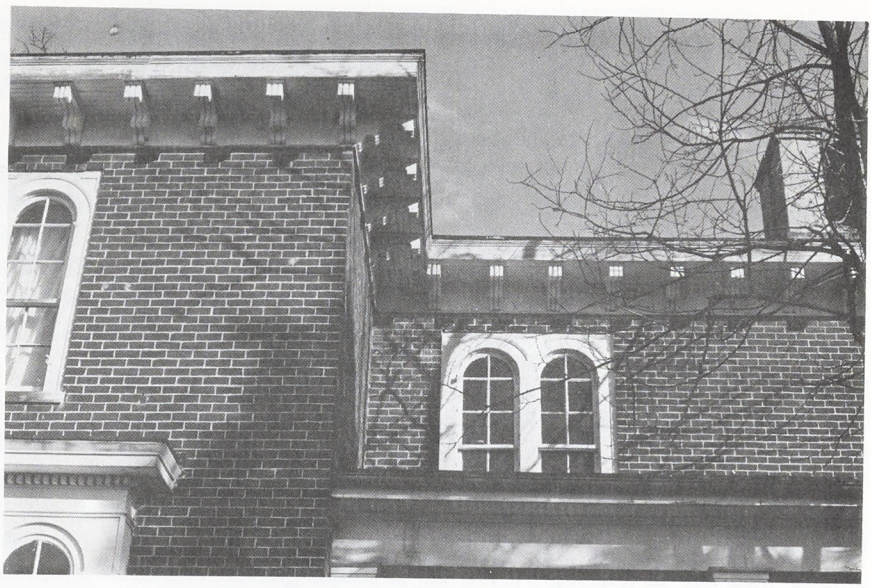


Bay window on entrance facade. Photo: VHLC.



Chimney stack. Photo: VHLC.

the north side of the west entrance facade. The one-story front porch, set in the jog of the pavilion and main block, has simple Doric pillars connected by railings and supporting a plain entablature. The entry has sidelights separated from the transom by heavy brackets. On the pavilion there is a bay window with three carefully articulated, round-headed openings with the divisions marked by Doric pilasters standing on pedestals with panels between them. The entablature of the bay window has dentil moldings between the cornice projection. The second-floor windows of the entrance facade are paired, round-headed openings set in a rectangular, wooden frame. The remaining first and second-story windows have 6-over-6-light sashes except for one south side window which has 2-over-2-lights separated by a stanchion that is positioned in front of a partition wall.



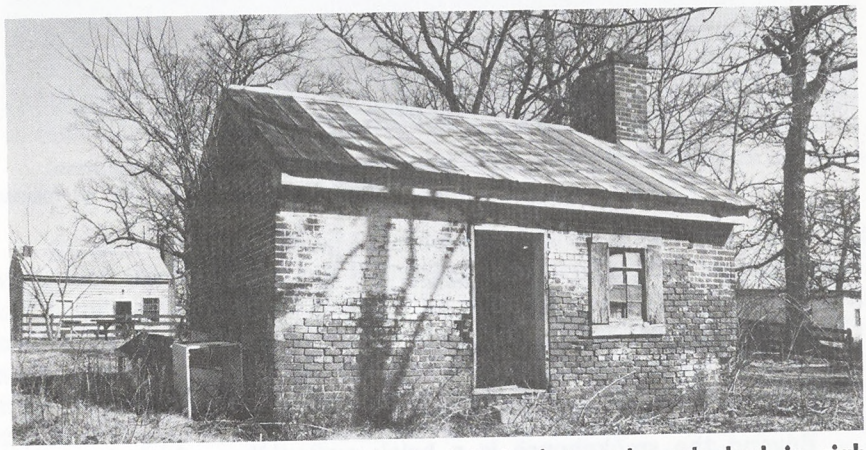
Entrance facade detail. Photo: VHLC.

Mantel in library. Photo: VHLC.

The house is constructed of brick with an all-header bond on the facade and an irregular number of stretcher rows alternating with a row of Flemish bond on the side and rear walls. The foundations up to the first floor line are also of brick but they have been stuccoed and scored in imitation of regular ashlar. In Italianate fashion, a fine, heavy bracket cornice supports the roof overhang. The deck-on-hip

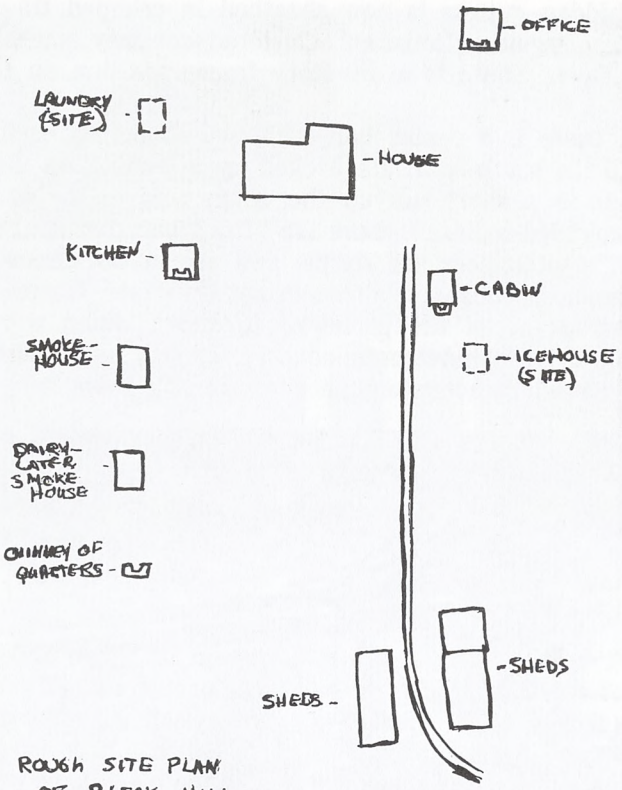
roof with hidden gutters is now sheathed in crimped tin. The brick interior chimneys have Italianate, clustered chimney stacks with four articulated flues. There is a one-story frame addition on the rear of the house.

Inside, there is a center hall with two rooms on each side. The stairs go up the south wall, are broken by a landing on the east wall and continue in a short run up the north wall to the second floor. Beneath a rounded handrail, there are turned balusters and a Victorian newel post. Mantelpieces are simple and are in the Classical Revival style. Doors and architraves, although not elaborate, feature a number of variations. Many of the pieces of furniture which were built on the place in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as furnishings from the earlier Saunders house on the site, are still there.



Kitchen in foreground, cabin in left background, and shed in right background. Photo: VHLC.

Bleak Hill is notable for the number of outbuildings that are still standing. In the front yard, west of the house, is the attractive little office in which the family lived for a time after the 1830's fire. Dating from the early nineteenth century, it is of brick laid in Flemish bond with plastered jack arches over the openings. The Federal mantel in the office came frome the old house which burned slowly enough for it and much of the furniture to be saved. East of the house is the frame cabin which housed the builder of Bleak Hill and his bride while the present house was being completed. It later served as a guesthouse and as a schoolhouse. Behind it stood a frame icehouse. Across the yard is the old brick kitchen with an interior-end chimney. Inside, there is a huge lintel over the fireplace opening and a small warming oven to the right of the fireplace. A brick laundry once stood to the southwest of the kitchen. East of the kitchen is a plank smokehouse with square corner-notching.



ROUGH SITE PLAN OF BLEAK HILL FRANKLIN COUNTY

Beyond the smokehouse is a brick outbuilding which is said to have originally been the dairy, where Jule, the dairy maid, used to churn down in the basement and sing "Way down in de lonesome ground, Oh, Lord, how long!" It was later used as a smokehouse. Still farther to the west stands the chimney of an old slave cabin used by "Aunt Docia." It seems that most of these outbuildings predate the present dwelling. There are numerous, more recently-constructed farm sheds and a large dairy operation at the foot of the hill to the northeast.

In 1904, both Mr. and Mrs. Peter Saunders died and the estate passed to the children. Around 1910, Alice and Agatha sold out to William Dabney "Cheese" Saunders, their brother, who ran the place as a dairy farm, taught at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and was a pioneer in experimental dairy practices. In 1946, William Saunders' heirs sold the farm to Dr. Henry Lee, husband of Dr. Elizabeth Saunders Lee, daughter of William Dabney Saunders. Dr. Lee gave the farm in 1969, to his son, William Dabney Saunders Lee, great-great-grandson of Judge Fleming Saunders.

Smokehouse with square corner-notching. Dairy (later used as a smokehouse) in left background. Photo: VHLC.

As part of the extensive documentation of Bleak Hill, there are numerous photos taken of its inhabitants participating in both social and farm activities at the turn of the century. Much of the correspondence to and from the inhabitants of Bleak Hill has been saved. Finally, no less than three lengthy reminiscences of the place have been written and, collectively, they cover most aspects of life at Bleak Hill from the second half of the nineteenth century through the early part of the twentieth century and thus provide invaluable insights into the social history of this region.

Making hay at Bleak Hill, ca. 1900. Photo: Lee and VHLC.

Of the two recollections reproduced here, the first excerpt is by Alice Saunders, daughter of Peter and Elizabeth Saunders, who collected and saved most of the documentation at Bleak Hill. Her reminiscences include a particularly interesting section, written in her eightieth year, on the production, gathering, and use of food for homefolks as well as for the endless streams of visitors. Next are reminiscences by Susie M. Taylor, niece of Elizabeth Dabney Saunders.

Appendix

(Notations of master-builder on elevations and plan for Saunders place which was constructed ca. 1815-20 and burned ca. 1830.)

If the platform roof is adopted with a balustrade, around the area within the chimnies, the black lines represent the Form and appearance of the roof. If a plain roof is prefered, the dotted lines represent the appearance both in the front & gable end view. The only advantage of the platform roof consists of the facilities it would afford for extinguishing fire and the view it would give from such an elevation — should these be considered sufficient to encounter the addition expense, to render that as light as possible, I would recommend a double floor of heart pine with a declivity from the centre to the front & rear not exceeding 2½ or 3 inches; running on the upper course of shingles & terminating with a simple nosing. — Taking it for granted that the building will front North & South, as it is ind— necessary to comfort in our climate.

I would recommend sham windows only in the Western gable, except the one over the Door to light the passage up the upper story — and with the corresponding window in the Eastern gable to have no other open windows there except those nearest the South eastern angle. The Evening sun of Summer must be excluded to give comfort to a room in our climate. As windows are the most costly part of a building, after providing for light & ventilation both economy & comfort prescribe, "the fewer the better" — and it appears to me to be a great mistake, that many windows improve the appearance of a building: —The windows of the upper story being only a single sash, in order to hoist must have casements in the Wall provided to secure them. The half window in the upper story is recommended for its economy & beauty — deeming it impossible to have a house of two full stories in the best taste & correct architectural proportions—If the clear pitch of the rooms (9 feet below & 8 feet above), should be thought too low — an additional foot to the walls, to make the lower rooms 10 feet, would not be objectionable — upon the score of appearance.

The graduated paper on which the plan is laid down will show the dimensions in every case. I have taken the liberty to extend the plan by the thickness of the walls every way beyond the forty by sixty feet, as I cannot obtain many desirable objects without it. It will be perceived that I have provided no sitting room or parlor deeming such a room unnecessary in our habits of Country life. The colonnade thro' the Hall supporting a Gallery upon the level of the upper floor will form a communication between the upper rooms of the upper rooms of the East & west ends & supersede the necessity of two stair-cases — The partitions of the upper story will agree with those of the lower except that the space occupied by the Dining R. Closet, passage & Dressing Room below, will be appropriated to a lodging room above with its Door opening into the Gallery — The plan supposes the pitch of the Hall to be the full elevation of the building. The communication with the cellars will be under the Stair Case and it would be found most convenient to place the Kitchen & Servants rooms to communicate with the East passage Door —

A part of a bill of timber for Peter Saunders Esqr. by F. Gravelly:

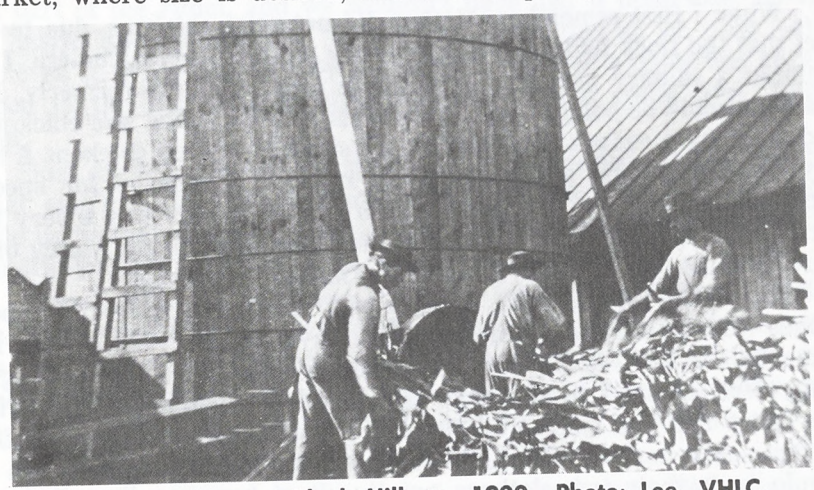
112 Joists	**19 feet long**	**2¼ x 12 inches**
8 Trimer Joists	**19 feet long**	**3 x 12 inches**
48 Joists	**11 feet long**	**2¼ x 12 inches**
36 Raising Joists	**21½ feet long**	**2¼ x 8 inches**

Farm Fruits of the 1800s

By Alice Saunders

There were always visitors during the Summers. Ours was a large connection. I had forty first cousins & ours was a very clannish family. All of my Uncles & Aunts on my mother's side after the war, were poor and Bleak Hill was the only home left intact. My Father inherited a large body of land & the sale of that enabled him to keep the home place and the best farming land and to keep out of debt. The lavish hospitality of those days was possible because the table was supplied almost entirely from the products of the farm. Milk & butter in abundance. Flour & meal from the mill. Hams, bacon and lard of our own curing. Lamb from the flock of sheep, vegetables from the garden, fruit, apples, pears, plums, grapes, raspberries and blackberries, gooseberries & currants. Peach trees did not flourish & we seldom grew watermelons and cantaloupes. The soil in the garden was not suitable, and when grown on the low grounds were too great a temptation to the "darkies."

For strawberries we relied largely on the wild ones which grew in abundance on the place, and our tenants kept us supplied at a very moderate price for the picking. They were good, highly flavored; but the "capping" was very tedious job. The cherry trees, of which there were several in my childhood in the front yard (and I lived on them during the cherry season) gradually decayed as did the apple trees in the orchards, a prey to insects. At that time the necessity for spraying was not known. There was one variety of apple which, I remember, as being especially delicious, the "Webster Pearmain." It was rather small, but highly flavored. It is no longer grown, would not sell on the market, where size is desired, rather than quality. Then I remember



Cutting ensilage at Bleak Hill, ca. 1900. Photo: Lee, VHLC.

a large pear tree, which seldom failed to bear. I never knew the name; but the pears were medium sized & delicious. I wonder if it is still living! Of course we put up our own jellies & preserves & pickles and later canned tomatoes & peaches.

Incidentally there was always a barrel of strong apple vinegar in the cellar & another in process of making. Mother made a very refreshing drink of raspberries & blackberries soaked in vinegar & sterilized with sugar added. Also wine made from blackberries. I don't remember that she made grape wine. I don't know why for there was always an abundance of grapes. She made a very delicious conserve of wild fox-grapes, used just before ripening, coddled with sugar & then dried in the sun & rolled in sugar. The finished product was similar to raisins.

I must not forget the abundance of nut bearing trees on the place. The "chestnut orchard" at "Hardfare" many giant trees of great age, which furnished many bushels of nut, some of which were stored for our use during the winter & the rest sold. The trees have long since succumbed to the chestnut blight which has killed all the trees in the forests. Then there was the large scaly-bark tree at the foot of the hill which supplied us with delicious nuts, much like pecans in flavor. That too is dead; but there are several seedlings which have come into bearing I think, though the trees are of very slow growth. Then black walnuts, of course, in abundance.

I have not mentioned the plentiful supply of ice from the icehouse filled during the Winter months, cut from a pond filled from a spring in the woods, where there were no dwelling houses. The winters then were certainly much more severe than they are now; for I can remember only one winter when we failed to fill the icehouse and there was, generally, more than one hard freeze.

When I first remember, Mother did not raise chickens, due to the fact that the flock had been wiped out by an epidemic of cholera. I remember a solitary gander. There was a flock of geese formerly. But chickens could be bought at 10 & 12 cents apiece (frying size chickens) and eggs at ten cents a dozen. Later, my sister & I raised chickens & turkeys, so we had an abundant supply of eggs & turkeys for special occasions & some for sale. But our "crop" of turkeys was a very uncertain one, largely dependent upon the weather when the young ones were hatched. We knew nothing of the modern methods.

We always kept a cook, a maid who did the laundry and a boy. Wages were unbelievably small in those days. The prevailing wage for domestic service was five dollars a month & the hours were long. I really feel ashamed to chronicle this. But, as a compensation, living was cheap and you could buy material for a calico dress at from five to ten cents a yard. Other dress materials cheap in proportion & people made their own clothes.

During the Winters we lived frugally on the products of the farm, potatoes, beans, black eyed peas (which I never liked), turnips, cabbages, salsify, celery sometimes, apples of course, and hominy grits, ground at the mill.

Fresh pork during the hog-killing seasons, for there were two killings, one before & one after Christmas. The hog-feet were pickled & kept in the cellar until Spring. One or two beeves, according to the size of the household were slaughtered during the Winter & some of the meat was corned for use in the Spring. We bought only groceries, sugar by the barrel, coffee by the bag, and tea of course. The only luxuries were a few oranges, cocoanuts & raisins at Christmas.

"Noble Souls" of Bleak Hill

By Susie M. Taylor

My most vivid recollection of Uncle Peter is his reading prayers in the library. I can see him now, his silver hair curling down on his coat-collar, he never adhered to fashion, and anyhow, the men of his day wore their hair rather long.

His sonorous voice gave an added dignity to the noble words. He always used a book of prayers said to belong to Grandfather Dabney. It carried you through the week and started you out fresh on Sunday; of course you always knew what the next one would be, so it didn't matter if your attention wandered which it was apt to do, especially in Spring when the birds were singing outside and the violets so sweet under the open window.

Aunt Betty usually came in last, sitting in the corner of the hearth, which she always swept with a little broom kept handy, it was part of the ritual, and we wouldn't have had it otherwise, though the hearth was immaculate: we laughed about this as we grew older but loved it. When Aunt Liddy was down on a visit, a chair was always placed in the hall just outside the door, so she could hear Marse Peter.

Sinai sat there too, when she was spring cleaning. It was a noble ritual, and from it there grew something into our lives, that may have made us better men and women. As a child, I thought Aunt Betty the grandest-looking person in the world.

Aunt Liddy said "she was a flower" when Marse Peter married her. Her hair was always brushed like satin and worn in curls in front. She and Mother used to curl these short pieces round at night and stick one ordinary pin through, which was never known to drop out; they must have slept very decorously; but the curls became them both.

Washing the breakfast dishes was a social function at Bleak Hill. The ladies all gathered in the dining room, and Aunt Betty had the

Bleak Hill, ca. 1900. Photo: Lee, VHLC.

colored boy bring in a low table made for the purpose, which was put in front of her, and a large double action pan, one side with suds, and the other to rinse, 'twas a wonderful idea to sit, as the operation was a slow one.

The visiting ladies seized snowy towels, and the conversation began. All topics were discussed, from religion to politics, and other things. It was so agreeable, that the more formal guests, and the men, pipes in their mouths, came dropping in; the house was always full.

The art of conversation is said to have passed away, but Aunt Betty held a salon at dishwashing times. As I grew older, I used to wonder why it was necessary for the family to do this after breakfast and supper, when we consumed food gaily at dinner from plates done below stairs. However there has never been any silver or cut glass that shone like Aunt Betty's did in those old days. When I first remember Bleak Hill, there were few church privileges. Once a month, we all, children included, went to old Piedmont at Callaways; it was Presbyterian, but considered almost equal to an Episcopal Church, one step lower I think; having no Bishops, only other clergy. It was an occasion when we went to Piedmont in the old carriage which was awe inspiring, with little green silk curtains at the windows, and upholstered with tapestry; it had a very close, leathery smell that was rather sickening, especially if you rode on the front seat back to the horses, but we "endured the cross, for the joy set before us."

Dinner generally followed at Cousin Mary Callaways, it was a darling old place and the dinner, oh my! Of course we went sometimes when weather and roads permitted, and the occasion warranted, to

Piedmont Presbyterian Church. This mid-19th c. church, with some additions, is still standing at Callaway. It is reputed to have been constructed by the noted Roanoke County builder, Benjamin Deyerle who held land in the area. Photo: Courtesy of Franklin County Historical Society and VHLC.

Rocky Mount, there were more large dinners, and we returned feeling rather like anacondas, but very happy.

Sundays when there was no church, we assembled in the old fashioned parlor and Uncle Peter read the service in his fine reverential way; we learned the responses very early, which made us perfectly at home in any Episcopal Church.

There was an atmosphere at these services, that made the old room seem a sanctuary, as indeed it was, if the presence of God and the pure worships of noble hearts can sanctify.

Later on, Ascension Church across the fields, where it lifted its modest cross in the shadow of a wooded hill, was to rise, as a monument to Aunt Betty and Cousin Prudence Hairston. Beginning with nothing but faith, they bit by bit got the money together, Uncle Peter giving the site and building materials; I doubt if any of the great Cathedrals did as much for the uplift of a community as this little church.

When I remember the isolation of the life at Bleak Hill, I realize what wonderful people Aunt Betty and Uncle Peter were, to uphold so high a standard of religion, conduct, good breeding, and culture, and what all this meant to the young creatures who grew up there. As his boys grew older, Uncle Peter always had a highly educated teacher for them, and some outside boys were taken to board, making quite a little school.

The office and the room under Aunt Betty's room were dedicated to the boys, with school room in the cabin. I was too young for this, but the other girls were included. Uncle John Dabney taught this school for several years.

He was a choleric old gentleman, very agreeable in social life, but terrible in the school room if you were stupid or lazy; I remember one poor boy (a very kindly person) who must have acquired a permanent inferiority complex from being told in stentorian tones, that resounded all over the place, that he "was a born fool".

I have delightful recollections of him (Uncle John) however; he used to read aloud to Mother and Aunt Betty, afternoons when they were quilting in the room over the parlor, and other times; I sat, a small figure in the chimney corner listening. My favorite was Abbott's "Life of Napoleon", which has colored my opinion of him to this day.

The following summer we named our flock large of ducks, after Napoleon and his family, and Marshals; I remember Josephine with a large overhanging top knot, Napoleon was a green-headed drake with a fiery eye, Marshal Ney was my favorite.

We had very few children's books in those days. Miss Alcott was of course delightful, but most of them, like Sandford and Merton, and the Fairchild Family, were too prissy even for us. Nothing daunted, we turned to the classics, and read all the standard novels, when I'm sure I was not more than ten or twelve. Nothing in life can ever equal the pleasure we found in "Ivanhoe", "David Copperfield", "The Talisman", "The Last Days of Pompeii", and others. The grown-ups often read aloud winter nights, always something fine, and the discussions afterward were most enlightening. I must not forget the fairy books of those old days, Hans Andersen and Grimm, also the Arabian Nights, which I adored and Hawthorne's "Tales of the Alhambra", I would love to own that old copy. "Pilgrim's Progress" too, was read with vivid interest.

So, though the life was isolated, and would have been considered very narrow by most people, yet we ranged over a wide field, and acquired a wonderful amount of information.

One of the most delightful people at Bleak Hill was Aunt Docia, the old cook whose cabin just outside the back gate was a favorite haunt of the children. She was a privileged pensioner on Uncle Peter's bounty, and a faithful and highly valued friend, another example of the strong ties that existed in the old days between the white people and their house servants.

Aunt Docia gathered dried beans in the garden, made soap for Aunt Betty, and raised a few chickens for us, otherwise, she pleased herself and was a great figure about the place. On Sunday afternoons we used to read to her in the Story of the Bible, sitting in summer on

the cabin steps, Aunt Docia in long white apron and head handkerchief; she nodded a good deal, but always said it was "mighty pretty",

I still have a heavy feeling in the stomach when I remember the pies she used to make of blackberries we picked ourselves and seconds from the mill; they were baked on the hearth in some mysterious way and were very heavy.

In those days there were no Inns or houses of entertainment in that isolated section, so travelers always asked for a night's lodging at private homes, where the earmarks seemed favorable for a good feed for man and beast.

No one was ever turned away from that hospitable gate, and many and various were the people entertained there.

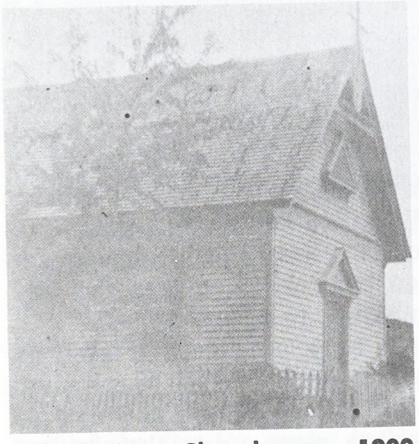
Of course all clergymen, who were a people set apart and highly reverenced, were joyfully received. Old Mr. Lee, who ministered in many far flung parishes, was often there for days at a time.

The children felt it an honor to untie his leggings, very muddy, after a day's struggle with the Franklin roads.

He wore a long white beard and had a cold, stern, blue eye. I was very much afraid of him and when his glance happened to fall my way, I always searched my heart for secret sins.

Uncle Peter and Mr. Lee used to play long drawn out games of chess, when they sat for hours without speaking, occasionally a bony hand was lifted and a pawn or knight, or per chance a king was moved cautiously. When dinner was announced the board was set aside, and the game resumed. I never saw one finished. The old men seemed to enjoy this so-called recreation however.

In summer the house was always full.



Ascension Chapel, ca. 1900. Photo: Lee, VHLC.

Aunt Docia, ca. 1900. Photo: Lee, VHLC.

The nearest railroad station was Big Lick, now Roanoke, thirty miles across the mountains, over the most inconceivable road.

Friends tried to arrive at the same time, so one trip would bring about ten; they usually spent the summer. The old carriage was requisitioned with Bob and Morgan, the big bay horses, and Uncle Bobby as driver; he nodded a good deal on the seat, but the horses kept faithfully to the road.

There was a wonderful old green jersey that went too, and a wagon for the luggage. It was like moving day. I often took this trip with Mother, and can see Aunt Betty now, as she stood on the porch to welcome her guests, taking us in her arms and to her warm loving heart, there was never any one like her.

Grandma was often at Bleak Hill for the summer.

She was a very spirited old lady, full of fire, and interest in everything, the picture of an old time gentlewoman, with white caps that covered her head, tying under the chin, only a silvery band of white hair showing on her forehead.

She looked like what she was, a personage, when she entered the room gliding across the floor, and sitting very erect in a stiff backed chair, no lolling for her.

We were considered very degenerate as we lounged comfortably about. Grandma cried for joy as well as sorrow, equally when the family came or went.

She also believed in groaning, and calling out loudly, when anything hurt, no concealment with her. She was different from any old lady I ever knew and had a wonderful personality. Very partisan, she was violent in her denunciations, and equally strong in her attachments. She had little patience with either laziness or incompetence, but nevertheless would work her fingers to the bone for any one. I've seen her slip some impecunious member of the family a coin out of her all too thin, shabby little grey leather purse. This was done secretly as she knew Mother and Aunt Betty would disapprove. Grandma believed in fighting and her heroes were always military ones. A very fiery, impulsive, warm hearted, lovable old lady, interesting to the last moment of her life, I adored her.

Aunt Cornelia Dabney was another notable old lady, who spent most of the summers at Bleak Hill. We hailed her advent with joy as did every one. She was one of the most amusing, delightful people in the world, very clever, and eccentric too, but only in an attractive way, it would take more than my pen to do justice to her.

Aunt Cornelia always brought us a large package of candy, delightful slabs of pink and white cream, large pink striped peppermints and sticks of hoarhound, I still think them good. The candy was put in Aunt Betty's wardrobe, and given out, a piece a day, thereby lasting a long time and saving many a stomach ache.

Added to these were a number of other younger people, and Edward, home for the holidays, and a perfect torment to the children, and you have a gay assemblage.

There was dancing at night in the old parlor, every one participating, and Mother at the piano playing reel tunes untiringly.

Sometimes there were games, and Edward always had catch tricks brought home from college, of course we were always caught.

Though he teased us unmercifully we adored him, and were his willing slaves. Uncle Peter kept a number of riding horses, servants and horses seemed to be the luxuries of those days, so every one rode and we all learned at an early age.

Horseback riding was one of the chief pleasures, as I remember, and the best way to get about, as the roads were unspeakable.

When Fall came and every one left, it was very sad, but winter had many charms, with coasting on home-made sleds, eating apples, and popping corn in Aunt Betty's room, where in certain bounds we could do as we pleased.

Frank Cleaneay, Alice S. Saunders, Chiswell Dabney Jr. on horseback at Bleak Hill, ca. 1900. Photo: Lee, VHLC.

There were also quantities of nuts, we had sheltered stores of them outdoors, and on good days cracked them on the area steps, or the old mill stone. Long rambles over the place when the weather was open, the four of us together. Then the long winter nights with books around the fire, or games in Mother's room upstairs, where we could pull the beds to pieces; this of course was what the girls did, but there

were good times too with the school boys after study hours. Those were happy, innocent, and very good days.

Aunt Betty was a great lover of flowers, Uncle Peter, on the contrary, was a perfect utilitarian. They were exactly opposite, but Aunt Betty had her old fashioned garden, and a darling place it was.

Those old people had an innate sense of arrangement, perhaps brought over from England, and handed down, slightly formal, but not too much so. I remember the profusion of bloom, and the children were allowed to gather nosegays at their pleasure.

The hyacinths and peonies I loved best, and the great bed of lily of the valley, their sweet pungent perfume is fresh in my nostrils as I write.

The garden had a southern exposure, and a little child could lie in the sun on its sheltered walks, drinking in its perfumes and dreaming the unforgettable dreams we all dream that never come true.

The yellow jasmine outside the parlor windows was another great joy, it is long since dead.

But I must get on for time is passing and we are growing up fast. Grandma and Aunt Cornelia are gone, bless them.

Saunders family, ca. 1900. (Left to right, 1st row), Elizabeth Dabney Saunders, Agatha Saunders, William Saunders, Peter and Edward Saunders (these two barefoot boys grew up to be, respectively, secretary of the State of Virginia and dean of engineering at the University of Virginia), Peter Saunders; (l to r, 2nd row,) Betty Montgomery Saunders with her daughter, Isabelle, on her lap, Nancy and Edward Watts Saunders (parents of Peter, Edward and Tom), Alice Saunders, Tom Saunders. Agatha Saunders, William (husband of Betty Montgomery Saunders), Edward Watts and Alice were children of Elizabeth Dabney and Peter Saunders.

Aunt Betty, very little changed, and Uncle Peter frailer, and having to rest more, but looking after his own affairs still. He never complained, though I am sure he never felt well, and could eat only a few things very sparingly. We thought little of it then, but looking back, I know now, that his life was one of heroic self denial.

I cannot go farther without speaking of the love that bound Aunt Betty and Mother more closely together than any two sisters I have ever known; theirs was a perfect sympathy and understanding, and no cloud ever rose to mar it. I have no words to express what they both were to Mother and her little children in her widowhood.

Years afterwards when Mother and myself were back for a visit, Uncle Peter put his arms about her one day and said, "Sue, I hear you are leaving tomorrow, why are you going? Bleak Hill has never seemed the same since you stopped living with us." He was like Mr. Greatheart in "The Pilgrim's Progress" taking the weak and halting and the women and children under his protection.

Times changed some at Bleak Hill as the years passed.

The sons both married in a very remarkable way, the women Aunt Betty picked for them, who brought only joy into the family circle, and the grandchildren were the crowning glory of their old age.

Friends still gathered there, and the open-hearted hospitality was the same, but they were younger and a little more modern. We had many charming summers at the old place, with dancing, cardplaying, and horseback riding, long rambles, and a good deal of love-making in the moonlight, so beautiful, with the shadows of the great oaks falling dark across the lawn.

It is a joy to think that the home was still carried on in much the same way, and that no terrible troubles marred the serene happiness of a remarkable old age.

"Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be, the last of life, for which the first was made."

Some of the old servants were left and Uncle Peter was still "Marse Peter" to Uncle Bobby, Sam, and Aunt Liddy, who outlived them both.

I can't dwell on that terrible time when Aunt Betty left us; crowning her noble life, by a death of self-sacrifice. Uncle Peter did not long survive her. He was over eighty, and very feeble, and I think he did not care to live.

"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their death they were not divided."

Thus endeth the story.

Two noble souls, "gone where the spirits of just men are made perfect."

A later chapter may be written of Bleak Hill, but by another pen, for me, the book closes.

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Maryland Border War Refugees Flee to the Roanoke Valley

By Patricia Givens Johnson

The first settlers migrating into the upper Roanoke River Valley before 1745 came for many reasons. The circumstances causing most of them to come will never be known. Sometimes from available records we can discover why some came so early to a wild mountain frontier. Mathusalem Griffith, Mark Evans, and Tobias Bright, refugees of the border war between Maryland and Pennsylvania, are three whose reasons for coming are known.

All three men came from the Conojacular Valley along the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania and arrived in the Roanoke Valley before December 1744. Mathusalem Griffith settled on Peter's Creek and Mason's Creek between present Roanoke and Salem. Mark Evans chose land along Evans Spring Branch northwest of the Great Lick and near the Crystal Spring on the south side of the river. Tobias Bright settled on the North Fork of Roanoke.[1]

Tobias Bright or Breit was a Palatine German while Evans and Griffith were probably Welsh. Most of the Welsh in Pennsylvania were

Baptists or Quakers but Evans and Griffith may have been Anglicans. Mathusalem Griffith married Lyky Rees on February 2, 1730, at Christ Church in Philadelphia. Mathusalem's wife on Roanoke was Lucretia so apparently Lyky and Lucretia are the same woman. Mathusalem was 45 when he married Lyky so she may have been a second wife. Mark Evans married Katherine Thomas on June 17, 1723, at the same church.[2]

In 1734, four years after Mathusalem married Lyky, they left Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where there was a large Welsh settlement, and moved to a tract of land that Mark Evans had gotten from the Proprietors in Philadelphia in 1732. Evans' tract lay on the west bank of the Susquehanna River in the Conojacular Valley, so-called for an ancient Indian site, and near the present town of Wrightsville.[3] This valley was in Hallem Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, part of old Springettsbury Manor which William Penn had given to his son, Springett. Maryland claimed the same area as part of Baltimore County.[4] Thus it was a disputed area where Mark Evans and Mathusalem Griffith came to settle and they found a full-scale border war underway.

Thomas Cresap, a notorious Marylander, was forcing the Pennsylvanians to swear allegiance to Lord Baltimore or chasing them back across the river. Cresap's tactics were not admirable but there was some justice to his claim. The original charters given to Penn and Baltimore placed Penn's southern boundary at the 40th parallel and Baltimore's northern boundary at the same parallel. Thus, the Conojacular Valley, Wrights Ferry (Wrightsville) and even part of Philadelphia lay below the 40th parallel and were legally in Maryland. Penn, however, claimed that "to the 40th parallel" included everything from the 39th to the 40th, placing the above mentioned places in Pennsylvania.

Establishing Maryland's right to the Conojacular region had become a crusade to Cresap. He waged open war with the Pennsylvanians who tried to murder him and his family several times. Once they pushed him from a boat into the Susquehanna, beating him with oars and shooting at him while he was drowning. He saved himself by clinging to a rock.[5]

By 1735 Cresap had forced many west bank Pennsylvanians to swear allegiance to Maryland. He came with a posse to Mathusalem Griffith and told him he must swear for Maryland. Mathusalem did not want to do so because he believed his claim to land lay with the Land Office in Philadelphia, but Cresap told him he would burn his house down if he refused. So Mathusalem swore allegiance to Maryland to "save himself and family from the threatened ruin."[6]

The German Palatines who Mathusalem lived among would not give in to Cresap. To complicate matters further, some Pennsylvanians in Chester County who wanted the Germans' land formed an association

with Cresap and the Governor of Maryland to drive the Germans out. This betrayal of Pennsylvanians by Pennsylvanians was called the "Chester County Plot." Pennsylvania issued a decree against these plotters saying they were trying to take land that was in "the quiet and peaceful possession" of Mathusalem Griffith and approximately forty Germans all holding under the proprietorship of Pennsylvania.[7] Maryland, meantime, called for the arrest of "Mark Evans, Mathusalem Griffith, Tobias Bright" and others as being illegally settled in Maryland. Bright was listed as a German living in Baltimore County who had sworn allegiance to Pennsylvania and Maryland offered a reward for all such people. A twenty pound reward was offered for Mark Evans and ten pounds for Mathusalem Griffith. Maryland issued a public proclamation in August 1736 saying that everyone attending "tumultous and riotous Assemblys & Meetings" would be arrested. Evans, Griffith and Bright and all the Germans are named in this proclamation.[8]

About this time Mark Evans became involved in the arrest of one Jacob Lochman. When a Pennslyvania sheriff crossed the Susquehanna to arrest Lochman for debt, Evans stopped the sheriff, asking where he was taking Lochman. The sheriff answered, "To jail unless bail could be raised." Evans replied, "That could be arranged." Instantly about thirty men on horses armed with cutlasses and clubs rode up, dispersed the sheriff's men, beat the sheriff, leaving him for dead and made off with Lochman. The sheriff's men named Mark Evans as one of the assailants and a "Marylander." So goes the Pennsylvania version of the story.[9] A Maryland account claims Evans was a "Pennsylvanian." So he was wanted by both colonies. But it was the Marylanders who arrested him first and had him jailed in Baltimore County before May 18, 1737.[10]

Meantime, Pennsylvania had sent several posses after Cresap who barricaded himself in his house "with five men of desperate fortunes" and evaded capture. Finally he was taken in November 1736 and driven through the streets of Philadelphia where crowds gathered to see the "Maryland monster."[11]

The authorities obtained depositions against Cresap and one of those testifying was Mathusalem Griffith. Mathusalem swore that in December 1725 he was traveling along the road with Cresap and began talking of John Wright, Jr., who had built a house on the west bank and ran Wright's Ferry. Wright had not given in to Cresap so he had decided to burn Wright's house. Cresap said before he was half a year older he would build a fort where John Wright's house stood, equip it with cannon and aim these at the house of Samuel Blunston, a Pennsylvania magistrate, living directly opposite on the east bank. Cresap said he would bombard Blunston's house and "make the sash windows fly about his ears."[12]

Mathusalem and others told enough to keep Cresap behind bars in Philadelphia. But the so-called "Conojacular War" did not end with Cresap's arrest. His confederate, Charles Higginbottom, took up the crusade against the Germans. "He broke into their houses with axes, wounded and carried them prisoners, and drove the women and children forth in the month of January into the woods." His party drove a whole group of Germans to Baltimore as prisoners. Mark Evans was captured with this group. The sheriff of Lancaster County had to send a body of men to protect the few people remaining on the west bank. Most had fled to the east bank where many nearly starved and some died during the terribly cruel winter of 1736-37.[13]

The Conojacular War continued into the 1740's. By that time it was evident the boundary dispute would not be settled soon and was not until Mason and Dixon made their survey in 1767. The continuing turmoil prompted Mathusalem Griffith, Mark Evans and Tobias Bright to look for land elsewhere.

Though we know Evans was imprisoned in 1737 we do not know for how long nor do we know the whereabouts of Bright and Griffith in the years after this. They may all have remained in Hallem Township on the "Great Road" to Lancaster. In June 1744 the Treaty of Lancaster was signed with the Iroquois giving legality to settlements beyond the Blue Ridge. A Virginian, James Patton, who had a 100,000 acre grant on the Roanoke River, attended the Treaty talks and spent three weeks in Lancaster County, presumably advertising his land on Roanoke River.[14] Surely victims of the border war heard his glowing reports. By December 1744, Mark Evans, Mathusalem Griffith and Tobias Bright, refugees of the "Conojacular War", were living on the upper Roanoke River near the Great Lick. Peace and security had been vainly sought along the Susquehanna. Perhaps along the fertile Roanoke they would find it at last.

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