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JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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"No man is fit to be entrusted with the control of the present who is ignorant of the past, and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great."

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JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Organized May 21, 1927
Post Office Box 485
Charles Town, West Virginia 25414

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History of Friend's Orebank and Keeptryst Furnace

The area known as the Orebank, lying approximately 1 mile east of Bakerton on the Potomac, is the site of one of the earliest and longest operating iron mines in West Virginia. Early explorers had identified this location and several others along the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers as worthy of development, for it had all the ingredients necessary for nurturing an infant iron industry: iron ore, limestone, water, and wood.

The iron ore (brown hematite), mixed with red clay, formed a layer from 1 to 20 feet deep, and ledges of brown boulder hetamite up to 2 feet thick laced the area. Beneath the iron ore lay Tomstown dolomite, a low-silica limestone that is excellent for building and lining furnaces.[1] The limestone was also used in the smelting process. The plentiful water supply was necessary for the ore-washing and smelting, and, since the roads were poor, the Potomac provided a means of transporting products to the market. The local hardwoods could be used to make charcoal for smelting the ore.

The Orebank was originally settled by Israel Friend, a Quaker, who obtained a regal grant of 300 acres for the governor of Virginia in 1734 as part of his effort to secure most of the iron-rich land along both sides of the Potomac. Seven years earlier, in 1727, he had received a deed from the Indian chiefs of the Five Nations to property at the mouth of Antietam Creek.[2] Henceforth, the histories of Friend's Orebank and Antietam Creek were to be closely linked.

By 1737, Friend probably had erected a stone house , which he called "Keeptryst," on the Orebank property.[3] The house is still standing and is one of the oldest buildings in Jefferson County. At approximately the

[1] Grimsley, G.P. *West Virginia Geological Survey.* Vol. IV. Morgantown: Acme Publishing Co., 1909; pp. 275-276; *West Virginia Geological Survey.* Vol. XII. Parkersburg: Scholl Printing Co., 1939; pp. 7-8

[2] G., C.S. "Iron Industry in Jefferson County." *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society* (MJCHS). 30:18; Dec. 1964; Isabel Robbins Ward, "Chesapeake and Ohio Canal," *D.A.R. Magazine,* Oct. 1964.

[3] G., C.S., p. 17. The inference is drawn from the appearance of Keeptryst on the 1737 Map of the Northern Neck of Virginia (Gooch). A photograph of the Israel Friend House appears in the previously cited "Iron Industry in Jefferson County," published in the 1964 issue of *MJCHS.*

same time, he began mining iron ore at this site. The destination of the iron ore during the initial operation is not clear. It may have been sent to a forge on Friend's Antietam Creek property.

Friend sold a portion of his original grant in 1745. After his death in 1753, the remaining property was divided among his three sons. In 1763, John Semple, owner of the Occoquan Iron Works, bought two tracts of land from Friend's sons.[4] One was at the junction of Elk Run and the Potomac River, near the present Baltimore and Ohio railroad underpass on Bakerton Road. The other was located on the Maryland side of the Potomac near the mouth of Antietam Creek. Both sites had the water power necessary for operating a furnace and the Maryland site contained iron ore deposits.

Other developers simultaneously recognized the potential of the Virginia and Maryland ore banks. David Ross, Samuel Beall, Jr., Richard Henderson, and Joseph Chapline formed a company in 1763 with the intention of mining and smelting iron ore.[5] Chapline had substantial holdings on both sides of the Potomac.

During the following year, Semple erected a furnace on his Virginia property, sold part of his Maryland tract to Ross and colleagues, acquired some of their land on the Virginia side of the river, and received a patent at "Keep Triest" for 10,202 acres.[6] He also agreed to supply the forge at Antietam Creek with up to 300 tons of pig iron per year; Semple was to deliver it to Knott's island.

The characteristics of Semple's Keep Tryst Furnace are not known, but contemporary blast furnaces were usually 30 to 40 feet high and 15 to 20 feet square at their base. The facing of the furnace was probably built from readily available stone and the inside lined with firebrick or sandstone. Normally, these structures were built against a bank so that the furnace could easily be charged; a covered bridge was built from the bank to the furnace throat. Storage buildings for charcoal and ore would have been located at the top of the bank, and the area at the base of the furnace was normally occupied by a casting house and a bellows. The bellows, providing the air blast to the furnace, would have been

[4] Norris, J.E. *History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley*. 1890; p. 81; Will Book 2, p. 92 before Frederick County Court; Michael D.Thompson, *History of the Iron Industry in Western Maryland*. 1976, p. 20.

[5] Thompson, p. 23.

[6] Thompson, pp. 20, 22-24.

powered by a water wheel.[7] Since an operation of this size would require approximately 8 to 10 workers, a small community was probably located at the site.

The furnaces were first filled with charcoal, lighted from the throat, refilled, and allowed to burn up to the throat. Then they were filled with alternating layers of charcoal, ore, and limestone. On the the average, it took 174 bushels of charcoal, 5,172 pounds of iron ore, and 1, 558 pounds of limestone to make one ton of pig iron. While a furnace was in blast, it required approximately 800 bushels of charcoal per day, the equivalent of an acre of 20- to 25-year-old hardwood timber.[8] The large tracts of land acquired by Semple and his Maryland competitors served largely to supply the operations with charcoal.

Striving to keep pace with Semple, Ross and company entered into an agreement to build their own furnace at Antietam Creek. It was probably not in operation until after 1767, for at that time they were contesting Semple's refusal to supply them with pig iron.[9] Apparently, Semple had constructed his own forge or found other outlets for his iron. The dispute was settled by arbitration in Semple's favor.

During the rest of the century, ownership of Antietam Iron Works became more consolidated while that of Keeptryst fragmented. Chapline's quarter interest in the Antietam operation, including his holdings on the Virginia side of the river, were bought by Ross in 1769 upon Chapline's death. When Beall died in 1790, his quarter interest in was purchased by Henderson. Meanwhile, Semple was heavily in debt to his brother-in-law, James Lawson, and died in 1773 in the midst of a court struggle with Lawson over the control of the Semple estate.[10]

At least 1,600 acres of Semple's holdings, including Friend's stone house, nearby iron ore deposits, and the Keeptryst Furnace Tract, were purchased by Henry Lee (later known as General "Light Horse Harry" Lee). Lee subsequently sold the right to mine iron ore on part of the property to John Potts, William Wilson, George North, and Robert

[7] Grimsley, pp. 77-78; Thompson, pp. 2-3.

[8] Thompson, pp. 7, 8-9.

[9] G., C.S., p. 18; Henry T. McDonald, "The Armory and Arsenal at Harper's Ferry," *MJCHS* 2:12; Dec. 1936; Thompson, p. 20.

[10] Thompson, pp. 20, 31, 34.

Hobart. Six hundred acres of Lee's holdings were leased to Colonel Burgess Ball.[11]

During the 1790's, the United States selected Harper's Ferry as the site for the new national armory and simultaneously evaluated the surrounding area for resources that could support the armory operation. George Washington appears to have been instrumental in the government's acquisition of the Orebank and Furnace properties. Washington was quite familiar with the area, having participated in the Fairfax survey. John Semple had chosen him as one of the potential arbitrators for settling disputes over furnishing pig iron to Antietam Iron Works.[12] Futhermore, Colonel Burgess Ball (who leased part of the Orebank) was a relative of Washington and General Henry Lee (who owned the Orebank and Keeptryst properties) was a close friend. Writing to Secretary of War, Timothy Pickering in 1795, Washington noted that "Genl. Henry Lee . . . I have no doubt will dispose of his right on very reasonable terms."[13]

The United States purchased the Orebank and Furnace properties and obtained rights to dig iron ore from Lee, Potts, Wilson, and North in 1800. Hobart had sold his share to Wilson earlier in the year.[14]

[11] At the time of Semple's death, Philip Ludwell Lee held the mortgage to the furnace tract. The property was subsequently bought by Richard Bland Lee and conveyed to Henry Lee. See: Deed of George North, William Wilson, John Potts, and others, conveying to the United States the right to dig iron ore on Friend's Ore Bank and the 221-acre Keep Tryst Furnace Tract. June 20, 1800. Reprinted in Charles W. Snell, *The Acquisition and Disposal of Public Lands of the U.S. Armory at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia: 1796-1885.* Vol. II Denver, Colo.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, December 1979; pp. 110-116 (Final Draft). George Washington, Letter to Secretary of State Timothy Pickering, September 16, 1795. Reprinted in *The Writings of George Washington,* John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. Washington, D.C.; vol. 34, pp. 307-308.

[12] Thompson, pp. 24-26.

[13] Washington, Letter to Timothy Pickering, September 16, 1795.

[14] Deed, May 8, 1800, conveying to the United States from Henry Lee and others the right to dig iron ore on 1,600 acres of land at Friend's Ore Bank; Deed, June 1, 1800, conveying to the United States from William Wilson and others four acres near Keep Tryst Furnace; Deed, June 20, 1800, conveying to the United States from North, Wilson, and Potts the right to dig iron ore of Friend's Ore Bank and 221 acres at Keep Tryst Furnace; reprinted in Snell, *Acquisition and Disposal,* Vol. 11, pp. 107-119.

In retrospect, the government's acquisition of the Orebank and Furnace properties was probably a mistake. Thomas Jefferson apparently shared this view, for he noted in 1802 that

> Whether this method of supplying what may be wanted will be the most advisable or that purchasing at market where competition brings everything to its proper level of price and quality is for the legislature to decide, and if the latter alternative be preferred, it will rest for their further consideration in what way the subjects of this purchase may be best employed or disposed of.[15]

The supply of timber (and therefore charcoal) at the two sites was limited,[16] making the long-term, independent operation of the furnace impractical.

The government purchase of the Furnace property marks the end of smelting operations at that site. Between 1800 and 1818, part of the Furnace tract was leased by John and Philip Strider, who constructed a flour warehouse and a sawmill. The area known as "Furnace farm" was leased by Jessee Moore in 1809. The furnace bellows, various pieces of equipment, and available cast and wrought iron were bought by Ferdinando Fairfax between 1809 and 1811. The property was purchased by John Peacher in 1819.[17] Henceforth, the Orebank would be an adjunct to iron works in Maryland and Pennsylvania.

During the period of decline at Keeptryst Furnace, the Antietam Iron works was also undergoing substantial change. In debt, owner Richard Henderson was forced in 1802 to give John Ritchie control of the operation. Ritchie sold the "Keep Triest" (Orebank) tract to pay debts. After Henderson's death, the iron works were bought by John McPherson and John Brien of Frederick County, Maryland. By 1815, the owners had enlarged and improved the operation, and ore from

[15] Jefferson, Thomas. February 2, 1802. *Messages and Papers of the Presidents,* Vol. I; cited in McDonald, p. 10.

[16] Roach, James C. "Keep Tryste Furnace Tract." Notes compiled from various sources in the files of the Harper's Ferry National Park, August 1971.

[17] Letter from Paymaster Samuel Annin to War Department. June 30, 1809; *U.S. Statutes at Large.* Fifth Congress. Sess. II. March 3, 1819, Chapter 90, p. 521; Jefferson County, Virginia, *Deed Book 23,* pp. 178-179.

Friend's Orebank was being used at thier furnace. Upon McPherson's death in 1833, John McPherson Brien bought his grandfather's part of the operation, which contained the "Keep Triest" tract.[18]

Meanwhile, that portion of the Orebank owned by the United States had not been used to support the Harper's Ferry Armory. Writing to Secretary of War B.H. Butler in 1837, the Chief of Ordnance at Harper's Ferry, Colonel George Bomford, noted that

> . . . althought a very large sum was paid by the War Department for this right to dig iron ore . . . and although the ore is considered as of the very first quality yet it has never been made available to the U.S. and unless the National Armory should be established (somewhere in the neighborhood) it probably never can be.[19]

During the summer of the same year, an effort was made to use the ore to the Armory's advantage. Thomas C. Miller of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, entered into an agreement with the government and assured Bomford that "Already I have removed two tons."[20] Unfortunately, Brien also claimed the right to dig ore at the same spot and forced Miller's men off the tract. The dispute was settled in court.

The Antietam Iron Works continued to make use of the Orebank throughout the 1840's and most of the 1850's, although the property changed hands several times and the owners faced serious financial problems. Ore dug at the site was moved upstream to Brien's Ferry (one mile below the mouth of Antietam Creek), taken across the Potomac, and then transported across the canal via a bridge. According to the 1850 Census, the "Keep Triest" operation then employed eight men; 3,300 tons of ore had been mined during the year. Brien's Maryland

[18] Thompson, pp. 34, 36-38; *Washington County Land Record Book,* Vol. 00, pp. 656-666.

[19] Letter, January 12, 1837, from Col. George Bomford to B.H. Butler. Reprinted in Snell, *Acquisition and Disposal,* I, p. 89.

[20] Letter, July 26, 1837, from Thomas C. Miller to Col. George Bomford. Reprinted in Snell, *Acquisition and Disposal,* I, p. 8[illegible].

operation was manned by both white workers and slaves,[21] and some slave labor was probably used at the Orebank throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

The first local use of chloroform as an anaesthetic occured at the Orebank during this period. Dr. John Reynolds of Shepherdstown, assisted by Drs. Butler and Taylor, amputated the leg of an Irish workman at this site on March 1, 1848.[22] The chloroform had been obtained from Baltimore.

The Antietam Iron works closed temporarily in 1858, and it is unlikely that ore digging or smelting operations continued during the Civil War, for both Harper's Ferry and the riverbank north to Shepherdstown changed hands numerous times during this period. The stone house at the Orebank was used as a military hospital during the war. Most of the machinery at the armory was destroyed or moved South at this time, and Confederate forces repeatedly tore up railroad tracks, destroyed rollingstock, and disrupted transportation of the rivers and highways. Manpower would have been scarce.

On November 30, 1869, the United States sold timber and mineral rights and property previously acquired for the operation of the armory. The right to dig iron ore on the 1,600 acres, purchased by the government in 1800, was offered for sale at the price of $13,000. It was purchased by W.C. Bradley of Maryland for 13,100.[23] However, the land on which most of the iron ore deposits were located was owned by Daniel V. Ahl and John A. Ahl, who purchased the Antietam Iron Works (including part of the Orebank) in 1864.

[21] In 1841, Brien had to mortgage his half interest in Antietam Iron Works to Robert Gilmore so that he could buy his father's share of the operation. Gilmore was forced to take over the business in 1843 when Brien was unable to pay the mortgage. Part of the Iron Works was sold in 1848 to pay Brien's debts; Brien was able to buy back 1,300 acres of the property the same year, but the Orebank was no longer included in his holdings. (Gilmore is shown as the owner of the Orebank on the 1852 S. Howell Brown Map of Jefferson County.) Brien died in 1849. Thereafter, the Iron Works were owned by William B. Clark (1853), who sold one half interest in the property to Levi Easton (1855). After Clark's death, Easton sold his interest to John Horine (1856). The Iron Works was purchased by Daniel V. Ahl from Horine's son in 1864; during the same year, Dr. John A. Ahl became a partner in the operation. See Thompson, pp. 89, 92-98; *Census of 1850.* Marshal's Report on Manufacturers, Washington County, Maryland; Jean Libby, *Black Voices from Harper's Ferry: Osborne Anderson and the John Brown Raid.* Palo Alto, Calif.: Published by the Author, 1979; pp. 88-89.

[22] *Shepherdstown Register,* January 9, 1881 (Obituary of Dr. John Reynolds).

[23] McDonald, p. 19; *Shepherdstown Register,* December 4, 1869.

The extent of mining operations at the Orebank immediately after the Civil War is uncertain, but it was closed from approximately 1874 to 1888.[24] The Antietam Iron Works was in operation until 1886, being rented by Quitman Parker Ahl. When the Iron Works failed in 1886, Thomas W. Ahl purchased 96 acres of the Orebank and began modernizing the operation.

Earlier operators had used iron rakes to remove the ore from the earth, an inefficient process that extracted only about one-half of the usable ore. The new owner extended the railroad spur (brought in from Engle by the Washington Building and Lime Company) to the river property. By 1890, he had hired W.C. Foreman, a miner with 24 years' experience in the business, to superintend the operation. About 25 men were employed at the time, most of them living on the Maryland side of the Potomac. Of the Ahl's 95 acre trace, approximately 55 acres were estimated to contain usable ore. According to a contemporary source, "The ore, which comprises almost the entire hill, is easily mined. It is loaded onto small cars, drawn by steam up an inclined plane, dumped into the big washer, the dirt and refuse cleaned out, then drawn again into the cars, which are pulled up to a platform along the railroad, and the ore is finally dumped into the cars."[25] Most of the ore was being shipped to Baltimore, with some going to a furnace at Dunbar, Pennsylvania. At that time, there were plans to construct a new inclined plane, expand the equipment, and build houses to accommodate the workers.

The property owned by Jacob S. Moler, north of the Ahl's operation, had been quarried previously but was not in use in 1890. Apparently, there was still plenty of iron ore at this site because a reporter was told that "All you have to do is take a pick and dig into the ground and out rolls the ore."[26] The land was then being examined by "Baltimore capitalists" with an eye to leasing it.

John Moore became superintendent in 1896, working for the new owner, Joseph E.Thropp.[27] Moore's daughter, Juanita Moore Horn,

[24] *Shepherdstown Register,* November 28, 1890.

[25] *Shepherdstown Register,* November 28, 1890.

[26] *Shepherdstown Register,* November 28, 1890.

[27] Interview with Juanita Moore Horn, April 23, 1984.

said that her father had previously worked for John Flanagan, who owned a stone quarry on the Potomac River between the Orebank and River Bend. Moore boated stone down the river and lived on board the boat with his wife, Nora Welch Moore, and their two children.

After taking the new job, John Moore initially lived in a house owned by John Flanagan, but the same year he purchased 25 acres of land north of the Orebank from Adam Moler and built the house still occupied by Mark and Juanita Horn. Juanita Moore, the youngest of eight children, was born in the house in 1904. She remembers seeing the quarry owners frequently as a girl, for her mother used to make dinner for them whenever they came to inspect the operation. A 1909 letter from Joseph E. Thropp, Sr., bears the address: "John Moore, Supt., Antietam Mines, Harper's Ferry, West Virginia," and suggests that Thropp also owned the iron ore works at Antietam Creek.[28] The letterhead lists Joseph E. Thropp, Jr., as General Manager of the Earlston and Saxton furnaces in Earlston (Bedford County), Pennsylvania. George W. Hughes was listed as Assistant Manager.

At this time, the Orebank was the only operating iron mine in West Virginia. One ore vein, opened to a depth of 88 feet by 1890, had by this time been delved to a depth of 140 feet. Fifty to 60 men were employed at the time, and a small engine was used to haul the iron ore from the pits to two washers. The washing plant, run by Ben Huff, used a steam-driven pump to draw water from the river and separate the ore from the clay. The mud residue was channeled off to the bank on moveable metal flumes. As a result of the washing operation, mud deposits accumulated to a depth of 20 feet, forming what was known as the "Mud dam". The ore-washing operation tinged the Potomac River red on the West Virginia side as far down as Harper's Ferry.[29] The washed ore was shipped to a furnace at Earlston, Pennsylvania, where it was combined with lake ores.

During this period, the Orebank had developed into a working community that included a store, a post office, a telephone (one of three in the area), and several houses for workers.[30] The store and post office

[28] Interview with Juanita Moore Horn, April 23, 1984.

[29] Grimsley, pp.275-276; Interview with Juanita Moore Horn; G., C.S., p. 18.

[30] Interview with Juanita Moore Horn.

were run by Jack Boyers. George Gay and Grover Hardin lived in two of the three small frame houses on the property, and there was a barn to house livestock. Approximately five shanties had been built on the property for workers who stayed at the quarry during the week and went home on the weekends; most of these people came from across the Potomac River in Maryland.

While John Moore was superintendent, the Israel Friend House was first occupied by the Eaton family. At the time, the house had two usable entrances, one on the ground floor facing the river and another on the third (top) floor that was reached by a wooden drawbridge from the bank behind. The house was later occupied by George Washington "Pappy" Jones and his family. Jones had previously worked with John Moore, moving stone from Flanagan's Quarry down the Potomac and he and his family had also lived on a house-boat. Jones came to work at the quarry after Moore became superintendent.[31]

The Orebank property was sold to the Everett Saxton Company of Pennsylvania in 1925; it had been in the hands of a receiver for a year or more. Thropp's operation had ceased several years before. The property containing the stone house was owned by the Savior family from approximately 1940 to 1960.[32] The parcel north of the house was initially purchased by the power company and then Robert Mason of Bakerton; this area is now known as Glen Haven.

Mr. Jones was still living in the stone house in 1952, at the age of 90 and he continued to live there until his death approximately three years later.[33] Mr. Jones was one of the last people to occupy the house. The house is now owned by Cedric Sullivan of Bakerton, and the site of the washing plant is on adjoining property now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Cool.

William D. Theriault, Ph.D.

[31] Interview with Juanita Moore Horn.

[32] *Shepherdstown Register,* December 10, 1925; Interview with Juanita Moore Horn.

[33] *Spirit of Jefferson Advocate,* Feb. 21, 1952.

ABRAHAM DAVENPORT, SR. (1714-1789)

Abraham Davenport, Sr. of Berkeley County Virginia was born in England on May 28, 1714.[1] There are three theories of how and when he came to America. The first theory of Abraham being a descendant of Reverand John Davenport of New Haven, Connecticut has been reasonably proven via lineages to be false. The second theory, proposed by H.B. Davenport in his book, states that an Abraham Davenport was registered as a blacksmith who migrated from England to St. Marys County, Maryland, where he eventually became a magistrate appointed by King George III.[2] A last theory is based on records which give evidence that he was a convicted felon, transported by the British government as an indentured servant. When evidence supporting all three theories is weighed, it appears that a combination of the later two theories best illustrates a plausible account of Abraham's migration and the establishment of the family's decending lines in Jefferson County, West Virginia.

To elaborate this account, Abraham Davenport was tried on December 9, 1737, for stealing goods worth seven Pounds from the house of Henry Wall of St. Dunstan in the West. It was Wall who prosecuted him with Thomas Gray as a witness. According to records, it was alleged that the silver mug had been sold to Thomas Gray the Elder. Gray's son, Thomas Gray the Younger, a silversmith of Whitechapel, in contrast to his father's testimony, affirmed that he knew nothing of the matter. Both Gray's were Quakers. Subsequently, Abraham was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged at the infamous prison Newgate. Later, however, on January 16, 1738, he was pardoned and given fourteen years indentured servitude in America.[3] He was transported on the Galley "Forward", piloted by John Magier, which was destined for Maryland or Virginia. Thus, nearly six months later when he was received on June 9, 1738 and left for America on June 18, 1738.[4] His arrival in America probably occurred during August of that year.

[1] Marriage Scrolls - dates 1757, 11 x 14 inches containing birthdates of family members and a prayer by St. Matthew Hale.

[2] Davenport, H.B. - *Genealogy of the Davenport family and Connections,* 1947. p. 6.

[3] London Records Office, Sessions, 9, Dec. 1737.

[4] Kaminkow, Marion J. *A List of Emigrants from England to America 1719-1759.*

At this time and prior to the revolution, the colonies served as a dumping ground for what is referred to in English documents as "vagrants and offenders" or convicts. Persons having committed crimes of any magnitude were known as "his magisties seven-year passengers," serving terms of seven to fourteen years, with seven being common in Maryland.[5] The conditions of transport were quite bad. As records show, the Galley "Forward" in 1730 delivered 77 alive while 32 were buried at sea.[6] Reaching America, these convicts were sold as white or indentured servants, a modified form of apprenticeship. At this time, the colony of Maryland operated in a similar fashion to the old feudal system still in effect in the mother country. By hard work and honesty, most convicts became respected citizens.

Maryland was foremost of these colonies receiving as many as an estimated 50,000 convicts between 1717 and 1775.[7] At one point, the ratio of convicts and servants to free men was six to one. The economic importance cannot be over emphasized, especially, in the middle colonies such as Maryland and Virginia. It was scarcity of labor that made the sale of convicts important to the economy. It should be noted that servants and convicts were almost always preferred over slave labor, as many servants came with other skills. One land agreement shows Abraham to be a blacksmith by trade. In addition, most convicts would be productive members of society, whereas slaves were never provided the opportunity. It should be noted that the crimes of these "servants of indenture" were of rather a petty nature. The worst criminals were seldom transported but rather executed in large numbers after each court session. The class of the servant changed with the state of society and with the master or planter under which he served. Toward the latter half of the century servants were more abused. In some cases they were forced to dig their own graves the last few days of their lives with a social status of not much above that of the negro slave. But even at its worst, conditions for the offender were far better than languishing in a debtors's cell in England.[8]

[5] Ballagh, James. *White Servitude in the Colony of Virginia, passim.*

[6] Middleton, Arthur. *Tobacco Coast, A Maritime History of the Chesapeake Bay Colonial Era,* p. 10.

[7] McCormac, Eugene. *White Servitude in Maryland (1634-1820),* p. 93.

[8] McCormac, p. 75.

In contrast, Abrahams's lot was far better in the early half of the 18th century. In fact, his life was quite similar to that of a free citizen in all but two respects. Owing to legal restrictions, he was not subject to military duty nor was his oath accepted in court. At this time, most servants were comfortably housed and fed and there was often a contract of mutual agreement involved. In return for seven years labor the master bound himself to provide " sufficient meate, drinke, washing and apparrell." Upon expiration of service most servants were provided with such items as "barrels of Corne, hilling hoe, weeding hoe, and a felling axe," and in some cases small plots of land. With faithful performances of duties, Abraham, like other industrious servants, was given a plot of land and animals. Thus, the accumulation of property and eventual expiration of servitude enabled him to become a planter with all the rights and obligations of full citizenship in the colony of Maryland.[9]

Abraham Davenport lived and remained in southern Maryland until sometime during the Revolutionary War. About 1746, having fulfilled his seven-year commitment, he married Mary Simms, a daughter of Anthony Simms, a prominent land holder and tobacco farmer in the region.[10] Mary was a Catholic converted to Episcopalian, Abraham's religion. Despite the predominence of Catholics to the north, anti-Catholic sentiment was high in southern Maryland. It was said that Mary never forgot her Catholicism, for while on her death bed she asked for her rosary.[11]

Abraham's residence alternated between four counties: St. Marys, Charles, Prince Georges, and Frederick (present day Montgomery) depending on where he owned land at the time. A blacksmith by occupation, he also farmed tobacco, as evidenced by county land records. H.B. Davenport states that Abraham was a magistrate in St. Marys County appointed by the King of England, George III. He may very well have been as about 1768-1776 he owned land in St. Marys County.[12] Records to confirm this appointment have since been destroyed by fire. A Magistrate was a low level judge (similar to the Justice of the Peace) convening four times a year to preside over legal matters in the county.

9 McCormac, p. 71.

10 Newman, Harry. *The Maryland Semmes and Kindred Family, passim.*

11 Davenport, p. 14.

12 Maryland State Archives. Debt Records of St. Marys County, Lieber 41.

Abraham and Mary gave birth to eleven children: Elizabeth (1747), Stephen (1749), Abraham, Jr. (1752), John (1753), Marmaduke (1755), Anthony Sims (1757), Adrian (1759), Mary (1761), Samuel (1763), Catherine (1765), and Nancy (1767).

In the mid-18th century, the American dream was attainable by two major methods, the acquisition and sale of land and marriage into an influential and prominent family. Abraham followed both routes.

The following is an account of his land holdings and sales in the colony of Maryland:

Tract[13]/County	**Acreage**	**Bought**	**Sold**
"Dann"/ Prince Georges	93	1748	1750[14]
"Turner's Forest" Charles	100	1753	1759[15]
"Munmouth"/ Charles	156	1762[16]	
"Hard Struggle" "Friendship" Prince Georges, Frederick	243	1765	1780[17]
"Goodwill"/ Prince Georges Frederick	20¼		1780[18]
"Hopewell"/ St. Marys	100	1768	1771[19]

While residing in Maryland, he was an Episcopalian as evidenced by records showing membership in the Piscataway Parish, now called St. John's Parish in Piscataway, Maryland.[20] He may have also attended the Rock Creek Chapel of the "Chapel of Ease" in what is now

[13] The custom of naming a tract of land was brought over from the Mother Country.

[14] Prince Georges County Court House. Land bought and sold for 800 lbs. of tobacco. Leiber BB 1746-505.

[15] Maryland State Archives. Debt Records of Charles Co., Lieber 13-16.

[16] Charles Co. Court House Land Records, April 20, 1762. Joe Higdon (one of Mary Simms Davenport's relations) sold to Abraham for 3,000 lbs. of tobacco.

[17] Frederick Co. Court House - bought from Bejamin Beall 21 March 1765 for 190 lbs. current money. Sold for 315 lbs. sterling in 1780 ref. Montgomery Co. Court House.

[18] Montgomery County Court House, Deed A584, December 11, 1780. Sold for 18 shillings to William Dunn. Ref. - Maryland State Archives Debt. Records.

[19] Maryland State Archives. Debt Records of St. Marys Co. Leiber 41.

[20] Register of Births, Film 26-3 Piscataway, St. Johns Parish. Compiled by H. Newman, 1967.

Montgomery County, Maryland. This was one of several small chapels created so that parishoners would not have to travel great distances to attend the mother church. The Rock Creek Chapel and "Hard Struggle" were both located in the Rock Creek One Hundred. Lawrence Owen, a neighbor of Abraham, was listed as a vestryman for this chapel, a wooden structure which no longer exists.[21]

Abraham's drive to acquire and develop land did not stop in the Colony of Maryland as vast amounts of land lay in the wilderness to the west, the Commonwealth of Virginia. After acquiring 400 acres in Berkeley County, Virginia in the form of a Fairfax grant in 1772,[22] he proceeded to send several of his sons to homestead.

1776 brought turbulent times to the colonies leaving no family unaffected. It was said that Abraham was initially a loyalist faithful to the King of England, but as the officials of Berkeley County seized lands of British sympathizers his sentiments changed to that of the newly founded American cause. The job he performed was known as the Patriotic Service, a non-combat support service. For his role in furnishing supplies to the troops, he is listed in the non-pension roles of the Maryland Service.[23] What follows is an account of the involvement of his seven sons in the war effort:

Stephen (age 28)	served in the Virginia Militia.
Abraham, Jr. (age 25)	served with Capt. William Morgan as a Civilian. served with Col. Moses Rawlings as a Cadet-Sgt. served with Capt. Thomas Beall as a Corporal.
John (age 24)	served with Capt. William Morgan as a Civilian. served with Capt. Samuel Cabell as a Private. served with Capt. Matthew Jobett as a Corporal

[21] Boynton, Lewis. *The History of Rock Creek Parish,* p. 15.

[22] Land grants. Virginia State Archives. Richmond, Va. 1772 #146.

[23] *Revolutionary Pensioners and Non-Pensioners under the Maryland Service* and *DAR Patriot Index.*

Marmaduke (age 22)	died at Valley Forge.
Anthony Sims (age 20)	served as a Civilian. served with Capt. John Lyle as a Corporal.
Adrian (age 18)	served with Capt. Thomas Beall as a Private.
Samuel (age 14)	served with Capt. William Morgan as a Civilian.

After the war, Abraham returned with his six sons (Marmaduke had died at Valley Forge) to continue farming and land acquisition. Because of the many Davenports buying property in Virginia at that time, determination of Abraham's property is difficult. However, Abraham, Sr. became a respected gentry in Berkeley County, where he lived until his death in 1789. He attended services at St. Georges Episcopal Chapel near his home, as evidenced by the ruins of the chapel and a present day historical marker.[24] As a member of the upper class, it can be assumed that he knew the other gentry in the area, the most prominent of whom were the Washingtons. In October 1789, Abraham Davenport, Sr. died of complications of an unkown illness at the age of 75.[25] According to his last will and testament, he owned in excess of 1,000 acres of land, 16 slaves, and much property.[26] It is believed that he is buried with his wife, Mary, in an unmarked grave[27] at "Mount Ellen", the home of his son, John, in Summit Point, Jefferson County, West Virginia.

Kevan Davenport

[24] *Historical Marker on Rt. 51 past "Altoona".*

[25] *West Virginia Estate Settlements 10-20, 1789.*

[26] Last Will and Testament. October 9, 1780.

[27] Unmarked graves were not uncommon even among the wealthy. Samuel and Charles Washington (brothers of George) are both buried in unmarked graves in the same area.

White Plumes and Cornstalks: Jefferson County's Pre-war Militia (1858-1861)

The day's climax had arrived. Four hours of steady marching and drilling had taxed the patience of the local militia. As the regiment completed its final maneuver into a hollow square, tired and foot-weary civilian-soldiers awaited eagerly their dismissal.

But first a few words from the colonel.

"Soldiers," he roared, "I was going to make you a speech, but with all this noise and foolishness I lost it out of my head. All I've got to say now is — up in that big booth are two barrels of whiskey for you to drink to your colonel's health."

A surge of energy suddenly revived the ranks.

"About face!" yelled the colonel. "The enemy is before you! Charge!"

The resurgent militiamen raced toward the spirits. Porte Crayon watched the charge with amusement. "Never was an order executed with greater alacrity."[1] recorded the cynical illustrator!

Many contemporaries echoed Porte Crayon's censure of the ante-bellum militia musters in the Valley of Virginia. The editor of Charles Town's *Virginia Free Press*, for example, defined the muster as a "pugilistic exercise" characterised by intoxication.[2] Others, however, rejoiced in the festive atmosphere of a typical muster and proclaimed the event "the biggest day of the year."[3]

The drums, the fifes, the officers and the uniforms so excited Clarke County school boy Tom Gold that he declared the general muster "even beat the circus days." Despite his ardent enthusiasm, the discerning Gold concluded that "nothing was learned as to military drill by such meetings." Still Gold found the musters useful because "they served to bring people together and to gratify the ambition of those who wanted to be Colonels, Majors, etc."[4]

1 Porte Crayon [David Hunter Strother], "Old Time Militia Musters," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* (volume and page numbers missing, but article in collection of Harpers Ferry).

2 *Virginia Free Press*, 20 May 1858, p. 2, col. 1.

3 Thomas D. Gold, *History of Clarke County, Virginia, and its Connections with the War Between the States* (Berryville, Va.: Thomas D. Gold, 1914), pp. 75-76.

4 Gold, p. 76.

Ridiculous, humorous, and inept. Certainly not the national defense force intended by the Founding Fathers when—in 1792—the federal congress enacted legislation requiring all white males between 18 and 45 to perform military duty once each year.

Jefferson County deemed unacceptable, however, the stereotypical "cornstalk and featherbed militia" that had diseased most of the nation. In fact, eighteen months *before* John Brown's Raid, the county's local newspapers were encouraging its citizen-soldiers to organize to "repel the foreign invader and to crush the domestic enemies of peace."[5]

This curious interest in a reinvigorated militia resulted, in part, from a wave of military spirit that washed through Jefferson in 1858—a spirit local congressman Charles J. Faulkner pronounced "essential to the liberties and independence of any people."[6]

The energy propelling this spirit of military strength and readiness materialized as a result of Virginia's enactment of a new militia law in March, 1858. Although the law's main provision simply required two company musters each year rather than the traditional one, the measure spurred a "military spirit awakening" in the Old Commonwealth and the enrollment of new volunteer companies throughout the state. Regarding the formation of new militia units, the editor of the *Free Press* proudly observed that "our own county is by no means backward; the ball is rolling."[7]

Before rolling into Jefferson County's militia history, however, one first must differentiate between Virginia's *line militia* and *its volunteer* companies. With few exceptions, the law required all white males between the ages 18 and 45 to enroll in the company and regiment of the district in which they resided. This *compulsory* service constituted the state's line militia. Enlistment in a volunteer company, on the other hand, was by choice; and—unlike the line militia—the volunteers were uniformed and armed.[8]

5 *Virginia Free Press*, 9 Sept. 1858. p. 2, col. 2.

6 *Virginia Free Press*, 9 Sept. 1858. p. 2, col. 2.

7 *Virginia Free Press*, 3 March 1858, p. 2, col. 1.

8 Lee A. Wallace, Jr., Comp., *A Guide To Virginia Military Organizations,* 1861-1865 (Richmond: Virginia Civil War Commission, 1964), p. 261.

Organization of the line militia depended upon an area's population. By 1858, Jefferson County comprised a militia district, and all eligible men residing in this district served in the 55th Regiment of the Line. The 55th Regiment was divided into ten companies, numbered officially one through ten. These formal designations clearly were usurped, however, by local sobriquets, as follows:[9]

COMPANY NO.	CAPTAIN	LOCAL DESIGNATION
1	W.H.T. Lewis	Kabletown Company
2	J.T. Thompson	———
3	Thomas W. Davis	Holl's Pump Company Charles Town
4	J.T. Gibson	Market House Company Charles Town
5	L.D. Hess	Smithfield Company
6	J.W. Hensil	Shepherdstown Company
7	W.S. Magruder	———
8	S.D. Hurst	Leetown Company
9	J.H. Engle	Halltown Company
10	(not stated)	North Bolivar Company

(No designations were found for Company Numbers 2 and 7 in the local papers)

Men serving in the 55th Regiment and five additional regiments from neighboring counties (Berkeley, Clarke, Frederick, and Morgan) together formed the 16th Brigade of Line Militia, commanded by Brigadier General James Carson of Winchester.[10] Evidence suggests that this brigade as a whole did not muster during the period of this study.

As a line militiaman, one simply attended his annual regimental muster in April or May and--to comply with 1858 Virginia law--drilled in April *and* October with his individual company. These tri-yearly meetings usually occured on Saturdays at 11 a.m., and once on the field, the militiaman had to remain on duty for at least two hours. Since

[9] *Virginia Free Press*, 20 May 1858, p. 2. col. 1.

[10] *Virginia Free Press*, 28 April 1859, p. 2, col. 6.

muster notices appeared in the county newspapers usually three weeks before an event, an unexcused absence netted one a fine of seventy-five cents.

Commissioned officers, of course, were responsible for the organization, drill, and discipline of their units. When on the muster field, officers were required to wear uniforms similar to those donned by the United States regular army, with one symbolic exception–buttons on the militia uniform proudly displayed the Virginia Coat of Arms.[11] Attendance at a three-day training exercise, generally in mid-May just before the annual regimental muster, also was a requirement for officers of the 55th Regiment. Regimental and company officers, incidentally, were elected by their fellow militiamen.

The first regimental muster of Jefferson County's 55th Regiment occured on Saturday morning, May 15, 1858. With its right "resting opposite the Carter House" in Charles Town, the *Free Press* observed that the heavy turnout of line militia had produced "one of the largest assemblages that [had] appeared in out town for many years."[12] Following the election of officers (the regiment selected John T. Gibson as colonel) and a brief business meeting, the 55th excited Charles Town's curious onlookers with its parades up and down the county seat's streets.

Especially electrifying for the spectators was the precision and mastery of the county's volunteer companies—the Hamtramck Guards and Jefferson Guards.

Although distinctively separate from the line militia, volunteer companies were attached to line regiments and the volunteers did drill with the line at the annual musters. Otherwise, however, the volunteers seldom associate with the thrice-a-year militiaman.

Besides being uniformed and armed (on occasions, members of the line militia drilled with cornstalks as their weapons), the volunteers differed from the line in several important respects, For example, the volunteer company held its own periodic drills and meetings, maintained its own armories, hosted its own special parades and civic events, and participated earnestly in national patriotic anniversary celebrations.[13] As congressman Faulkner explained, it was the military

[11] *Virginia Free Press*, 11 March 1858, p. 2, col. 4.

[12] *Virginia Free Press*, 20 May 1858, p. 2, col. 1.

[13] Wallace, p. 261.

spirit of the volunteers that made them "the shield of our liberties and independence—the guardian of our national honor."[14]

Shepherdstown claimed its own volunteer company even before the reawakening of military spirit in 1858. Under the watchful eye of a local Mexican war hero, the venerable John F. Hamtramck, volunteers in the Shephersdstown Light Infantry had matured into a "well-drilled and elegant company of riflemen." The company's stylish uniform—gray trimmed with yellow lace, white epaulettes with black shank, and blue caps with white plumes tripped with blue—gave the company, the Shepherdstown *Register* boasted, "as fine and handsome appearance as any company in the State."[15] When Hamtramck died in the spring of 1858, the Shepherdstown Light Infantry changed its name to the Hamtramck Guards and elected Dr. Vincent Moore Butler its captain. The company's rendevous station was the Entler Hotel.

Determined not to be outdone by Shepherdstown, John Rowan spurred a vigorous campaign in Charles Town to organize a volunteer company in the county seat. Rowan, another veteran of the Mexican War and the adjutant of the 55th Regiment, received dynamic support from the *Free Press* through its headlines, editorials, and announcements. As a result of the publicity, the initial organizational meeting on March 24, 1858, attracted a large gathering; and following the appointment of committees to draft a constitution and to recommend a uniform, those present unanimously voted to name their company the Jefferson Guards. Rowan later was elected captain and the uniform eventually adopted was the blue army dress-uniform of the United States Infantry.[16]

These two volunteer companies, as well as the four created in Jefferson after John Brown's Raid, represented fraternity-type organizations that governed themselves.

Illustrative of a volunteer company's self-government is the *Constitution and By-Laws* for the Armory Guards, a group organized in Harpers Ferry during the winter of 1860. This pocket booklet is filled with articles and rules that specify membership policies, uniform standards, officers' duties, election procedures, discipline requirements,

[14] *Virginia Free Press*, 9 Sept. 1858, p. 2, col. 2.

[15] *The Shepherdstown Register,* 30 March 1861.

[16] *Virginia Free Press*, 1 April 1858, p. 2, col. 2.

and court-martial proceedings. Membership in the Armory Guards is restricted to those approved by a nominating committee and elected by the company. Membership cost is twenty-five cents each quarter ($1.00 per year). Company meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of each month; company drill every Saturday; and company parade the second and fourth Saturday of each month. Fines for missing meetings or drills ranged from twenty cents for privates to fifty cents for commissioned officers. Any member found guilty of "ungentlemanly, unofficerlike, or unsoldierlike conduct" could be fined from one to ten dollars or be expelled from the company in disgrace.[17]

Even before the trauma of John Brown's Raid, discipline and high standards coupled with military pomp and circumstance, had earned the Jefferson and Hamtramck Guards a favorite-participant status in local parades, fairs, civic events, and holiday celebrations. In Charles Town, for example, on America's favorite day—July 4—the Jefferson Guards paraded through the town and then escorted politicians and dignataries to the fair grounds where a "rich feast . . . of the finest variety of meats and fowls" awaited devourment. Following the meal, all gathered around the speakers' platform, and with honor and pride, the guards saluted the reading of the Declaration and the subsequent oration. Next came the toasts—toasts to the Union, toasts to the ladies, toasts to the flag, and yes, a toast to the Jefferson Guards: "May they perpetuate the virtues and patriotism of the illustrious name they bear."[18]

Extensive newspaper coverage of the volunteers further substantiates the community's support of its militia. Notices headlined by "Military Spirit" and "A Grand Civic Barbecue" often top columns in the *Virginia Free Press*. Announcements reporting the formation of new companies and the election of ranking officers receive equal footing with editorials and newsreports. Advertisements notifying militiamen of the date, time, and place of their next muster regularly appear in prominent spaces. "The military spirit seems to prevail to a considerable extent in our town" observed the editor of the *Free Press* in August, 1858. His newspaper, indeed, reflected that spirit.[19]

[17] *The Constitution and By-Laws of the Armory Guards* (Baltimore: James Young, 1860), pp. 1-11.

[18] *Virginia Free Press*, 8 July 1858, p. 2, col. 4.

[19] *Virginia Free Press*, 26 August 1858, p. 2, col. 1.

In addition to his military spirit, however, a personal interest accounted for the prevalent coverage of the local volunteers in the *Free Press*. The paper's editor, Mr. Gallaher, had five of his sons enrolled in the ranks of the two volunteer companies in Charles Town–the Jefferson Guards and its junior partner, the Jefferson Cadets.[20]

Organized by Lawson Botts in May, 1858, the Jefferson Cadets was a volunteer company composed of boys between 8 and 16 years of age. Four months after the company's inauguration, the ranks of the Cadets had swelled to more than 50 and the Charles Town boys had become "the pride of our town and neighborhood."[21]

The Cadets, characterized by precision drilling and elegant marching, generated unequivocal adoration at their public appearances. At Shepherdstown's Grand Civic Barbecue in September, 1858, for example, enthralled guests impressed with the Cadet's "perfect propriety" demanded a special performance by the company. The Cadets willingly obliged and "gave an exhibition of military tactics rarely surpassed by veterans."[22]

Free Press editor Gallaher delighted in the accomplishments of the Cadets, especially since he first had doubted the success of the enterprise because "boys are irregular, unsteady, [and] full of impulses that reject discipline."

But contrary to Gallaher's expectations, the Cadets had accepted discipline; and in a lengthy editorial, the surprised newspaperman explained that the benefits of this boyish organization extended far beyond "the single thump of the butts of their guns" and the "concert of movement at a support."

Gallaher heralded the Cadet idea as a "system of physical and intellectual training" that produced individual and community results. For the youthful members of the company, Gallaher theorized that "the preparation of a warrior for battle . . . is the preparation for the warfare to be sustained in all walks of life." As for the advantages of the cadet system for the community, especially during the summer–which Gallaher remembered as a "season of more than ordinary annoyance"

[20] *Virginia Free Press*, 26 August 1858, p. 2, col. 2.

[21] *Virginia Free Press*, 23 September 1858, p. 2, col. 2.

[22] *The Shepherdstown Register,* 11 September 1858.

because boys "full of schemes" poured from the schools "in a threatening number and with a threatening aspect" and inundated the town "with noise, with trick, and with idleness"—as for the community, the Cadets produced peace, not mischief:

> This summer [Gallaher wrote in 1858] the boys have been unusually good. Why? The military enterprise has engaged their hearts and attention.—They are busy cleaning guns, fixing up uniforms, or anticipating the labor of their captain by practicing among themselves the rules and positions before given.[23]

Elated with the Cadets, and the volunteer companies in general, Gallaher summarized the usefulness of such groups when he firmly asserted: "Our people are soldiers for the cradle—with such a spirit we may defy the assaults of the world."

The first assualt came, however, quicker and closer than anyone dared imagine. Harpers Ferry.

During the damp, chilled night of October 16, 1859, John Brown and his army of 21 struck a blow designed to end slavery in the South. The insurgents succeeded in capturing the Harpers Ferry armory and arsenal, but within hours, they found themselves trapped and fighting for their lives.

When word of the raid reached Charles Town during the pre-dawn hours of the 17th, the Jefferson Guards assembled with alacrity before the courthouse and advaced rapidly toward the troubled rivertown. Arriving on Camp Hill (just west of Harpers Ferry) at 11:30 a.m., the Guards were assigned an important mission: cross the Potomac one mile above Harpers Ferry, march down stream on the Maryland side, and take possession of the railroad bridge spanning the Potomac at Harpers Ferry. The Guards faced no opposition in accomplishing this task. Brown's escape route north effectually was closed.

When the Hamtramck Guards arrived from Shepherdstown shortly after 3 p.m. on the 17th, Brown and his dwindling force had been sealed within the armory engine-house. To insure against escape, however, both the Hamtramck and Jefferson Guards were posted outside the armory wall, where both remained until the early morning of the 18th.[24]

[23] *Virginia Free Press*, 16 September 1858, p. 2, col. 3.

[24] *Virginia Free Press*, 30 September 1858, p. 2, col. 4.

The capture of Brown by United States Marines at dawn on the 18th ended Brown's raid, but not the Brown story. The fiery abolitionist was hauled to Charles Town, tried and convicted in the Court House, and sentenced to hang on December 2, 1859. During Brown's six weeks of imprisonment, Virginia authorities transferred to Charles Town volunteer companies from all over the state to bolster the town's defenses and to insure against the possibility of escape by Brown. The Jefferson Guards comprised an integral portion of this "corps of Southern chivalry," but unlike the rest of the volunteers, the Guards remained on active duty long after Brown's execution.

With their quarters on the first floor of the Market House (across the street from the old jail), the Guards maintained a constant vigilance over Charles Town until the final executions of captured Brown confederates occurred in mid-March, 1860. With their work complete, and after six months of regular soldiering, the Jefferson Guards returned to their homes.[25]

"The curtain has at last fallen upon the closing scene of the Harpers Ferry tragedy!" announced a relieved *Free Press* in the spring of 1860. But the real tragedy was yet to come.

One result of the Brown raid was the hatred and fear it sparked throughout the South; and in Jefferson County—which had been "insulted by the vilest invasion"—one response to Brown and the abolitionists was the formation of a new volunteer militia companies to defend Virginia's soil against aggression "from within or without."

Lawson Botts, for example, organized the Botts Greys in Charles Town less than one month after Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry. Citizens around Duffield's Depot formed the Letcher Riflemen in February, 1860, and elected James L. Hunt as captain. Not surprisingly, Harpers Ferry produced two new companies in the winter of 1860—the Armory Guards under Captain H.C. Derrick and Mayor and Captain George Chambers' Floyd Guards.

With the addition of these four uniformed companies, the volunteers of Jefferson County decided to organize their own volunteer regiment. Consequently, on the last Saturday of July, 1860, the Second Regiment of Virginia Volunteers paraded through Shepherdstown under the command of Colonel James W. Allen.[26] Little did the men realize that

[25] *Virginia Free Press*, 22 March 1860, p. 2, col. 1.

[26] *Virginia Free Press*, 1 December 1859, p. 2, col. 1.

this same regiment—nine months later and immediately after Virginia's secession—would lead the advance to capture the United States armory and arsenal at Harpers Ferry.

In April, 1861, with the eruption of civil war, Jefferson County's citizen—soldiers—"brave, self-sacrificing, and true"—now marched off to do battle in their own land. Innocent civilians they were no more, but soldiers now in America's bloodiest war.

Dennis E. Frye

JEFFERSON COUNTY'S TWO LOST MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS

At present, Jefferson County has fewer incorporated municipalities than before the Civil War. Although a new municipality was added by the incorporation of Ranson in 1910, two charterships had disappeared by the end of the ante-bellum period, and have not reappeared. What happened to these "lost" corporations, Virginius and Middleway?

VIRGINIUS

"An act establishing the town of *Virginius*,[1] on lands the property of Lewis Wernwag[2] and others[3] . . . " was legislated by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia on 08 January 1827. The petitioning

> . . . land-holders and residents of . . . (this) island in the Shenandoah river (sic), near Harper's Ferry . . . (represented) that they have erected thereon several works of public utility, and about twelve dwelling houses; that the island although containing not more than fourteen acres of land, is susceptable of further valuable improvements . . . (which) would be accelerated by the establishment of a town thereon . . .[4]

Twenty-four years later, the General Assembly of Virginia chartered the town of Harper's (sic) Ferry on 24 March 1851. This appears to have territorially included and jurisdictionally absorbed the town of Virginius.

[1] Emphasis added.

[2] Lewis Wernwag was the millwright who constructed the first bridge at Harpers Ferry, over the Potomac River.

[3] One of the "others" named was Fontaine Beckham, who, on 17 October 1859, imprudently exposed himself to gunfire from the beseiged John Brown's raiders. A shot killed him instantly. Beckham was, at this time, the Mayor of Harpers Ferry.

[4] Hening, William Waller, *Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, . . .* 1826 (Richmond, Printer for the Commonwealth), pp. 109, 110.

An Act amending the first section of Harpers Ferry charter was legislated by the General Assembly on 13 December the following year,[5] but this left the former town of Virginius absorbed as before:

> . . . Beginning at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, running with the Potomac river west to the termination of the United States government line; thence with the said government line south till it intersects the Shenandoah river; thence across the canal, including what is usually called Throp's and Hall's island; thence down the Shenandoah river, *including the island of Virginius*[6] to the beginning.[7]

SMITHFIELD

Smithfield, now called Middleway, was chartered by the Virginia General Assembly earlier than Virginius, and lasted later. The enactment date was 15 January 1798. This was prior to the legislative formation of Jefferson County on 08 January 1801:[8]

> THAT the lots and streets as the same are already laid off on the lands of John Smith, the younger, and William Smith, lying in the county of Berkeley, shall be established a town by the name of Smithfield; and John Packett, Moses Smith, John Smith, Jacob Reese, Joseph Grentham, and John Grentham, jun. gentlemen, constituted trustees thereof.[9]

[5] *Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia passed in 1852-3, . . .* (1853, Richmond, Public Printer)

[6] Emphasis added.

[7] *Acts Passed at a General Assembly of Virginia, . . . 1850-51* (Richmond, Printer for the Commonwealth) pp. 176-179.

[8] Shepherd, S. *Statutes at Large* Vol. 2, 1796-1802 p. 271 Ch. XXXI, An ACT to Establish several Towns.

[9] *Op. Cit.,* Vol. 1, 1796-1802 p. 034 Ch. LXIX, An ACT for dividing the county of Berkeley, Sec.1.

RETROCESSION

Retrocession of Jefferson County in 1863[10] from the seceded Commonwealth of Virginia to the new State of West Virginia would seem to have abandoned the legislative contract formerly between now disassociated parties. Nonetheless, the West Virginia Legislature formalized nullification by repealing Virginia municipal Charters, three years later.[11]

SUMMARY

Four Jefferson County municipalities obtained new charters under the laws of West Virginia: Shepherdstown on 11 February 1867.[12] "Charles Town" on 24 February 1872,[13] Harpers Ferry on 16 April 1872,[14] and Bolivar on 27 March 1877.[15] The Chartering of Ranson on 18 October 1910[16] raised the number of municipal corporations in Jefferson County to five.

Smithfield, now Middleway, had declined from its former crossroads prominence to a character less that of a town and more that of the quiet rural village it is today. Apparently never having sought to recharter, it, with Virginius, is one of the two lost municipal corporations of Jefferson County.

John Stroud Kusner

[10] Ambler, Charles H. and Festus P. Summers, *West Virginia, The Mountain State* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1958), *passim.*

[11] *Acts of the Legislature of 1867* Ch. 52, p. 62.

[12] *Acts of the Legislature of West Virginia,* 1867, p. 17 Ch. 15.

[13] Office of the Clerk of the Jefferson County Circuit Court.

[14] *Op. Cit.,* Chancery Order Book 2, p. 063.

[15] *Op. Cit.,* Law Order Book "B" p. 009.

[16] *Op. Cit.,* Common Law Order Book "I" p. 098.

SUMMER PICNIC

On August 8, 1984 the annual Jefferson County picnic was held at Fruit Hill, the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Hoxton, Jr., located about one and one half miles north of Shepherdstown. In spite of the usual August heat, approximately 95 members and guests attended. They enjoyed the delicious fare contributed by the members and organized by Capt. John Schley and his committee.

When called to on to speak, Mr. Hoxton pointed out that the history of Fruit Hill had been well covered by two articles in the magazine of the Society: one by Helen Boteler Pendleton in Volume XIII, December 1947, and the other by Linnie Schley in Volume XLI, December 1975.

Fruit Hill is on land acquired from Lord Fairfax in 1750 by Thomas Swearingen and sold by his son in 1766 to Henry Cookus. The property subsequently went from the the Cookuses (several spellings) to the Burket family and in the 1820's was purchased by Alexander Robinson of Baltimore. The farm has remained in the Robinson family ever since, through Alexander's son Archibald, Archibald's daughter, Anna Andrews, and her daughter Sally Page Andrews, who left it to the present owner Archibald Robinson Hoxton, Jr., her first cousin once removed.

The original house is a stone and brick building adjacent to a spring and the oldest part is thought to have been built in 1760. This house is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Michael F. Taylor (Ann Hoxton) who restored it in the seventies, retaining its original qualities and materials where possible, and at the same time incorporating the elements of a comfortable home.

The main house was built by Archibald Robinson in 1830 on a knoll near the stone house and faces east toward South Mountain across the Sharpsburg battlefield. The house is brick over a stone foundation and little altered from its original form. Plumbing and electricity, including electric heat in part of the building, were added and most of the two story galleries was enclosed to provide more winter space and more efficient heating.

Michael Henderson, of Shepherdstown, entertained with his guitar and songs appropriate for the occasion. Mr. Hoxton invited those present to tour both dwellings.

HISTORIC SHEPHERDSTOWN COMMISSION

During the fall of 1983 and the spring and summer of 1984 the Historic Shepherdstown Commission accomplished a major goal in the restoration of the Entler Hotel. The Commission removed the collapsing porches from the rear of the building and reconstructed them to their original appearance. As part of this project masons repointed bricks, repaired chimneys, and rebuilt a section of the stone foundation.

The Commission accomplished this work through the assistance of several institutions and agencies, as well as through the generosity of many individuals. The Historic Preservation Unit of the West Virginia Department of Culture and History granted $20,000 to this project. The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation gave the Commission $8,000 to help match the state grant. Students and staff of the James Rumsey Votech Center rebuilt the porches as a vocational training project. Members of the Commission contributed hundreds of hours of volunteer labor and thousands of dollars. The total cost of the project was over $52,000.

The state grant of $20,000 was federal money appropriated by congress as part of a "jobs bill" designed to stimulate local economies. This project accomplished the bill's purpose. The Commission purchased building supplies locally and a number of local contractors worked on various phases of the job. This fact is offered as evidence that historic preservation can mean more to a community than the restoration of one building. Since 1979 the restoration of the Entler Hotel has brought grants totalling $78,000 from outside sources into the local economy.

Of course these grants would not have been made if the people of Shepherdstown and Jefferson County had not demonstrated support for the project. Local financial support has come primarily from the donations of individuals, either in money or labor, and has been the backbone of the Commission's success in restoring the Entler Hotel.

The historic Shepherdstown Museum was open for its first full season in 1984. An article in the *Washington Post* aptly described the museum as housing "a fledgling collection of period furnishings and artifacts." This "fledgling collection" is growing. People now have a place in

Shepherdstown where they can share with others items they have preserved.

In the summer and fall the Museum displayed a delightful exhibition called "Ladies Home Companions," a collection of objects used by women in America in 1835-1865. This travelling exhibition was sponsored by the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in West Virginia, the Huntington Galleries, and the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia.

The museum is open on weekends during the spring, summer, and fall. The Kiwanis Club of Shepherdstown manned the museum for one Sunday a month.

The Commission is attempting to publish an article on Shepherdstown history in each quarterly issue of the *Good News Paper*, the community paper sponsored by the Shepherdstown Ministerial Association. An attempt to revive the oral history project for the town is, as yet, unsuccessful. A successful oral history project needs willing interviewers, interviewees, and a theme and a focus for the interviewing. So far the oral history project has lacked these ingredients.

The Historic Shepherdstown Commission sponsors the Harvest Festival in September of each year. This is a popular local craft/bake sale event which seems to benefit from a lack of commercialism. It is always thoroughly enjoyed by those who attend.

The Commission is a member of the Lower Shenandoah Valley Heritage Association, an umbrella oraganization of area historical societies and the Eastern Gateway Travel Council, Inc. Both these organizations have helped to draw visitors to the area. Although the Historic Shepherdstown Museum does not charge admission, the Commission hopes that efforts to attract visitors will ultimately provide financial benefits.

The Historic Shepherdstown Commission is looking forward to two major events. In 1986 we will celebrate the bicentennial of the construction of the Entler Hotel. The following year will be the bicentennial of James Rumsey's successful demonstration of a steam powered boat on the Potomac River at Shepherdstown. December 3, 1987, is the two hundreth anniversary of this event. Interesting activities are being planned to celebrate both historic occasions.

Ben Miller
President
Historic Shepherdstown Commission

SOCIETY SPEAKERS AT SPRING AND FALL MEETINGS

1980 Ralph S. Sherrard
Shepherd College

"Adam Stephen, George Washington, and the French and Indian War"

1981 John E.Stealey, III
Shepherd College

"The Ante-Bellum Literature of the Shenandoah Valley"

Robert D. Mitchell
University of Maryland

"The Geography of the Shenandoah Valley"

1982 Klaus Wust
New York City and Edinburg, Virginia

"German Settlement in the Lower Shenandaoh Valley"

Elizabeth Carroll Spindler
West Virginia University

"John Peale Bishop and Charles Town"

1983 W. W. Abbot
University of Virginia

"The George Washington Papers"

Millard K. Bushong
Shepherd College

"General Thomas Rosser"

1984 Charles A. Hulse
Shepherd College

"History Archaeology and Implications for Jefferson County"

George Parkinson
West Virginia University

"Porte Crayon and his Artistic Work in Jefferson County"