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Magazine of the

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."

"History by apprizing them of their past will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of man; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume, and, knowing it, to defeat its views."

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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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Membership—Open to all who have interest in the history of Jefferson County. Annual dues of $15.00 may be sent to Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 485, Charles Town, WV 25414, after the beginning of the fiscal year on January 1. Life membership is $100.00.

PUBLICATIONS

One copy of the Magazine is mailed to each person holding a paid membership. Until the publication of next year's Magazine, members may purchase additional copies for $6.00 each; order these from The Society, Box 485, Charles Town. Original volumes or facsimile reproductions are available to all persons at $7.00 per Magazine.

The Society also has copies of various books and a video available:

The Washington Homes of Jefferson County. $10.00 mailed.

Michael D. Thompson, *Calendar and Index to Recorded Plats in Jefferson County, West Virginia (Virginia) Courthouse, 1801-1901*. $25.00 mailed.

Between the Shenandoah and Potomac: Historic Homes of Jefferson County, West Virginia. $45.00 mailed.

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Between the Shenandoah and the Potomac: A Visual History of Jefferson County. The video costs $25.00, mailed.

A History of the National Conservation Training Center Property and surrounding area

Part One/The Colonial Era

Revision April 2004

by Dan Everson



Preface

My purpose for writing this history of the NCTC property and surrounding lands has been to describe the families that lived here, their strategies for making a living from the natural resources it had to offer, and their activities during the time they occupied the land. Most of my professional career has been spent as a field biologist, and I don't have a long list of credentials as either a writer or historian. I simply ran across a story that intrigued me more and more as the details fell in place, and felt compelled to share it with others who might be interested in local history. My curiosity was first piqued during several afternoons I spent rambling over the property documenting the presence and distribution of plants. Old foundations and fence lines, broken pottery, bits of brick and

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Dan Everson is a biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service currently in Daphne, Alabama. He spent ten years with the National Conservation Training Center near Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

glass all suggested a long history of use. Who were these people? What did the landscape look like before and after they arrived? Archaeological reports describing thousands of years of human occupation, the results of surveys and research conducted prior to the construction of NCTC facilities, also furthered an interest in who had lived here in the past. Local histories sometimes mentioned the people who had lived in the Terrapin Neck area, and I thought it might be interesting and useful to put these anecdotes and histories in a more systematic framework that would draw a more complete picture of their lives here. To the extent possible I have tried to make flesh and blood people- with motivations and real family histories- out of names, dates and various legal documents. For source materials I wanted to utilize reliably documented accounts and public records, which has led to many hours in archives, libraries and courthouses in West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Kentucky researching land grants, deeds, wills, letters and family genealogies; much time was also spent double-checking other authors' citations. Published "family lore" accounts tended to be riddled with uncertainties and outright impossibilities and were therefore avoided unless the accounts were confirmed by other evidence. Even so, I expect that there are mistakes and misinterpretations in this work, and though the writing style may seem confident of the facts, I remain open to other lines of evidence that may present alternative views. I started this project a *tabula rasa* with no particular historical axe to grind other than a desire for an accurate portrayal based on objective data.

Court houses and public records are excellent sources for objective facts, but have a drawback in that they tend to narrowly focus on the activities of landowners who, in this case, have been mostly relatively wealthy Caucasian males (with some notable exceptions); this history would be much richer and would benefit greatly from an equal amount of detail concerning Native Americans, female family members, the slaves, the indentured servants and hired help, the subsistence farmers, renters, and other cultural groups who spent a significant part of their lives in the Terrapin Neck area, but whose thoughts and activities went unrecorded. I have included their stories when they could be found, but unfortunately most of the details of their lives can only be imagined or extrapolated from other sources in the region. (If you are aware of sources I could use, please let me know). The public records I used may also leave the impression that family life centered around the acquisition, disposal or debated ownership of various pieces of property, which is of course

misleading. Again we are left with trying to imagine their daily activities, their hopes and dreams, and what brought joy, frustration and meaning to the families and individuals herein described.

While reading the following Eurocentric version of events, keep in mind that for a significant period of time after the arrival of Europeans, the most common faces on the property were not white. One of the nearly invisible groups in the historical record from about 1750 through at least the 1850's is also likely to have been the largest – the enslaved people of African descent. Almost 40 percent of the people living in Virginia at the time of the first census in 1790 were held in slavery, while free blacks made up an additional 2 percent of the populace. Probate inventories and census records show that 10 to 20 slaves were based at the Springwood property at various times, and an equal number were associated with the RiverView Farm portion of the property. This suggests that on the property that has become the National Conservation Training Center, for about one hundred years the number of people living in chattel slavery outnumbered those of European descent by a ratio sometimes larger than 2:1. We get an occasional glimpse of their existence from probate inventories or tax assessments that include such information as first names, ages, and changes of ownership, but details of their families and experiences are mostly missing. That's a lot of missing history, and I have tried to honor their lives by including their names whenever I could find them.

I wish to thank several people who encouraged me in this work, including Mark Madison, FWS historian at NCTC; Karel Whyte, Swearingen family genealogist; Don Wood and Galtjo Geertsema at the Berkeley County Historical Society who were generous in helping me locate maps and innumerable details; and André Darger, former NCTC course leader who provided a forum for some of this information in his Employee Foundations course: the course provided a strong incentive to try to get the details right. Jessie Hendrix and Elizabeth Hyman were among those who were generous in taking the time to check for accuracy, and were themselves significant sources of information. Any mistakes that remain are all mine.

A note about the maps: surveys and maps obtained from Galtjo Geertsema, surveyor from Martinsburg, WV, were very valuable. Further deed descriptions obtained in the Berkeley (WV) Jefferson (WV), Frederick (MD and VA), Washington (MD) County courthouses, also were used to help decipher what sometimes amounted to a quagmire of

distances and bearings used to describe new property boundaries, portions of which were just copied verbatim from earlier surveys, mistakes and all. By using both early and later surveys, and surveys from adjacent properties that described the same lines, I have a reasonable degree of confidence in the maps, especially those near present-day NCTC. The property boundaries for Thomas Swearingen's heirs west of Shepherdstown in the enclosed 1770 map are based on Fairfax grants in the 1750s and 1760s and assume that parcels were not sold or added to in the meantime. The archives in the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort, Kentucky were invaluable in locating various land grants and other details related to the Revolutionary War period.

I consider this a work in progress and welcome new sources of information and further details on any of the topics I have written about.

Dan Everson
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April 2004 email: dan_everson@fws.gov

Disclaimer

The opinions and choices of material to include in this manuscript are those of the author. The US Government, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Conservation Training Center did not initiate, design or direct the writing of this manuscript and are not responsible for the accuracy, opinions or choice of materials. The author undertook this project solely to satisfy his curiosity, working on it intermittently during the occasional free moment of work time, as well as evenings and weekends over a several-year time span. As with any written history, the topics that are featured and the interpretation of events in this work are influenced by the biases and perceptions of the author, which include having grown up in a Scandinavian farming community in west-central Wisconsin. I have tried to be as inclusive as possible, so attention to certain cultural and socio-economic groups in this history should not be misconstrued as cultural myopia, but is instead an artifact of when, how, and for whom, public records were archived and indexed, as well as the tendency of our culture to follow and record the activities of limited members of a community or family. There are many voices missing in this work, not because these voices are unimportant or uninteresting, but because of the great difficulty, perhaps impossibility in many cases, of

locating their words or accounts of their activities in the Terrapin Neck area. As I continue to search for information to fill some of these gaps, I make no claim to having written the history of the NCTC property, but merely a history that is at best incomplete, yet hopefully still interesting and useful. Tracking down and presenting the recorded history of the NCTC property has been a continual challenge, and has caused the author's wife to use the word "obsessed" on several occasions. Tracking down and presenting the un-recorded history of the Terrapin Neck area, in order to capture those missing voices, is a challenge that may only be accomplished with your help. Copies of the manuscript have been made available by NCTC as a courtesy to guests and others who may be interested in local history.

A note about names:

Several of the family names prominent in this history have been standardized to a common spelling. John Van Meter's name in other publications and documents may be spelled in various ways including Jan Van Metre, Van Meteren, Vanmater and Vanmetre. Joist Hite usually spelled his name Jost Heydt, but records may show Joost Heyd and other combinations. Swearingen may appear as Swaringen, Sweringen, VanSwearingen and other phonetic characterizations.

For the sake of simplicity I have referred to the western portion of the NCTC property as RiverView Farm and the eastern portion as Springwood throughout the document. It should be understood that both these names are of relatively recent vintage: *RiverView Farm* first appears on a deed in 1896, and *Springwood* is probably mid 20th century. Springwood in the past has had other appellations including *Mapleshade* (1920s) and *Shepherd's Lower Farm* (1870s-1890s). Nearby Shepherdstown has had other names such as Mecklenburg or Packhorse Ford which will occasionally appear in the text. Because property boundaries have changed over the years I also occasionally refer to now-adjacent properties as being part of RiverView Farm; for example the property now known as the Lost Drake Farm southwest of the NCTC entrance was the former home of Hezekiah Swearingen who eventually inherited the adjacent tract to the north that became RiverView Farm, which was largely developed by his son Van. The property now known as the Wild Goose Farm was also Swearingen property from 1828 to 1838. So to reduce confusion, in this document *RiverView Farm* will be

used to describe those lands that were acquired by Hezekiah Swearingen from his father (who once owned both Springwood and RiverView Farm) in the late 18th century and remained with his heirs through the Civil War, while *Springwood* refers to the eastern portion of NCTC held by the Shepherds from about 1807 to 1907 that now includes the campus and the Hendrix life estate. How - and perhaps why - the Shepherd family acquired the Springwood property in the 19th century is a major theme of the following compilation.

Time line of Events

Native Americans lived intermittently along the edge of the river they called the Cohongoroota for thousands of years. Riverbottom lands provided fertile soil for their fields of squash and corn, and the rolling limestone uplands supported plentiful resources including large herds of buffalo and elk grazing in the meadows amidst scattered patches of oak-hickory forest. Village locations changed frequently based on the availability of resources and competition with other groups. The latest evidence for a seasonal encampment at the site that became NCTC is dated at about 400 years before Europeans first explored the lower Shenandoah Valley. Among the enduring legacies of the people who once lived here are the beautiful names given to local creeks and rivers: Shenandoah, Antietam, Opequon, Tuscarora, Conococheague, Cacapon.

Chapter 1 Early Colonial Period

1649 - Forty-two years after British colonists first landed at the site they named Jamestown, the British monarch-in-exile Charles II felt it necessary to be generous. His father, King Charles I, had recently been beheaded for, among other complaints, defying parliament, and religious zealotry that included having the noses and ears cut off subjects who refused to join the Anglican Church. Now young Charles had been forced by the victorious Puritan Roundheads to take sanctuary in Scotland and then France. He would wait 11 more years for the Restoration of the Monarchy, but in the meantime he promised a large land grant in Virginia, later known as the Northern Neck Proprietary, to six noblemen friends because of their support of the Crown in those troubled times. One hundred fifty years later, people living on Terrapin

Neck near Shepherds Town, Virginia, would have cause to regret this generosity.

The new Proprietary was to include all the land between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers. Europeans didn't have a clue as to where these rivers actually began, there being a vague notion at the time that the rivers had their headwaters in the Blue Ridge somewhere off to the west of the settlements on the coast. The exiled heir to the throne and his friends had no idea how much land had just been given away, provided of course that young Charles should ever re-establish the British monarchy. More than 80 years would pass before a commission in Virginia set out to find the head springs of the two rivers and thus determine the boundaries, it having become apparent in the meantime that the Potomac actually passed through the Blue Ridge at present-day Harpers Ferry and had its headwaters well to the west in the Alleghenies.

This type of land grant was not unprecedented - other colonial proprietors in the mid-Atlantic region included Lord Baltimore in Maryland and William Penn in Pennsylvania. In fact Lord Baltimore's new proprietorship had been carved out of land originally promised to the Virginia colony, leading to frantic visits to the King and his court, as well as naval attacks in the Chesapeake Bay and several pitched battles between the competing British factions on several occasions through the 1650s. The British lords with interest in the New World competed for high stakes - proprietors were given full governing rights inside their granted lands, and could make large amounts of money selling tracts of land to settlers. A settler interested in a plantation lifestyle could receive land by grant from the proprietor, and could then keep, sell, bequeath, or entail that land so long as they paid an annual quit rent per acre to the proprietor during the duration of their ownership. The colony of Virginia, on the other hand, was a Crown Colony, ruled by the current monarch in power, and administered through a Governor and Council in Williamsburg, Virginia. (The King originally did not rule over Virginia as Sovereign of England, but instead the colony was considered part of his feudal manor holdings, which meant he ruled over Virginia as a feudal lord, like the proprietors.) Lands granted by the colonial Council in Virginia, with the governor's stamp of approval, became known as King's Patents. Land speculators in Virginia who had been given Orders of Council for large tracts of land to sell and distribute also offered another avenue for a settler to acquire a King's Patent. The Virginia Council, as well as the Northern Neck Proprietary, and a number of large

land speculators eventually operated land offices in Virginia from which settlers could acquire land. The Virginia Council had a strong interest in locating settlers on the margin of the colony both as a source of revenue through land sales and rents, and as a buffer to the wilderness and all its hazards, which explains their eagerness to give out large land grants to speculators on the periphery who could draw in those settlers.

It is unknown when the Virginia colonists first heard of the new proprietary, but no doubt the Virginians were dismayed at the prospect of losing control of yet another large tract of land, having already been forced to give up the northern portion of the Chesapeake Bay country to the Calverts and Lord Baltimore. The new Northern Neck Proprietary seems to have generated fewer violent sparks, perhaps because most of the land lay to the unknown west beyond the tidewater settlements, and there was not an immediate influx of new governing authorities marking boundaries and clamoring for resources. The relatively small number of settlers in Virginia generally stayed close to their tidewater plantations for many years because of fear of Indians, and the threat was real - some 350 colonists were killed by Indians in the Virginia colony in 1641 alone (Couper, 1952)

1660 - Charles II returned triumphantly to England as King after the death of Oliver Cromwell. Many of his loyal followers had lost much of their property while he was in exile and responded by moving to one of the colonies across the Atlantic, at least several were grateful for having been granted large tracts of land in the New World as partial compensation.

1685 - Joist Hite was born in Bonfeld, Germany, son of a local butcher and a member of the Protestant church (Jones et. al, 1979).

1690 - By this year deaths and marriages had transferred the bulk of the Northern Neck Proprietary in Virginia into one family of the British peerage, Lord Fairfax (who had acquired it through marriage to a Culpeper). Lord and Lady Fairfax lived on large castled estates in England; they would never see their Virginia lands. Nevertheless, Lord Fairfax did employ agents in the Virginia Colony to administer the Proprietary and to see that the local Virginia Council did not infringe on his lands between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers as the Council handed out their own grants in the region. The Virginia Council often

ignored the Fairfax claim to the land and gave out land grants within the disputed area anyway. At this time the Virginia Colony was selling frontier lands not only to individual settler families but also to land speculators, who provided a service by surveying the land and bringing in additional settler families. The land speculators, in tandem with their settlers, were required to survey parcels of land and have them recorded for the issuance of a patent by the Governor or Proprietor. There wasn't always a strong distinction between the speculators and settlers because they often belonged to the same extended family. Once the governor issued a settler a patent, they then held a strong legal title to the land. In order to acquire a large land grant, land speculators were usually required to bring in a specified number of settlers to the colony by a specified deadline. The settlers then paid fees and rents to the large land speculators. The system necessarily meant that a lot of money traded hands; it also provided the potential for some of the middlemen to get rich, and created a strong financial incentive to attract settlers. Land patents from the Virginia Council and grants from the Fairfax Proprietary were mostly in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont areas of Virginia through the 1720's; the lower Shenandoah Valley on the western side of the Blue Ridge was largely unexplored before 1700, and will become the focus of the following narrative. Early Virginia history is replete with tales of European exploring parties setting out westward, walking up the moderate slopes of the Blue Ridge and gazing out over the Shenandoah Valley, supposedly uttering flowery phrases and waxing poetic over the lovely vision before them, followed by the congratulatory backslapping return with lusty tales of adventure describing hardships and toil for the ears of the more timid souls who had remained safely at home. You have to wonder, since a traverse of the Blue Ridge is hardly a Himalayan odyssey, if there were a few traders, trappers or Native Americans nearby thinking to themselves "big deal, my grandmother walks up there every week…".

The rise of the tobacco plantation culture in the colonies, especially in Maryland and Virginia, required an ever-increasing pool of reliable labor. The European indenture system wherein a settler's passage to the colony could be worked off over a period of years was not able to meet the demand for labor. Africans had first arrived in Virginia in 1619, when a Dutch ship brought 20 – with families, property, history, culture, hopes and dreams of their own – to Jamestown to be sold to the planters. A few Africans escaped slavery through the indenture system but, by the 1690s

large numbers of enslaved Africans began to be imported into the middle colonies. The majority of landowners were not slaveowners, and those who were generally could afford only one or two slaves that worked alongside white family members. Most of the slaves in the colonies were concentrated on a relatively small number of very large plantations (Dufour, 1994).

1693 - In Britain, the Fairfax family, who had acquired the rights to the Northern Neck Proprietary in Virginia, asked for and received confirmation of their Proprietary from the King. They apparently hoped this would resolve once and for all who held title to the land between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers in that wild, uncivilized colony across the Atlantic. It didn't

1699 - A new system of land grants became available to immigrants coming into the Virginia colony, referred to as treasury rights. This allowed anyone to purchase land, 100 acres for 10 shillings. To retain ownership, an annual quit rent and occupation of the property was necessary.

This replaced the old system of acquiring land by bringing in settlers, known as head rights.

1702 - Robert Carter, in Williamsburg, Virginia, became the agent of Lord Fairfax. Until his death in 1732, he was particularly effective at controlling or at least lodging legal complaints (caveats) against infringements on Fairfax Proprietary lands. He eventually held all the important positions on the governing Council of the colony while at the same time acting as Fairfax's agent. His tenacity may have tended to reduce settlement in the lower Shenandoah Valley because of the difficulties in acquiring a clear legal title to the land. He and other Fairfax agents managed to steer many land grants toward members of their own families - thus adding significantly to the Carter, Fitzhugh, and Lee family fortunes in Virginia.

1705 - The Virginia colony passed a law forbidding the granting of patents in excess of 4000 acres; exceptions to this policy were sometimes given to companies and individuals. To the north in Pennsylvania, William Penn's Proprietary had now expanded to almost the Susquehanna River. Native American groups (at least those that were

paid) tended to be more tolerant of the Pennsylvanian settlers because of Penn's policy of purchasing land from the local tribes. The English settlers in Virginia and Maryland, on the other hand, were referred to by the natives as "Long Knives" because of their habit of acquiring land by force. At this time the French were exploring and settling the Ohio Valley, and the Spanish were increasing their settlements in Florida and along the lower Mississippi.

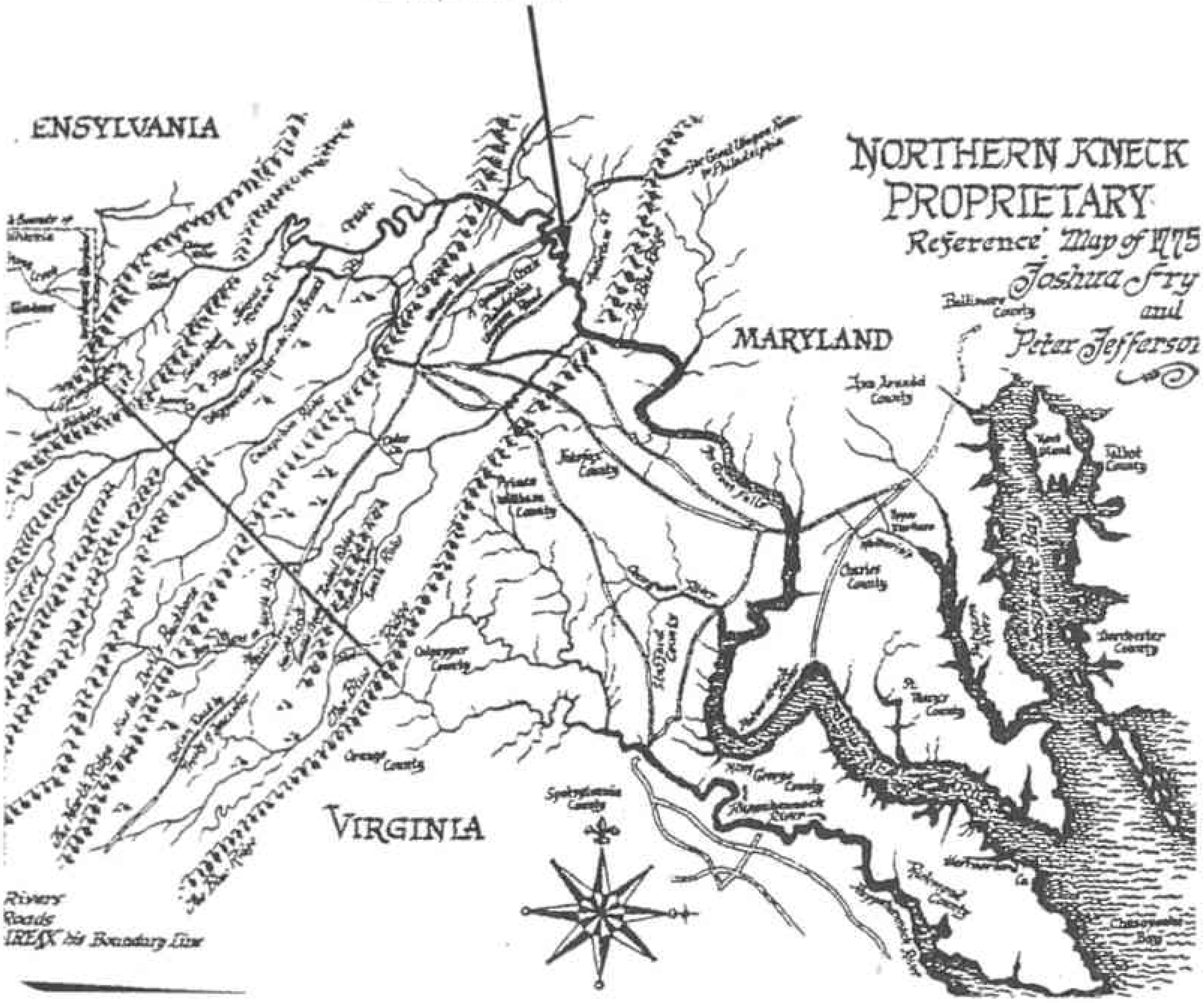
1709 - Joist Hite, born in Germany, crossed the Atlantic and settled in New York with a number of other Dutch and German families, including his father and stepmother. He had married Anna Maria Mercklin 5 years before, and had worked as a linen weaver before setting sail from Rotterdam with several other local families; Anna had given birth to two children but they hadn't survived. Many history texts describe him then as a wealthy, distinguished businessman with the financial wherewithal and influence to organize and finance the journey to the New World for many families, and was supposedly even able to provide his own ships; the histories then go on to describe his inevitable continued success and prominence as a real estate entrepreneur in the New World. It would be interesting to see where this fable originated, as recent scholarship points to a more humble origin – he has been documented as crossing the Atlantic as one of a group of indentured servants who worked for a time at a failed business venture in New York. By 1714 he was apparently a landowner with a growing family living north of Philadelphia, and about 3 years later he owned a plantation and gristmill outside the present community of Schwenksville, Pennsylvania, a few miles north of Philadelphia, and was doing some weaving on the side (Jones et al. 1979). His later efforts at administering a large land grant in the lower Shenandoah Valley of Virginia will prove to be a major chapter in the history of the land that has now become the National Conservation Training Center.

In Britain, the Fifth Lord Fairfax died, leaving title to the bulk of the Northern Neck Proprietary in Lady Fairfax's hand, though her Culpeper family members retained a percentage of ownership as well.

1719 - Lady Fairfax died. Her 24-year old son Thomas, 6th Lord Fairfax, became the sole Proprietor of the Northern Neck in Virginia. He owned only a 1/6 interest in the Virginia proprietary outright, the other 5/6 he held only for his lifetime. He had rather reclusive, taciturn

bachelor tendencies, and often preferred to spend his time alone on his British estates rather than engage in the typical aristocratic functions of a

Terrapin Neck



young British peer.

1720's - The debate over exactly when a permanent community in the Shepherdstown area first developed has not been resolved - some authors put the date as early as 1706, others 1719, others still later in the 1720s. If in fact Europeans lived in the area before 1720, they seem most likely to have been itinerant groups that stretch the definition of "community", since they seem not to have built substantial cabins, churches, mills, or cleared extensive fields, or laid claim to more than a small amount of land and a very minor portion of the springs and water resources of the area; they may have lived more in the manner of the Native Americans who still established small temporary camps in the region at the time, perhaps trapping, hunting, trading and gardening to survive. In the early to mid-1720s there seems not to have been an established group of people

willing to defend their claims to any large land holdings near present-day Shepherdstown, the evidence being the number of springs, creeks and rich bottom lands -the most valuable real estate- that remained to be claimed in the late 1720s by families such as the Van Meters, Morgans, Shepherds and others (these families, of course, may have purchased or bartered the rights to these water sources from earlier arrivals who didn't intend to stay). So with due caution, the second half of the 1720s probably marked the arrival of the first long-term "settlers" into what became the Shepherdstown area. At the regional level, many of the early settlers coming into northern Virginia and northern Maryland were Germans most recently from the Lancaster and York areas of Pennsylvania. William Penn's agents had been busy in the Rhine Valley of Germany attempting to lure settlers into Penn's proprietary. After arriving by the shipload in Philadelphia and other ports, many of the newly arrived settlers stopped in the small established German communities in Pennsylvania such as York and Lancaster only long enough to ask for directions to the closest available land. Many of these settlers belonged to various sects of the Protestant faith seeking land and a place to practice free expressions of their faith, including Moravians, Quakers, and Dunkers. It is misleading in some respects to refer to them as "German", since many of them had spent only a short time in what was referred to as the Palatine area of Germany. Their Protestant faith had made them unwelcome in many parts of Europe, so they had sought refuge in the Palatinate and may have lived there less than a generation in many cases. William Penn's agents no doubt found them an attentive audience. After negotiating the wilderness paths south out of Pennsylvania (Mason and Dixon would not begin marking the legal border between Maryland and Pennsylvania until 1763 – many considered Lancaster to be in Maryland), and their arrival on the other side of the Cohongoroota River in Virginia near the river ford, a few groups may have set about building cabins and clearing a bit of land for pasture and crops. The first arrivals had no readily available system in place to acquire legal title to the land they occupied, and had to depend on other settlers' willingness to recognize their "tomahawk rights", which refers to their method of marking property claims by blazing marks on the trunks of trees. The new settlers would find it difficult to develop legal, cultural and social ties with Williamsburg and the other European-populated areas of Virginia because of the distance and lack of roads – therefore they were rather tenuously "Virginians" only in a narrow

geographical context, and even that was debated for years until the leaders of the colonies agreed on which tributary constituted the main stem of the Potomac River. (Lawsuits debating the boundaries between Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania continued even up to the 20th century).

In a 1721 map made for Philomen Lloyd, the Secretary of the Maryland Colony, the area upstream of the mouth of the Monocacy River is described as "*Potommeck above Ye Inhabitants*" and shows the correct relative positions (and the present-day names) of the Conococheague, Opequon, and Antietam creeks. An interesting notation for an area near Opequon Creek about 8 miles west of NCTC near the present site of Bedington, West Virginia is "*Opeckhon Creek: A Salt Soyl called ye Elk's Licking Place. Great Droves of those Creatures resorting there to lick ye Earth*".

Settlement of the northern (Lower) portion of the Shenandoah Valley was given impetus in 1722 with the Treaty of Albany between Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and the Five Nations Indians (the Iroquois Confederacy, which included such groups as the Mohawks, Senecas, Cayugas, Oneidas and Onandagas). The northern Indians agreed not to cross the Cohongoroota (Potomac), or the Blue Ridge, without a pass (only 10 passes to be issued at a time), upon pain of death or slavery. This treaty clearly made piedmont Virginia and Maryland just to the east of the Blue Ridge very desirable for settlement by recently-arrived Europeans, allowing greater European familiarity with the Shenandoah Valley on the other side of the long ridge. Indians were still allowed to travel through and otherwise utilize the Shenandoah Valley along their Warrior's Path, which extended from New York to the Carolinas. The powerful Iroquois, centered in New York, had fought tenaciously for many years with other tribes in eastern North America for control over trade and other resources, and seem to have benefited from this treaty at the expense of some of the other tribes under their "protection" in the mid-Atlantic region, a strategy they pursued at various councils through the early 1750s. The northern Iroquois negotiators, who claimed to speak for all the Native American groups in the area including the Shawnee and Delaware (Lenni-Lenape*), apparently were willing to sacrifice (for a fee) a large land area for which the Iroquois had a very tenuous claim

* *Delaware* is from a British family name (Lord De La Warr) given to a river by the colonists, and then to the native people living nearby; *Lenni-Lenape* is what the tribe living in the Delaware River Valley called themselves.

even from the Native American perspective. The treaty still allowed the Iroquois Confederacy to outfit and send warparties south through the Shenandoah Valley to continue their long-term conflict for control over several southern tribes including the Cherokee and Catawba. European travel in the region was not constrained by any language in the treaty.

1725 - Charles Mounts Anderson, early explorer and operator of an Indian trading post on the Monocacy River near present-day Frederick, Maryland, was asked by the Maryland Assembly to provide a meeting place at his home for a council with a local Indian tribe. A John Powell was charged with inviting the Indians, and was *"to go to Shuano town on Potomack, commonly called Opessa's Town"*; he was provided calico shirts and scarlet worsted stockings to be used as gifts to help induce the Indians to attend. The purpose of the proposed council was to negotiate with the Shawnee over returning slaves they had been harboring - but the Shuano (Shawnee) Indians chose not to show up on the appointed date, and Anderson's partner Israel Friend was sent back to invite them to visit Annapolis instead (*Maryland Archives*, vol. 25 p 443, 451). Opessa's Town is now called Oldtown, located on the Potomac River between Hancock and Cumberland, Maryland, about 50 miles west of Shepherdstown. Charles Anderson had been in the Indian trading business since at least 1712, when he was recorded as entering into a lawsuit in Cecil Co, Maryland, with the widow of Indian trader Jacque LeTort, who lived at the Indian town at Conestoga, Pennsylvania (see Diller, n.d). Charles Anderson had been involved with negotiations over these same slaves since at least 1722 when the Maryland Council, hearing he was in Annapolis, had asked him to go to the Shuano town (Oldtown) with gifts *of coats and socks, and a promise of a "chain of friendship" for "so long as the sun and moon shall endure"*, especially if they would give the slaves back (*Maryland Archives*, vol 25, p. 395).

1726 - John Van Meter and his family purchased a 200 acre tract from Lord Baltimore near present-day Frederick, Maryland in the Monocacy River valley settlement known as Monocacy Hundred. The Van Meters were of Dutch origin, and had been in the Dutch colonies near New York and New Jersey for several generations; at least some of them were slave owners, as John's grandfather mentioned 6 slaves in his will (K. B. Rogers, n.d.). All of John's children were born on land the family owned in New Jersey, but the family had moved west to Maryland by the early

1720s. John, 43, and occasionally his younger brother Isaac were itinerant traders in the Monocacy River valley, and they no doubt had some contact with Charles Anderson's Indian trading post there. Their father, nicknamed "the Dutchman on the Hudson", had also been a widely traveled Indian trader and supposedly had encouraged his sons to settle in the upper Potomac region he had once explored. The Van Meters were likely well acquainted with a fellow Dutch Swearingen family living nearby at the time. The Van Meters certainly became acquainted with another family living in the neighborhood – John's daughter Elizabeth would marry Thomas Shepherd in a few years, and the young couple would, with Elizabeth's parents and several of their neighbors and relatives, soon take up land on the other side of the Cohongoroota River near a ford along the old wilderness trail, which the Shepherds would years later develop as "Shepherdstown".

May of 1726 marked the death of Thomas Swearingen, a slave-owning plantation owner living not far from the Potomac River near present-day Chevy Chase, Maryland (a northern suburb of Washington DC). He left behind 3 daughters – Margaret, Luranna, and Mary – and two sons including Thomas, who was 18, and Van, who was a young lad of 7. All the children were bequeathed land in the will: Margaret and Luranna each received 40 acres of "Hills Choys", Mary received 96 acres of "Swearingens Pasture", Thomas received 70 acres of "Forest", and young Van received 70 acres of "Forest" and 20 acres of "Hills Choys". Van Swearingen will become a major focus of the rest of this narrative.

1727 - Sometime this decade a small number of German immigrants and others from colonies in Maryland and New Jersey may have begun forming a community near Pack Horse Ford on the Virginia side of the Cohongoroota River, along the old wilderness trail that had been used for thousands of years by the native Americans, located a mile or so south of the land later developed by the Shepherds. These first Europeans left few traces of their time spent here, vague church records, explorer's accounts and uncertain graves being the bulk of the evidence (see Dandridge 1910, Bushong 1941). There are records of Europeans exploring this area before 1729, though it may be stretching it a bit to call them a community before about 1730. Within a few years land sales and legal actions recorded at Virginia courthouses would provide better documentation of these and perhaps later arrivals, including the Morgans, Shepherds, Weltons and Van Meters. The Native Americans had not been forced to

give up their use of the Shenandoah Valley at this time, by either violence or treaty, but the Europeans apparently felt that the small numbers of Natives who traveled through the area did not present enough of a menace to keep them from settling there. The Natives were getting anxious, though: in a letter to the authorities in Maryland complaining of white incursions near the Cohongoroota (Potomac) in 1731-32, several Indian representatives of the Five Nations, including one Capt. Civility, specifically mentioned that they had sold land only to Israel Friend, the trading partner of Charles Anderson, near Antietam Creek on the eastern (Maryland) side of the Cohongoroota near Pack Horse Ford (Md Archives vol. 28, p.10-11). They considered any other whites settling in the area to be trespassing and urged the Maryland authorities to stop the surveying of property.

Among those possibly "trespassing" was 19-year-old Thomas Swearingen, who apparently made a claim for 115 acres of land on Little Antietam Creek, south of present-day Sharpsburg and Keedysville Maryland, dating from on or before Nov. 1727 in what is now Washington County Maryland. He patented this property on June 12, 1734*. The property, later known as part of a much larger tract called Fellfoot owned by Tobias Stansbury of Baltimore, was purchased by Stansbury from Thomas Swearingen and his wife Sarah in the 1750s (Fred.Cty Md DB E, p433). This is the first record indicating that the Swearingens from near present-day Chevy Chase were interested in a new plantation further north in Maryland on the western side of the Blue Ridge, again located only a few miles from the Potomac (a few other families such as the Chaplines made the same journey from tidewater Maryland at the same time).

1728 - Peter Beller and his wife, likely recent German immigrants, were baptized in a German religious community near Lancaster, Pennsylvania after helplessly watching their young daughter die (Klein 1926). They would soon be migrating further southwest to the colonial frontier beyond the Blue Ridge.**

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* website for a map of the location: midatlantic.rootsweb.com/MD/washington/plats/platmap.htm

** This may be a different Peter Beller than the one who eventually owned NCTC property, but the timing and circumstances seem right. There was also a Peter Bellar who had owned, prior to 1712, the same piece of property north of Philadelphia later purchased by Joist Hite [Phil Deed Book F, Vol 2, p. 48].

1729 - Brothers John and Isaac Van Meter, explorers and traders from the Monocacy River valley in Maryland (Isaac and his family mostly remained in New Jersey at this time) built a cabin about 2 miles west of present-day Shepherdstown, West Virginia near where Route 45 crosses Rocky Marsh Run. They had spent some time in the last several years making contacts with authorities in Virginia about acquiring a large land grant, which included talks with Robert "King" Carter, representing Lord Fairfax and the Northern Neck Proprietary. They no doubt agonized over who held the rightful claim, the Virginia Colony, or Lord Fairfax in Great Britain. John Van Meter became the Constable of Monocosie Hundred in Maryland in 1729, a position he would hold intermittently through 1734, suggesting that his Virginia cabin was a temporary dwelling at first. The Virginia cabin site eventually became his home in the mid-1730s and became part of a patented property of over 1700 acres that included most of the watershed of the spring-fed creek now known as Rocky Marsh Run. It's interesting to note that John, who could presumably pick out the most desirable property in the entire area, deliberately picked out the wettest, marshiest site around, and for years his tract was referred to as the Van Meter Marsh patent. (Homeowners now living in this area are occasionally the subject of local newspaper articles during wet years – the intermittently marshy aspect of the landscape has apparently become less desirable in recent years, and some would prefer that the perennial surface water, so attractive to the Van Meters, drained a little faster to the Potomac through the now-channelized sections of creek.) Before moving full time to Virginia Van Meter lived in what was known as the Monocosie Hundred which encompassed an area extending from the mouth of the Monocacy River where it joined with the Potomac up into Pennsylvania, including the area now known as Frederick, Maryland. After writing a letter to authorities complaining of "abuses" by the settlers in Monocosie Hundred, Constable Van Meter was given a couple of deputies, including one Joseph Mounts (Tracy and Dern 1987).

Back in Williamsburg, the colonial capital of Virginia, Robert Carter unsuccessfully petitioned the King via the Virginia Council to stop issuing patents within or near the Fairfax Proprietary until the boundaries were determined. The colonists still didn't know where the headwaters of the Potomac or Rappahannock Rivers were, and so couldn't determine what lands were within the Proprietary; the Virginia Council perhaps saw a benefit in remaining obtuse about the boundary location for the time being. Many in Virginia preferred to interpret "head" of the Potomac as

describing the head of navigation, which would make the Proprietary much smaller by including land only in the coastal plain. Fairfax, of course, preferred the "first fountain" definition.

Chapter 2 European Settlement of Terrapin Neck

1730 - On June 17, the Van Meter brothers, after petitioning the Virginia Council for land grants for themselves, their many children and diverse relatives, were successful in acquiring a combined 40,000 acre grant from the colonial government of Virginia in the lower Shenandoah Valley. Thirty thousand acres, or 3/4 of the total, were to be located between the "Sherando" and "Operkin" (Shenandoah and Opequon) rivers - clearly well within the Northern Neck Proprietary also claimed by Lord Fairfax. The brothers together were required by the Council to settle themselves and 30 other families within two years to retain title to the acreage. Note that they were not given *all* the land between the Shenandoah and the Opequon, nor were they required to mark out a single large block of land. On the contrary, they were allowed to mark, survey and sell the best portions to themselves, their friends, and their new settler families, usually in parcels amounting to several hundred acres, until they eventually accumulated 40,000 acres. In short they were given the sole rights to a two-year hunting license for 10,000 acres within the forks of the Shenandoah River (an area including the heavily wooded upland called Massanutten Mountain, part of the George Washington National Forest, and the flatter land near Front Royal), as well as 30,000 acres bounded by the Shenandoah, Potomac and Opequon rivers. This also meant, of course, that the Van Meters had to be nervous about claiming ownership to land that someone may have already been living on and was willing to defend – other occupants, if any, could decide for themselves whether to purchase a legal title for their claim from the Van Meters during this two-year period. Other potential settlers could also approach the Virginia Council to gain title after the two years were up, and they probably also had to consider dealing with Lord Fairfax's agents. John Van Meter, in his rounds as Constable of the Monocosie Hundred in Maryland, no doubt informed all his friends and neighbors of his new land grant, and the wonderful land they could acquire from him across the river in Virginia. The Van Meters and the Virginia Council were fully aware that Fairfax held a claim to the land, well before the petition was heard; in fact, in later legal proceedings, Fairfax pointed out that the Van

Meters had approached him first for a grant (Couper 1952). In ignoring the Fairfax claim the Virginia Council and Governor Gooch probably considered it an opportune time to try to solidify their own claim, particularly since the neighboring colonies of Maryland and Pennsylvania were expanding rapidly. As settlers pushed westward in a search for land, legal boundaries in the colonies at this time were routinely redrawn, ignored or became obsolete. In the 40 years that the Proprietary had been in Fairfax hands, the Fairfax family had never shown any inclination to travel to the colony to personally administer their claim, and it was probably fairly easy to ignore the Fairfax agents when they started to complain. True to form, Robert Carter issued a caveat for Fairfax at the time that the Van Meter petition was being considered. (To keep the Fairfax claim alive, Fairfax's agent Robert Carter issued the first Fairfax grant in the Shenandoah Valley to a member of the Carter family 3 months later on September 22.)

The Van Meter brothers weren't alone in their petition for land in the lower Shenandoah Valley, as other land speculators acquired grants within the Fairfax Proprietary this year as well. The Virginia Council granted land on the west side of the Opequon River in Virginia to Quaker leaders Alexander Ross and Morgan Bryan with similar requirements for bringing in new settlers. Quakers from Pennsylvania and Maryland soon began packing up and moving to Virginia. The Quaker leadership in 1738 admonished them *"to keep a friendly correspondence with the native Indians, giving no occasion for offence"* and to emulate William Penn's example by always purchasing new settlements from the natives. They were further reminded that the province of Virginia had *"made an agreement with the natives to go as far as the mountains and no farther, and you are over and beyond the mountains, therefore out of that agreement; by which you lie open to the insults and incursions of the Southern Indians...*(Kercheval 1833)

Jeremiah York was perhaps the first known permanent settler in the vicinity of present-day NCTC. Tax records show he had been living in Chester County, Pennsylvania since about 1718 (O'Dell, 1995), but about 1730 he disappears from the tax rolls there. Records indicate a Jeremiah York living in the Monocosie Hundred near Pipe Creek north of present-day Frederick Maryland in the early 1730s (an old bible record indicates a son born there in 1732), but if this is the same York, he is not listed in the tax list of 1733, suggesting a possible date for his move west into Virginia, about the same time as the Van Meters and others from the

Monocosie Hundred. He claimed the land within a tight meander of the Cohongoroota several miles north of Packhorse Ford that would soon be called Terrapin Neck. Old friends and neighbors of York from Pennsylvania settled nearby on the Maryland side of the river, including Samuel Finley and the Alred family; the Yorks and Alreds would later settle in North Carolina together as well.

1731 - Joist Hite, 45 years old, having listened to the tales of the open lands in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, decided to sell his property near Philadelphia to a John Pawling for £540 pounds. The Van Meter's large land grant in Virginia greatly interested him, so Hite and about 16 other families packed up and headed south through the wilderness, widening the old Indian trails where necessary to make room for their heavily laden wagons. He and the Van Meters soon struck a deal (some genealogical sources have described Joist as either John Van Meter's cousin or nephew; other documents suggest they were just well acquainted), and the Van Meter brothers sold him their claim to the 40,000 acres granted them the previous year, possibly because of nervousness over the existing dispute over title, or maybe it had been their plan to sell out all along. John Van Meter was perhaps tired of the added "abuses" that inevitably came along with the administration of land grants and settlers, and was happy to be relieved of the burden, especially when it put money in his pocket. He was nearly 50 years old and had been moving west to the frontier his entire adult life. His younger brother and partner Isaac had decided to stay in New Jersey rather than settle on his grant in Virginia, so Isaac wasn't going to be much help. (According to fairly well documented family lore, Isaac later returned to Virginia and was killed by Indians during the French and Indian War in 1757.) The land the Van Meters had already patented was also sold to Hite 3 years later in 1734, though they retained and lived on several large parcels in the Shepherdstown area. Hite also had an additional 100,000 acre grant in the Shenandoah Valley issued to him by the Virginia authorities that he shared with a group of partners. Hite already had a head start in attracting the required number of settlers to his land grants with the 16 families who had traveled with him from Philadelphia; they all had lived out of their wagons near the Van Meter cabin and Pack Horse Ford for a year while homes were built about 5 miles south of present-day Winchester on the upper Opequon. Joist and Anna Maria's children were still fairly young at the time: John was 17, Jacob was 12, Isaac was 10,

Abraham was 2, and Joseph was a newborn (Jones et. al 1979). Over the years the Hite and Van Meter families would develop close ties from numerous marriages.

In addition to settling a specified number of families, Hite and his partners were required to have the 140,000 acres surveyed by **December 25, 1735** to retain control of the grant, the Virginia Council having granted a two-year extension to the original Van Meter Orders of Council. Thus began the anxious process of locating and surveying land and finding settlers to reach their quota. After setting up a land office (and operating an inn) south of present-day Winchester, Virginia, in addition to trying to attract new settlers and buyers into their area, the Hites began surveying and selling property to people in the Valley who were already living there, offering a title and a bond on a scrap of paper should the title ever proved defective. In return, the settlers had to pay a base fee, usually £3 per hundred acres (which was six times the price charged by the Northern Neck Proprietary or the Virginia Council), and an annual "quit rent". This may have been unpopular with some settlers, who probably were familiar with the Fairfax claim and were waiting to work with Fairfax for title. It must have been a bit of a shock to those already living in the area for a newcomer like Hite to appear in their midst holding an exclusive claim to 140,000 acres granted by the Virginia Council, and asking them to purchase the property they lived on from him. The Hites apparently were not particularly well organized and acted more in the manner of traveling land "peddlers". Lord Baltimore in Maryland and William Penn in Pennsylvania also considered this area as a possible expansion of their grants, and most of the settlers had actually come from those colonies. It would take a great leap of faith to buy land from the Hites. On the other hand, the Hites were in the neighborhood, the settlers could receive what looked like a bona fide title to the land without traveling to Williamsburg, they could pick and choose from among the choicest properties without regard to size or shape, and they were offered a form of title insurance. If a settler also happened to dislike the feudal Lords of Great Britain and their propensity to hand out property to relatives and privileged favorites, a fellow immigrant settler like themselves may have been seen as a more worthy person to conduct business with. Unfortunately, it was later found that the Hites and their partners kept poor records and conducted many shady transactions, including the recording of poor or fictitious surveys, the erasing of names on documents, and the like. Many of their land transactions were little

more than a verbal barter of various goods. It was found later that fewer than a third of their supposed buyers actually lived on one large grant. It should be noted that the Hites were not particularly unusual in this regard, many other colonial land speculators had similar problems and solutions to them (Couper, 1952).

1732 - Robert Carter, Fairfax's agent in Virginia, died. Fairfax lost an influential and powerful ally within Virginia's governing Council, though in fact Carter was a mixed blessing, having enriched himself and his heirs with land in the Northern Neck, and leaving administration of the Proprietary in some disarray with his passing (see Brown 1965). At one point, Robert Carter had amassed over 330,000 acres and owned about 1000 slaves (Wiencik, 1988, p.13).

Nearer the head of Chesapeake Bay, Lord Baltimore and the Calverts took note of the tide of immigrants coming out of Pennsylvania looking for land. The Treaty of Albany with the natives notwithstanding, the leaders of the Maryland colony, *"being desirous to increase the number of honest people within our province"*, offered land on very good terms between the Potomac and Susquehanna Rivers in order to capture some of the immigrants heading south into Virginia. A family could get 200 acres for free, with quit rents waived for three years, while single men or women could get 100 acres under the same terms (Md Archives vol. 28, p25-26). The measurement standard for honesty wasn't mentioned, but probably had something to do with not being an Indian.

1733 - Lord Fairfax, still in Great Britain, petitioned the King to stop the colony from issuing grants within his proprietary, and to finally! conduct a survey for a legal description. This was granted. To ensure that this ruling would not be ignored, Lord Fairfax decided to deliver the text of the decree himself by visiting Virginia - that wild backwater colony across the Atlantic - for the first time. Unfortunately for the later settlers on Terrapin Neck, he didn't arrive in Virginia until two years later.

1734 - A young Thomas Swearingen and his wife Sarah sold 68 acres, *"part of a tract of land called Forrest lying in Prince George County"* he had inherited from his father several years before (O'Dell 1995). It's unknown if he was thinking about life in Virginia at this time, or whether he was living on his now-patented Fellfoot property south of present-day Keedysville on the Little Antietam, but those new grants available across

the river in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia were undoubtedly being discussed by many young men in Maryland.

This year the first Hite survey near Terrapin Neck was conducted. On May 30, surveyor Robert Brooke surveyed an 834 acre tract on the Cohongoroota (Potomac) River adjacent to Terrapin Neck between Shepherd Island and the mouth of Rocky Marsh Run (then known as Jones Mill Run). This was surveyed for three partners—**Charles Anderson**, Indian trader and negotiator from the Monocacy settlements in Maryland, **Joseph Mounts**, deputy of Constable Van Meter in Maryland, and **Josiah Jones**, who also had another 164-acre survey in his name alone a few miles upstream *"being in the first large bottom below the mouth of Opeckon Creek."** Jones had lived there long enough to have already built a road and at least started construction on a mill near present-day Scrabble just west of NCTC, but the partners didn't yet hold legal title to the land. The presence of this mill and several others soon underway in the area about the same time suggests that settlers and grain fields were already becoming common. Anderson, Mounts and Jones probably had claimed this parcel several years before expecting to buy it from their old friends the Van Meters, who were setting up operations on a 1,786-acre parcel several miles to the south along the marshy upper reaches of what was then called Jones Mill Run, but the Van Meters had instead sold out to Joist Hite 3 years before. This was a case where the Hites surveyed 834 acres that were already claimed and occupied, and then sold the occupants the land and provided a title bond in case the title should ever prove defective (Hyman, 1996).

Anderson, Mounts and Jones had moved into a wild country that still included significant numbers of bison, elk, bear, beaver, wolves, cougars - and native Americans who traveled frequently through the area along their ancient trails. Much of the lower Shenandoah Valley to the west of Terrapin Neck was a prairie with scattered woodlots; larger woodlands tended to be in the vicinity of rivers and streams and along the ridges bordering the Valley. The rich limestone soils of Terrapin Neck would have tended to grow a mixed oak-hickory forest cover very quickly barring any significant disturbance, just as it does today (the woodland around the NCTC campus was an open pasture in the 1940s!) What did Anderson, Mounts and Jones find so attractive when they claimed this

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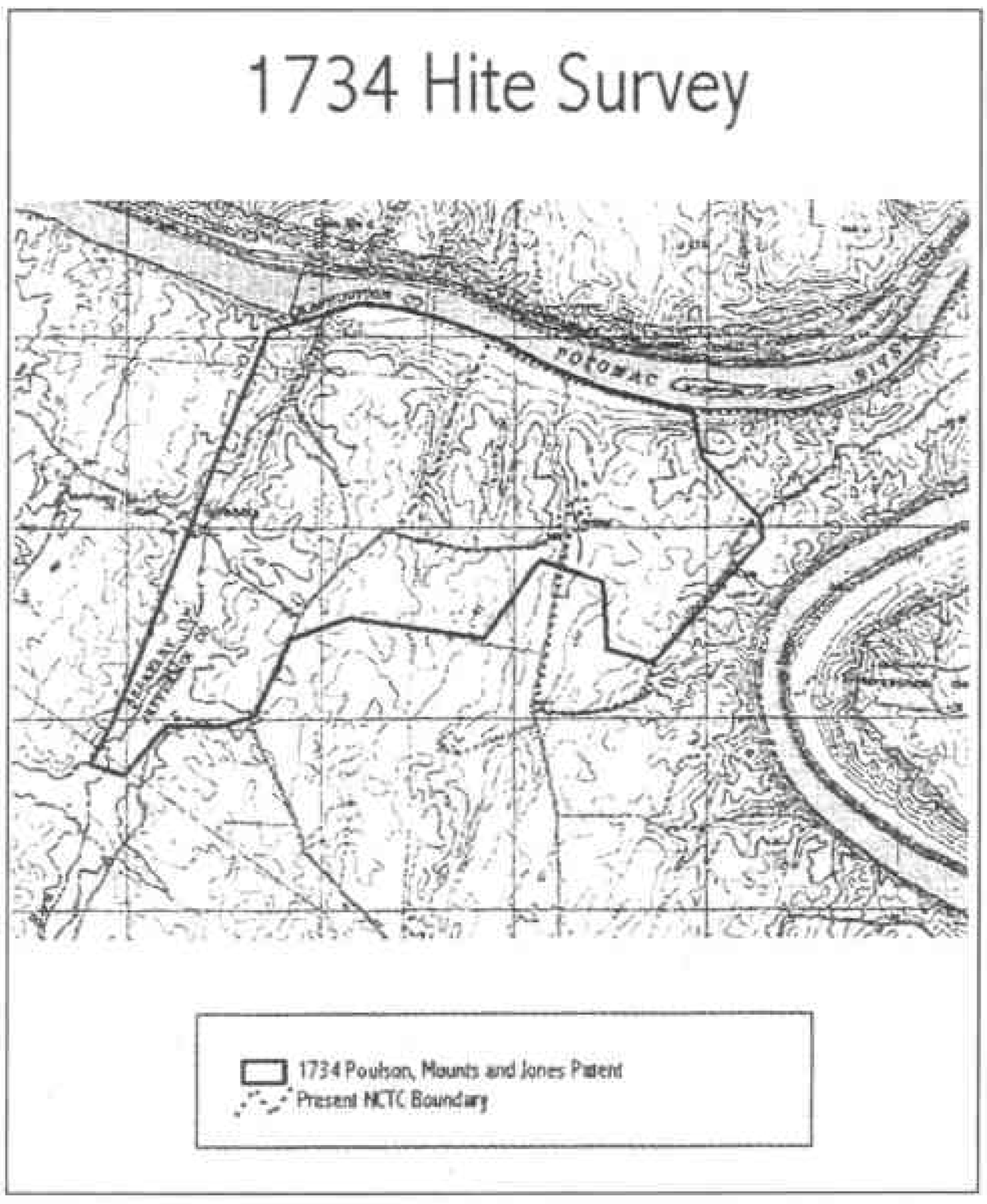
* Copies of surveys are at Berkeley County Historical Society's Belle Boyd House in Martinsburg, WV.

property? You can get some idea of what the Terrapin Neck area looked like by examining the text of their 1734 survey:

1734 Survey near Terrapin Neck

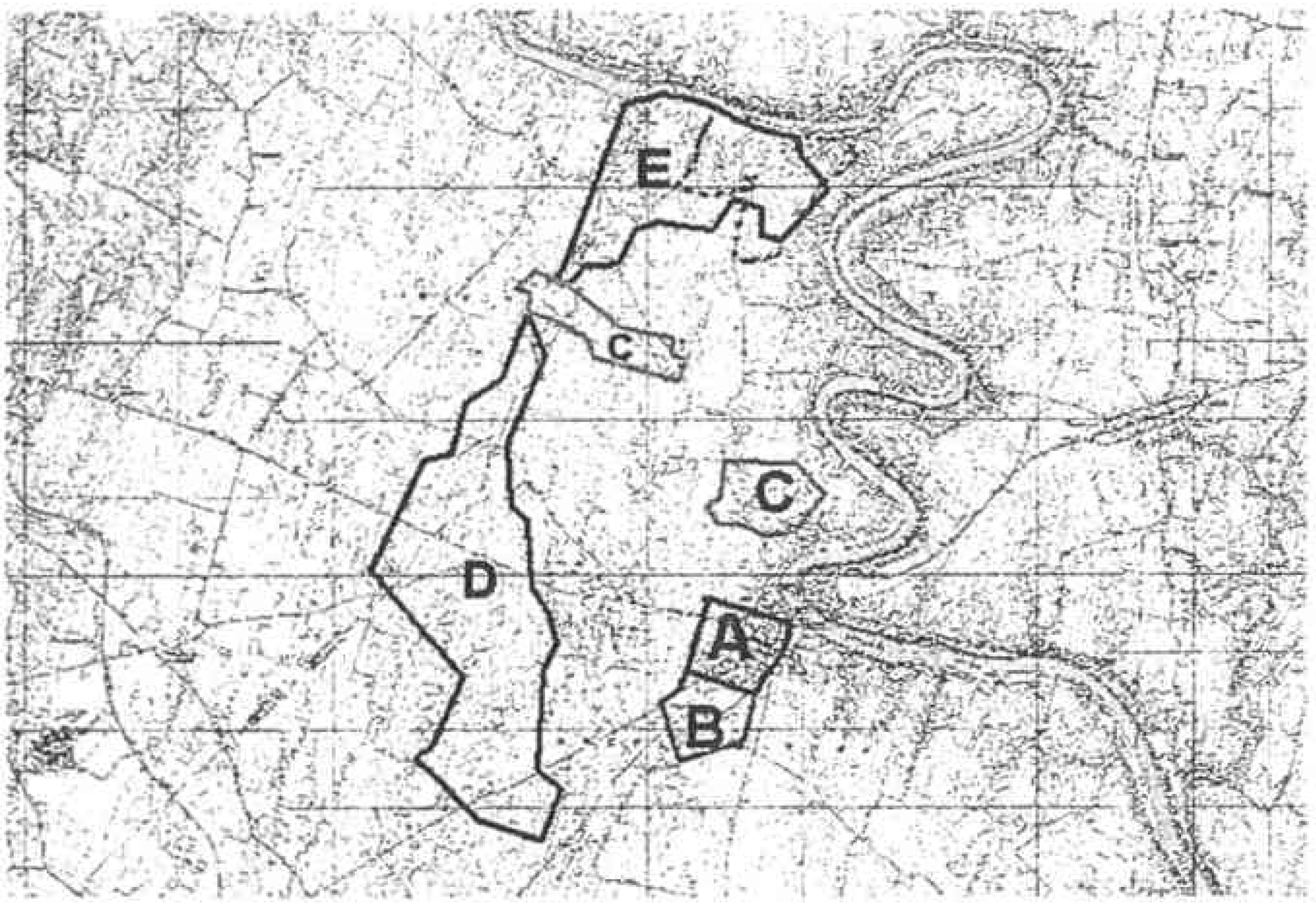
Surveyed for Charles Anderson, Josiah Jones, and Joseph Mounts 834 Acres of Land Beginning at a **Walnut Tree** Standing at the Mouth of the Said Jones Mill Creek and on the West Side Cohongolooto Riv. And Thence down the Meanders Thereof 413 Poles to a **wt. Oak** opposite to an Island. Thence on the high land round the Several courses following Viz. So 40 po: to a **Hicory**. S 38 E 80 po: to a forked **wt. Oak**. So 26 po: to a large **Hicory**. S 40 W 183 po: to a **bla. oak**. N 60 W 46 to a **bla. Oak**. N 72 po. to a **wt. oak** on a knowl. N 70W 72 to a **bla. Oak**. S 50 W 88 to a bla. oak. S 70 W 74 to a large **w. Oak**. N 75 W 62 po. to a **bla: Oak**. S 62 W 80 po: to a **wt. Oak**. S 25 W 80 to a **Locust Tree**. N 70 W 19 po: to a Hicory. West 66 po: to a **wt. Oak** by a Spring. S E 80 po: to a **wt. oak**. NW 26 pole over the Mill Branch to a **Walnut Tree** beyond a Meadow. N35 E 40 po: to a **Hicory**. N 20 E 240 to a **wt. Oak**. And Thence N 40 W 230 pole to the Beginning This 30th day of May 1734.

Rob't Brooke



The island referred to above is now known as Shepherd Island, the Cohongolooto (various spellings) refers to the original name of the Potomac River, and Jones Mill Creek is now known as Rocky Marsh Run. A pole is 16.5 feet. Note that these same tree species are still commonly found on NCTC property. The Berkeley County Historical Society recently placed the "Jones Mill" site on the National Register of Historic Places – today a sign marks the site near present day Scrabble. The eastern portion of this 1734 patent is now occupied by NCTC.

Other 1734 Patents



The pattern seen in these early surveys shows that the new settlers, who could still pick from among the choicest properties, chose sites that contained a spring or stream, had access to river transportation routes, and were probably open enough to allow quick establishment of crops and grazing for their livestock; why spend months or years cutting down trees or burning out stumps if you don't have to? They would have wanted plenty of trees nearby, though, for building cabins, barns and other structures, as well as for firewood. The trees in the above survey, therefore, would not likely have been part of a continuous closed-canopy oak-hickory forest, but perhaps were contained within thinly scattered woodlots, or along the edges of larger forest patches. Fire, and grazing by herds of elk and buffalo were likely the primary means of retaining open sites on the rich soils near Terrapin Neck prior to – and during – the settlement by Europeans. The strange shape of the Anderson, Mounts and Jones survey shows their strategy of minimizing the amount of land they had to *pay for*, but maximizing the land area that they could utilize,

by acquiring the water resources- including all the major springs- in the area. Another settler was unlikely to take up land next door and begin complaining about cattle trespass and wood removal unless there was a reliable source of water available. (This was still a common strategy used by settlers in the American west in the 19th century as well; by claiming the 160 acres around a spring, homesteaders could potentially have at their disposal many thousands of acres of semi-arid land). The 834-acre tract was patented the same year by **Richard Poulson**, Mounts and Jones, who within several years began subdividing and selling portions of it. (A Richard Polson is listed as a taxable in the Monocosie Hundred in 1733, and is probably the same man, considering the number of other people in the Terrapin Neck area associated with the Monocacy River settlements.) The patent signed by Governor Gooch of the Virginia colony gave them a very strong legal claim of ownership to the property; they had achieved the goal of many of the early immigrants by acquiring a *patented* tract of land. Why did Poulson take the place of Anderson on the patent? After all, Anderson's Indian trading post partner Israel Friend had also taken up land nearby along both sides of the river south of present-day Shepherdstown, probably in the 1720s. (Friend's title to the Maryland land apparently came from several generous Indian chiefs who considered him their friend - see Diller, undated. Thomas Swearingen would be executor of Friend's will in 1749). Anderson and Israel Friend were both descended from a Swedish Lutheran colony – New Sweden – along the Delaware River. And since Anderson's middle name was Mounts, one can assume he was closely related to deputy Joseph Mounts, one of the other patentees. (A Christopher Mounts, also related, had acted as an Indian interpreter for the Maryland Council back in August of 1700, further evidence that the Mounts and Anderson families had had several generations of frontier interactions with Native Americans, and may have derived a substantial portion of their incomes from these relationships – Md Archives v25, p.104). Anderson may have been nervous over the Hite / Fairfax land dispute, and perhaps an agrarian lifestyle was ultimately unsuitable to someone who had spent so many years as an Indian trader on the frontier, and land speculation was his only real interest in the Virginia property. It could also have something to do with the fact that Anderson was in the Orange County, Virginia "gaol" by September 1735 for the murder of David Hopkins (O'Dell 1995), the charges brought by one Morgan Morgan and several other prominent early settlers in the area.

Where Are the Native Americans?

Archeological evidence on the NCTC property has shown that Native Americans utilized the site intermittently upwards of 8000 years. Dating of cultural artifacts suggests that regular occupancy of the site ended about 1300 A.D.; this matches a regional pattern characterized by pronounced changes in the distribution and subsistence strategies of earlier cultural groups often correlated with a climate phenomenon known as the Little Ice Age. The very few European accounts of the area between the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers in the 1720s indicate the area was utilized by small groups of natives for occasional seasonal subsistence including trapping, hunting, and the setting of fish traps to catch springtime sucker runs near present-day Harper's Ferry. The I-81 corridor about 10 miles west of NCTC today roughly follows a major trail from New York to the Carolinas once used by various groups including the Lenni-Lenape, Shawnee and Catawba tribes; another ancient trail crossed the river at Pack Horse ford about a mile south of Shepherdstown. There seems not to have been any large or long-term settlements of Native Americans in the Shepherdstown area when Europeans began moving into the valley; the Maryland Council in the early 1700s spoke of Indian towns at Conestoga, Pennsylvania, the Shawnee town at present-day Oldtown, Maryland, a fort near Great Falls on the Potomac and several other tribes with towns around the Chesapeake Bay. A group of Tuscarora Indians, after fleeing the Carolinas sometime after 1715, lived at the site of present-day Martinsburg for a time (some accounts suggest they moved there after 1730), then left just prior to the French and Indian War in the 1750s. Note that these tribal names were often designations given to them by the Europeans – kinship patterns were complex and the natives themselves may have felt little connection to their assigned group.

Robert Brooke completed several other surveys for the Hites in the area the same year.* In April, he surveyed 210 acres for Richard Morgan just north of present-day Shepherdstown. (This parcel was purchased by Van Swearingen 10 years later, and Thomas Swearingen, Jr. would eventually marry Morgan's daughter). Brooke also surveyed a tract for a

* Copies of these surveys are located at the Berkeley County Historical Society's Belle Boyd House in Martinsburg, WV.

Welton in the same area. Later in October Brooke came back and surveyed 222 acres for Thomas Shepherd and his new wife Elizabeth Van Meter (who was related to the Hites - a relationship that was likely a factor in later legal proceedings on Terrapin Neck), to which Shepherd added a gristmill and sawmill some time later. Twenty years later part of this tract would be laid out into the town lots of Mecklenburg (Shepherdstown). The Morgan, Welton and Shepherd families, all of Welsh origin, had divided up and were utilizing the water resources of what is now referred to as Town Run and its small upstream, spring-fed tributaries, one of which begins in present-day Morgan's Grove Park.

The community of Shepherdstown has been referred to by a number of names over the years. From the 1720s to the 1750s it was commonly referred to as Pack Horse Ford, in reference to the ancient river crossing about a mile south of the present community. For a time it was called Swearingen's Ferry, after Thomas Swearingen started a ferry in 1755. After 1762 it was legally known as Mecklenburg, or Maclinborough, using a variety of spellings. By the time of the Revolutionary War it was more commonly referred to as Shepherds Town. This name was given official sanction by the state authorities in 1798 (Dandridge, 1910).

The Swearingen brothers of Maryland, Thomas and Van, were likely exploring the Virginia side of the river at this time. The actual date of one or both of the brothers living full time on the Virginia side of the Potomac is unknown, but was most likely in the early 1740s. Thomas with his wife Sarah bought and sold several properties in Maryland between 1732 and 1744. By 1734 Thomas had patented his Fellfoot property near Keedysville, Maryland, was married and 26 years old. He was 11 years older than his brother Van, who was then a 15-year-old teenager. Thomas was probably the dominant male figure in Van's early life, as their father had died 8 years before. They likely had spent considerable time with their uncle Van Swearingen and his family who eventually established a home a few miles north of present-day Sharpsburg, not far from Thomas Swearingen's Fellfoot property on the Little Antietam (young Van would marry his first cousin from this family later). The Swearingen family had been involved with Maryland colonial politics and land use issues for several generations. Their great-grandfather's home in the then state capital of St. Mary's City at the mouth of the Potomac River was used as a meeting place for writing

many of the early Maryland laws; he had served as Sheriff for a time, and ran a lodging and coffee house for the colony's leaders and merchants. The family was originally from Holland but became British citizens after arrival in the New World. Later generations were pragmatic in their choice of religious affiliation, abandoning Catholicism in the face of certain persecution by the colonial authorities of Maryland who wielded power through the Anglican Church. They eventually became moderately wealthy slave owners and undoubtedly were involved with the growing of tobacco on their lands. Each generation moved further up from the mouth of the Potomac River, and Van's father and uncles had several plantations near present-day Washington DC and Frederick, Maryland.*

There was by this time a busy wagon road from Conestoga, Pennsylvania to near present-day Winchester, Virginia available for settlers to use. By 1741 a road from near present-day Williamsport, Maryland to Winchester, Virginia was being actively worked on, and not too long afterward settlers could travel by wagon from Philadelphia all the way to the Carolinas on a road now known as the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road. In crossing the Potomac, they could choose to ford near present-day Williamsport, Maryland, or cross at Pack Horse Ford a mile south of Thomas Shepherd's property. A 1734 survey in Virginia also showed a ferry operating just south of Pack Horse Ford near the mouth of Antietam Creek on the Maryland side of the Potomac to Knott Island on the Virginia side, which seems to have been associated with the new iron industry developing on or near Israel Friend's property. This would soon become the thriving mining and iron-producing town of Antietam, built near the ore deposit near the mouth of the creek of the same name. The ferry may have also been used by the occasional settler or traveler wishing to keep their feet dry. The colony of Virginia required public ferry operators to be licensed by an act of the Virginia Assembly, but there are no records of a licensed ferry operation here at the time. The commercial possibilities were probably just beginning to be realized as hundreds of newly-arrived immigrants, both German and Scotch-Irish, were spreading out across Pennsylvania and traveling south along the wagon road west of the Blue Ridge down into the Shenandoah Valley. It has been estimated that 85% of the settlers moving into what became Frederick County, Virginia came from Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and northern Maryland (O'Dell, 1995).

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* See http:/genforum.genealogy.com/swearingen/.

1735 - In May Lord Fairfax finally arrived in the Virginia colony for the first time to deliver the decree from the King to stop issuing patents within his Proprietary. You can imagine the stir in Williamsburg and the thoughts of those who had purchased property within the Fairfax claim. It was one thing to ignore a Lord on the other side of the ocean, but a different thing entirely when he was in town with an entourage and a handful of documents bearing the King's seal. Fairfax and his agents, including his recently-hired cousin William, immediately began to make plans for a survey of his Proprietary, and were inquiring about who had been given land within the Proprietary by the Council without their consent.

By July, mill owner Josiah Jones, one of the new owners of the patented tract near Terrapin Neck, was dead, leaving behind a wife and two children. His widow was ordered to appear in court to explain what she planned to do with her portion of the estate, including the mill. By September, Charles Anderson, one of the men named on the original survey for the property that became NCTC, was in jail for murder. The charges were eventually dropped, and Anderson moved to Oldtown further up the Potomac (O'Dell, 1995). If slaves could find a refuge there with the Indians, perhaps he could too.

December 25 of this year marked the end of the Hite's 4-year period for legally surveying land to include in their grant. It seems they tried to sneak in at least one more survey, as will be seen - the deadline had been extended several times in the past so they seem to have assumed that it would be extended again whenever the assembly got a chance to take up the issue.

1736 - In January, a Jonathon Simmons bought about 315 acres on the eastern side of the Poulson, Mounts and Jones patent (now the Springwood portion of NCTC) from Joseph Mounts for 30 pounds (Orange County DB 2, p. 385). Richard Poulson was living there at the time near the island (O'Dell, 1995). It is unknown if Simmons lived on his new property after the purchase, but it seems likely.

A Hite survey of 1200 acres including *all of Terrapin Neck* east of and adjacent to Jonathon Simmons new place was (probably) surveyed on May 21; note that this took place 6 months after the Hite deadline. (A map of this survey is located for the year 1777 later in this document). A John Browning, living in what is now Cecil County, Maryland not far south of Philadelphia, received a title bond of 200 pounds from the Hites

almost six months later on November 6th for this property, suggesting that the survey was not conducted at the behest of Mr. Browning, but was undertaken by the Hites on behalf of someone else or with the hope of eventually finding someone to buy it. According to Virginia law Browning was then legally required to settle on and improve Terrapin Neck to retain title – he never did, but instead seems to have lived in northeastern Maryland until he died there five years later. The surveyor hired by the Hites on Terrapin Neck was James Wood, surveyor for Orange County, and later there is some controversy over whether he surveyed the previous November 10, as was alleged in court later by the Hites (albeit with no supporting documentation), or whether the survey was conducted on the date it was written in his log book, which was the following May 21 (Hyman, 1996). Wood went on to later become the first clerk of the new court in Frederick County, and is known as the founder of Winchester, Virginia. The Swearingens and other landowners on the Neck would later have to deal with him on numerous occasions over the years with militia matters and getting their land transactions recorded.

Why was a non-resident John Browning able to purchase this 1200-acre tract on Terrapin Neck, rather than the people who were (probably) living there? Assuming that Jeremiah York actually *did* settle there after 1730 (he disappears from Pennsylvania records after 1729, and is mentioned as living on Terrapin Neck by at least 1741 in a later court deposition by Anthony Turner, who came to the area in 1740 as a boy – see Chalkley, vol. 2, p.95), and making a further assumption that later repeated court testimony was correct in showing that Browning never settled Terrapin Neck, we can speculate the following. Jeremiah York was 1) ignored by the Hites and not consulted about purchasing the land he had claimed – this seems unlikely because of the surveys done by Brooke in the area in 1734. York also left south-eastern Pennsylvania about the same time as the Hites, suggesting they were well-acquainted, or more likely, 2) York refused or did not pursue a Hite survey and patent, possibly because of the invalid survey after December 25, or knowledge of the Fairfax claim and Fairfax's recent visit to Virginia, or some other falling out with the Hites – and the Hites ignored York's unofficial "tomahawk rights" and sold it to Browning despite it already being claimed and possibly occupied. York was under no obligation to buy from the Hites; remember the Hites were allowed to distribute only a maximum of 30,000 acres between the Shenandoah and the Opequon

rivers with a December 1735 deadline, which had now passed. York could very well have been waiting to pursue a grant directly from the Virginia Council and Governor Gooch, or from Lord Fairfax (he did receive a Fairfax grant for the land finally in 1751). It's possible that York was unaware that he was even in a contest for ownership, since there are no records of York filing a caveat or seeking any other legal redress from the Hite sale of his claim, but for now he had the rather ignoble status, in the eyes of the law, as that of a "squatter," if the Hite survey was declared valid and the Brownings should ever press their claim to ownership. York may also have given up on his claim to Terrapin Neck and stayed at his farm in the Monocosie Hundred, but moved back after Browning died in 1741. York and Browning undoubtedly knew each other, since both were from the area southwest of Philadelphia near the Pennsylvania-Maryland border.

Even if York and others had begun negotiating with Hite over a land purchase, the issue was rendered moot – the Hites and other speculators and settlers were prevented from patenting any more property between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers because of a Fairfax lawsuit about this time. This lawsuit effectively eliminated any settler's ability to acquire a clear legal title to land between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers for at least the next 15 years. Any contest between York and Browning over title to Terrapin Neck had to wait until the dispute between Hite and Fairfax was settled.

Progress was made in describing the boundary of the Fairfax claim: the long-awaited search for the headwaters of the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers, which would define the boundaries of Fairfax's Northern Neck Proprietary, started in October and took about 9 weeks. The commission had two "teams", being composed of members representing both Fairfax and the Virginia Council. After completion of their arduous survey, another year was spent drafting their separate reports and maps.

1738 - There were still some disputes between agents of the Virginia Council and the Fairfax team, so the results of the 1736 survey of the Proprietary were carried to England for a decision. Lord Fairfax agreed to honor all Crown grants issued by the Virginia Council within his Proprietary, including the Van Meter/Hite grants. The Terrapin Neck area was now included in the new county of Frederick, Virginia, there now being enough people in the lower Shenandoah Valley to warrant a

court house of their own. Thomas Shepherd petitioned the Orange County, Virginia Court about this time, requesting to be discharged as "Constable Sherundo" as soon as Richard Morgan was sworn in his place (O'Dell 1995); in October Shepherd was also paid a bounty of 14 shillings for a wolf's head by certificate of Richard Morgan (FC VA Court Journal, in Smyth, 1909).

1739 - From the time of the first settlements in the New World, Europeans had a strong interest in American flora and fauna, with many wealthy gentlemen becoming avid collectors. By this year John Clayton of Gloucester County, Virginia produced the first taxonomic work from America, entitled *Flora Virginica*.

Joist Hite's wife Anna Maria died at 52 years of age. Joist remarried two years later to Maria Magdalena, widow of his late friend Christian Neuschwanger. Their marriage included a prenuptial agreement specifying that she would provide love, obedience, cattle, money and other household stuff, in return for love, faithfulness and a home (Jones et. al 1979).

1741 - John Browning died on the Eastern Shore of Maryland (actually in the northeastern part, not far from Philadelphia); he was only 36 years old. He willed "his" 1200-acre Terrapin Neck tract in Virginia, sold to him 5 years before by the Hites, to three of his children: George, Nicholas, and Rosamond (she eventually married a William Keating). The Hite-Fairfax dispute was still unresolved, but luckily for Jeremiah York, there are no records of John Browning attempting to settle or press his claim to Terrapin Neck prior to his death, though he apparently considered it valuable enough to pass on to his children. It would be more than 40 years before his grandchildren suddenly took an interest in the property again, as will be seen.

1742 - Peter Beller, a German shoemaker (wooden clogs?), and his wife Catherine, with 6-year old son Jacob were living on the patented property Jonathon Simmons had purchased 6 years previously near Terrapin Neck (now the Springwood portion of NCTC). They eventually purchased the property from Jonathon Simmons - but the transaction wasn't recorded at the courthouse until sometime after Simmons death four years later (FCDB 4, p.121-123). Beller may have lived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania with Dunkers around 1728, and followed a common

German settlement pattern by continuing south into the Shenandoah Valley. There were other German Protestant groups settling just to the west on the other side of the Opequon River, an area off-limits to the Hites. Many German settlers preferred to continue on toward North Carolina in order to avoid the contentious land ownership disputes between Hite and Fairfax, and others (Couper, 1952). Beller probably followed the typical German style of growing crops and animal husbandry, and likely had a cabin and a barn on the property that would become NCTC (see chapter in Kercheval, 1833).

1743 - Van Swearingen, 24, married his 21 year old first cousin Sarah Swearingen. Sarah and her family had likely been living about 5 miles north of Terrapin Neck across the river in Maryland by this time, not far from Thomas Swearingen's Fellfoot property south of Keedysville where Van had likely resided with his brother. Van and Sarah's children eventually include:

Josiah - b. 28 March, 1744, oldest son
Rebecca - b. 2 Oct 1745 (she apparently died young)
Hezekiah - b. 7 Feb 1747
Luranna - b. 13 Nov. 1748
Drusilla - b. 29 Oct 1750
Thomas - b. 22 Nov 1752

Indian claims and complaints now being entirely ignored, settlement of the riverside land in Maryland across from Thomas Shepherd's little community on the Potomac had been proceeding steadily for almost a decade, with several surveys already completed in the area now known as Ferry Hill. John Van Meter hired a survey for a 160 acre tract on the Potomac on the Maryland side of the river known as Pell Mell, which was just northeast of an adjacent tract downstream already surveyed and patented known as Antietam Bottom. Van Meter instructed the surveyor Joseph Chapline not to mark the western corner of Pell Mell – a black walnut tree on the riverbank – until after the lines of Antietam Bottom (patented in 1739 by John Moore) were known, so there wouldn't be any controversy over the boundary. Unfortunately the walnut tree was never marked and sure enough it later caused a lot of controversy (Fred. Cty Md DB J, p 939, deposition of Joseph Chapline).

1744 - The newlywed Van Swearingens bought a 210 acre Hite-surveyed, patented tract from Richard Morgan for £110 just north of the

Pack Horse Ford community (now part of the Cress Creek development), which became their first family residence in Virginia (FCDB 1, p.116). The deed refers to Richard Morgan as a "Gentleman", while Van is described as a "Farmer". Van's older brother Thomas would acquire an adjacent 478 acres from a Fairfax grant six years later, site of a conspicuous circle of raised earth used by the native Indians sometime in the past (Kercheval 1833), that later became known as the Bellevue property. Local folklore includes the tale of a Delaware Indian chief who was supposedly captured in the vicinity by enemy Catawba Indians, and buried alive near the spring on what became the Swearingen estate. The spring on the property spurts instead of flows, according to the tale, because of the beating heart of the buried chief (Heatwole, 1995). Thomas established a ferry across the Potomac on this property by 1755, and eventually owned plantations on both sides of the Potomac River.

Although there are no records that describe the lifestyle of the new Swearingen plantations in Virginia, from descriptions of common practices at the time we can surmise that the children, many of the household chores, as well as the farm animals and crops, were all attended to by slaves. Tobacco and other crops and animals were grown and sold for profit, but much of the land – and much of the effort – would necessarily have been directed toward the growing of corn, wheat, hogs, sheep, and beef, which formed the basis of their subsistence. Tobacco was the currency of choice for paying taxes and fines for several decades in colonial Virginia. The financial system then prevalent has been likened to growing cash in your back yard. Landowners were assessed not only on real estate, but also on personal property such as horses and slaves. By Virginia law, planters were required to transport tobacco to a public inspection warehouse located in each county. Planters storing tobacco at the warehouse were given a receipt, which could be used as legal tender. Col. James Wood, clerk of the new Frederick County, in his Virginia Fee Book for 1744 recorded the Tobacco Assessment for selected settlers in the Terrapin Neck area as shown in Table 1 (page56).

Even though Van Swearingen was a "Farmer" and Richard Morgan was a "Gentleman", Van appears to have nearly double the property worth taxing compared to Morgan, and even was assessed a higher fee than his neighbors the Van Meters. He owned only 222 acres, suggesting much of his wealth may have been in slaves and livestock.

Table 1. 1744 Frederick County Tobacco Assessment

Name	Pounds of Tobacco Assessed
Peter Beller	50
Joseph Mounts	96
Richard Poulson	5
Van Swearingen	190
Jonathon Simons (Simmons?) ye infant	560
Israel Friend	268
John and Jacob Hite	449
Joist Hite	109
Richard Morgan	105
John Welton	130
Isaac, Henry and Jacob Van Meter total	158

from Kerns, n.d.

This list is missing some important people connected with the Terrapin Neck - Pack Horse Ford area at the time, such as Thomas Shepherd, who owned hundreds of acres of patented land, a gristmill and perhaps a sawmill by this time (a John Shepherd is assessed 122 lbs. and is the only Shepherd on the list, which suggests this may have actually been Thomas?), and Thomas Swearingen, who would own a mill, much land, and a ferry operation in the years to come. Why is Van assessed but not his older brother? Thomas Swearingen was more than likely still living a few miles away across the river in Maryland on his Fellfoot property south of present-day Keedysville. Thomas had been buying and selling land in Maryland since 1732, and had sold land in Maryland as recently as 1744 (although he takes in some orphans associated with Jones Mill in Virginia the following year.) Terrapin Neck settlers also missing from the list include Jeremiah York – or anyone named Browning. The clerk of court, James Wood, may have known that York did not hold a patent to the land he (probably) lived on in Terrapin Neck, since it was Wood himself who had conducted the land survey there for the Hites ten years before. It is unknown why the Browning heirs were not assessed instead, unless the ownership question between Hite and Fairfax placed these people on a separate list. Did Frederick County assess only those who held a patented tract in 1744, or did Wood keep a separate list for those living on unpatented land? Researcher Kerns also noted some prominent

individuals missing from the list for the Cacapon area for this year as well, and speculated that some settlers were too new to have come to the attention of the County authorities, or perhaps part of the Fee Book was missing. At any rate, this list strongly suggests that tobacco was a significant crop grown in the Terrapin Neck area at the time, though of course they didn't have to grow tobacco, and may have bartered other goods to acquire enough tobacco to pay their assessments.

Another Indian Treaty was negotiated this year, called the Treaty of Lancaster. Indian negotiators, again led by the Iroquois who claimed to speak for all the tribes of the mid-Atlantic region, at first strongly asserted their claim for lands west of the Blue Ridge by right of conquest (not by settlement, because there hadn't been any permanent Iroquois-related settlements in this area for some time), but ultimately signed over their rights to all lands between the Blue Ridge and Ohio River for £400. They were still allowed to travel their Indian Road between New York and the Carolinas, now roughly the route of Interstate 81 (see Md Archives v28, p336). This would now allow the legal settlement of the Maryland side of the River across from Shepherdstown, at least in terms of having accommodated (at least one of) the tribes.

Chapter 3 The Swearingens Become Prominent Under Lord Fairfax Rule

1745 - After years of dispute, the Fairfax Northern Neck Proprietary was defined and reaffirmed by the Privy Council in England, confirming the "first fountain" of the Cohongoroota as the head of the Potomac River, and making Fairfax the owner of over 5 million acres of Virginia! This essentially created two separate colonies within Virginia, at least in terms of acquiring a land grant, with Fairfax now in charge of all grants between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers. A survey was ordered to mark the western boundary that became known as the Fairfax Line, a boundary line running NW from near the present-day Big Meadow area of Shenandoah National Park to the head spring of the Potomac near present-day Davis, West Virginia; the surveyors laid a stone monument at the head spring, known as the Fairfax stone, and its various replacements can still be seen today. The surveyors included Peter Jefferson (father of the third president), and Robert Brooke (the son of the surveyor for the 1734 Anderson, Mounts and Jones survey near Terrapin Neck). This

created a situation where the Hites and Fairfax now "owned" some of the same land. The Hites and Fairfax got in a squabble and Fairfax refused to honor Hite titles despite what he agreed to in 1738 (Couper, 1952). Hite apparently had taken a long time to grudgingly provide to Fairfax names of settlers on lands Hite had surveyed, along with a description of the property boundaries. When he finally did provide them, the records and property descriptions were terrible; Fairfax felt disinclined to issue grants to what he considered fictitious people living on property with uncertain boundaries, and also wondered why the name "Hite" frequently appeared in the ledger obviously replacing a number of other erased names. Later court documents show that a high percentage of the acreage did go to the Hite family, though this was by no means a transgression of the terms of the 1730 grant purchased from the Van Meters. Using the names and acreages listed on page 174 in McKay (1951), Jost Hite's name is the "assignee" associated with 12 of 52 parcels surveyed and patented in 1734 under the Van Meter grant, amounting to 18,869 acres, or 41% of the total acreage of 46,248 acres. There were 36 other family names in the list, and, if legitimate, this was 6 more than was strictly needed. The 100,000-acre grant that Hite held with several partners was perhaps more of an issue, as it was found that only about a third of the listed families were actually living on the property in question.

Fairfax also objected to the Hite surveys for their tendency to lock up the water resources of an area. Many of the property boundaries of the Hite-surveyed lands included only the long, thin bottomlands bordering a stream, plus any adjacent choice uplands including the nearby springs. This made it difficult for later settlers to utilize adjacent property because of the lack of water. For example, in the Shepherdstown area John Van Meter acquired a long, thin parcel totaling 1,786 acres that included most of the narrow watershed of what is now known as Rocky Marsh Run, while the original Poulson, Mounts and Jones patent included extensive Potomac River frontage, the lower portion of Rocky Marsh Run, and an irregular shape designed to acquire the several major springs in the area. Richard Morgan acquired a skinny 290-acre patent between and perpendicular to the two grants listed above which included a spring and a meadow that ran into Rocky Marsh Run (now the site of The Conservation Fund's Freshwater Institute). Israel Friend's 300-acre patent was a long, narrow bottomland tract adjacent to the Potomac just downstream from Packhorse Ford on the Virginia side and was cited repeatedly by Fairfax as an example of just what he was complaining

about. Fairfax preferred what he called a "regular survey" that followed the Virginia Assembly order of Oct. 22, 1712 which required that surveyed parcels should have a breadth of at least one-third of their length (Brown, 1965).

Because his original legal land grant description referred to *"all that entire Tract, Territory, or porcon of Land situate, lying and beeing in America, and bounded by and within the heads of the Rivers of Rappahannock and Patawomecke..."*, Fairfax encouraged everyone to begin using the name "Potomac" for the river north of Harpers Ferry, instead of the old name of Cohongoroota, which was of Indian derivation from the sound of a honking goose. Lawyers could potentially have created mischief for his newly-won Proprietary if the boundary for his claim was known by Cohongoroota rather than Potomac, so the original Indian name had to go.

Closer to home, Thomas Swearingen was appointed guardian of John and Sarah Jones, orphans of the deceased mill owner Josiah Jones and their more recently deceased mother (O'Dell, 1995). Thomas and his family had apparently moved to the Jones Mill property near Terrapin Neck shortly before this time; Thomas Swearingen and his heirs would own and run the "Jones" mill near present-day Scrabble for more than 70 years. The mill location was adjacent to the Cohongoroota, which would allow barrels of flour and grain to be boated downstream to markets when water levels were high enough. Mill operators in that day kept a percentage of the grain brought to their mills as payment, and then sold the accumulated grain or flour to generate a profit (Stanton, 1993).

In 1745, Thomas Shepherd was appointed overseer of a local road, in place of Van Swearingen (Fred. Cty Court Journal, No. 2, p.2, in Smyth 1909). This year also marked the death of John Van Meter, who had been living upstream of the Jones Mill near present-day Rocky Marsh Run about 2 miles west of the little community being developed by John's daughter Elizabeth and her husband Thomas Shepherd. John had spent the last years of his life raising horses in what became known as the Van Meter Marsh patent. He had given away in 1744 *"all stalyons, geldings, mares and colts, running in the woods, branded on the left shoulder with the letter M"* to various family members (Smythe, 1909).

Note: Joseph and Remembrance Williams are mentioned in several deeds in the Frederick County Court House in Winchester on land near Jones Mill and the area that eventually becomes RiverView Farm within the Poulson, Mounts and Jones grant about this time. It is not certain

what their relationship is to the property. Two adjacent parcels were described with them as owners, but they seem not to have taken possession of the properties; this is probably a case of double titles for the same property, the confusion arising in part from the ongoing Hite-Fairfax controversy.

1746 - A death threw Peter Beller's title to the Springwood property into doubt. By decree of the Frederick County court, May 1746, Peter Beller *"recovered from Jonathon Simmons/Seaman an infant heir-at-law to Jonathon Seaman, late of Frederick County"* the 317 acres Simmons Sr had bought from Joseph Mounts - the Springwood tract (described in Frederick County, VA Deed Book 4, p.121). Jonathon Simmons Sr died before the real estate sale to Beller was recorded (it was a long journey to the Frederick County Court House), automatically giving the property to Simmons, Jr., who was still a youngster. Beller filed suit in Chancery Court to recover the property, the court acknowledged Beller's ownership and "ordered" the infant to honor the transaction when he was legally old enough to do so - within six months of his 21st birthday (this finally took place in 1762, after Beller sold the property to Van Swearingen, as will be seen). One can imagine Beller standing on the hill overlooking the river and mumbling ruefully "Mein Gott in Himmel" over this state of affairs...

1747 - Twelve years after his first visit, Lord Fairfax came back to the Virginia colony from Great Britain to defend and administer his Proprietary claims. He had settled his affairs in the British Isles and planned to live the rest of his life in the Virginia colony. A map of his Proprietary was finally published this year.

1748 - Thomas Swearingen acquired a 222 acre parcel (purchased from Richard Poulson) near the mill and the mouth of Rocky Marsh Run (Frederick County, VA DB 1, p. 396). He may have taken over the operation of the old Jones Mill there at this time, along with taking on the responsibilities and care of the Jones orphans.

1749 - Lord Fairfax, now living in Virginia full time, set up a land office near Winchester (strategically located not far from the Hites) and began surveying and selling grants of land. If a settler wanted title to unclaimed land between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers, the only choice

now was to deal with the Fairfax land office. Fairfax employed a number of young men to survey portions of his Proprietary, including George Washington. Fairfax was also commissioned Justice of the Peace for all Northern Neck lands, and served as local magistrate, county lieutenant, and vestryman of the Anglican Church. "*Lord Fairfax, Baron of Cameron in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, Proprietor of the Northern Neck of Virginia*" was now established as the ruler of over 5 million acres. The Fairfax land office generally just re-granted land surveyed and sold by the Hites back to the Hites and their purchasers, despite all the squabbles, though this did not stop the antagonism between the two groups on the 27 contested parcels. Unfortunately Fairfax could not just re-grant the land on Terrapin Neck to the Hite purchaser (Browning), because Browning was dead and buried on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, had never settled the property, and had no heirs around claiming possession; the late date of the survey and sale may have also been a factor. The Swearingens, Jeremiah York and others in the vicinity of Terrapin Neck were among the first to apply to Fairfax for grants of land they already occupied and elsewhere.

The Hite family and their partners were likely a bitter, dejected lot at this time, though in the back of their minds all those years they must have considered the possibility that the Fairfax claim would be legally recognized. Despite almost 20 years of work their expected fortunes had not been realized and the courts offered their only hope of reclaiming their perceived losses. Predictably, Joist Hite and his partners filed their own lawsuit to test the validity of the Fairfax claim and to regain 36,686 acres of land that they had surveyed but hadn't been able to patent, because of Fairfax suddenly showing up, out of the blue, waving a decree from the King (including the 1200 acres on Terrapin Neck that had been surveyed 6 months past the deadline). The Hite land grants were in dire legal straits, and the Hite family certainly didn't want to lose the bond money they would have to pay if their buyer's titles proved defective! The Hites were only one of about a dozen groups of speculators who had been surveying and selling land in the Shenandoah Valley prior to Fairfax gaining legal title, but the Hites were the only land speculators who Fairfax could not seem to accommodate to their satisfaction, which Fairfax blamed in part on the Hite's effrontery (Hyman, 1996).

1750 - Peter Beller moved from his patented Springwood tract to a new 400 acre Fairfax grant near present-day Baker Heights (O'Dell, 1995).

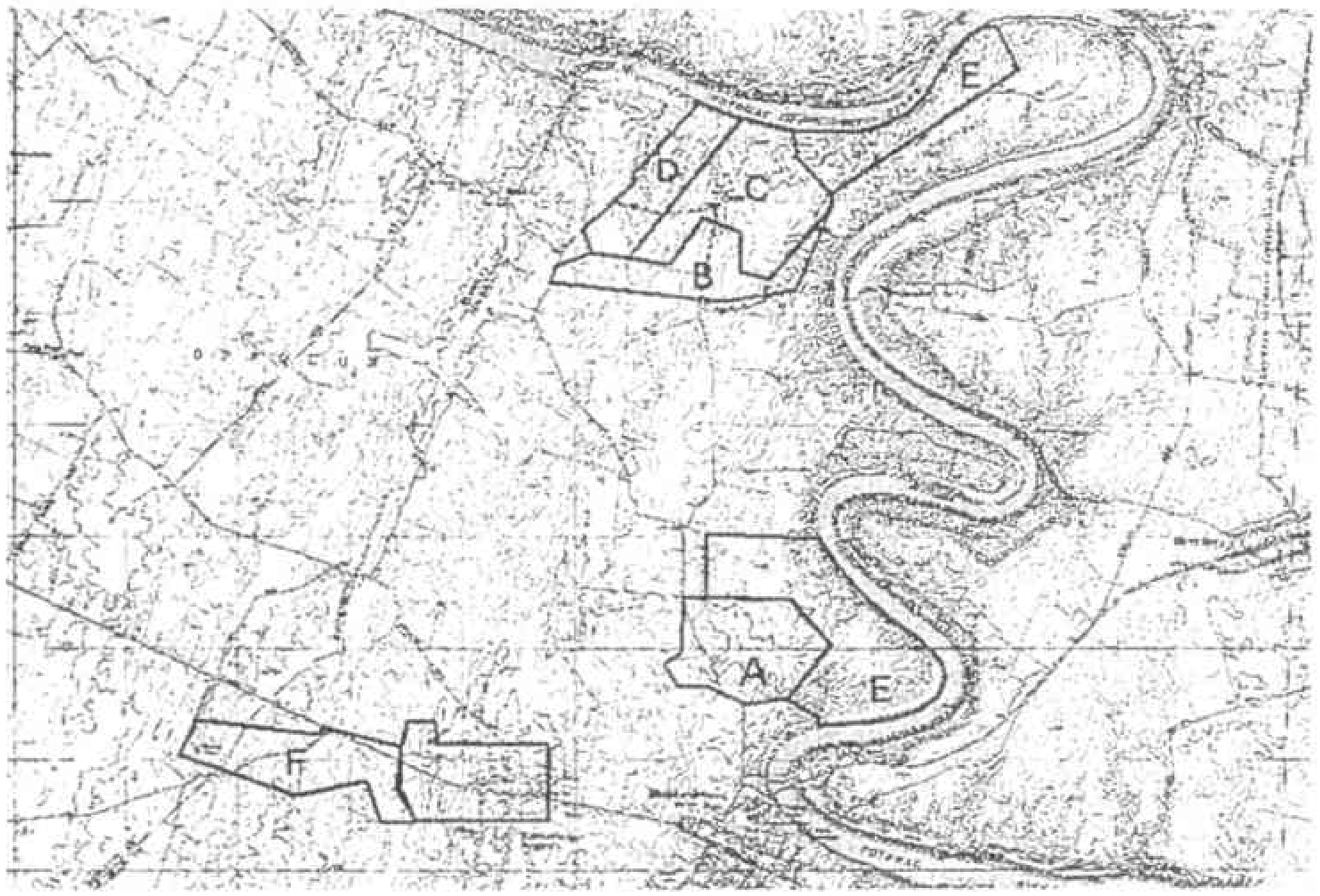
With the 300+ patented acres on the Potomac and the new 400 acre grant, this suggests that Beller was primarily interested in plantation agriculture with shoemaking a sideline business benefiting friends and neighbors. Thomas Swearingen received a Fairfax grant of 478 acres next to his brother Van's patented tract near present-day Shepherdstown; he had been living on the property near his mill, but was making plans for a new house and perhaps a ferry by this time, closer to Thomas Shepherd's little town.

Farmers in the middle colonies, seeing diminishing returns from their fields, began using clover and grasses to help restore nitrogen to the soil about this time, 100 years after farmers in England first began the practice. Within a few years, wheat exports from these same middle colonies, including Maryland and northern Virginia, would account for about 20% of all colonial exports (Dufour, 1994).

1752 - On 14 January, Van Swearingen received a grant from Fairfax for 187 acres near the entry to present-day Terrapin Neck Road, just south of the Beller property (maps are from data provided by G. Geertsema). The shape of the grant indicated he had an eye on the Beller property to the north, because the two properties combined would create a much more square shape than the original 1734 Poulson, Mounts and Jones patent boundary, while the 187 acres alone would be small, strangely shaped, and provide no significant source of water. His first foray into Fairfax grants may have been a disappointing experience. Whoever recorded the deed got his name wrong (Van Swaringham), and the surveyor used the wrong tree to describe the western corner, creating an issue with an earlier survey by his neighbor to the south (Richard Morgan) that had to be remedied. He also purchased a warrant for, and had surveyed, an additional 321 river-front acres on the east side of his patented land purchased in 1744 (now the Cress Creek development), and waited for a grant to be issued. His family had grown to 6 children by this time. The vestry of the Episcopal Church of Frederick County may have had at least two tight-faced members in their meetings this year, as it included among its membership John Hite (son of Joist Hite), Lord Fairfax, and Thomas Swearingen (Couper 1952).

1753 - Van Swearingen paid for a warrant and survey for a 200 acre tract along the unpatented northern boundary of Terrapin Neck, but waited over 6 years for the official grant from Fairfax to be issued. The

Van Swearingen Land Acquisitions in Terrapin Neck Area



deed would later describe, in standard fashion, 400 acres of waste land currently not claimed by anyone. He couldn't claim all of Terrapin Neck since Jeremiah York already had a Fairfax grant for 323 acres out on the eastern end of the Neck, Vachel Medcalfe claimed an additional 300 acres, and Abraham James claimed 196 acres at the base of the Neck. Van and his neighbors almost certainly were aware of the Browning purchase in 1736, and the fact that the 1736 survey was completed past the deadline, but seemed willing to take a chance on Fairfax grants since

a Browning had never asserted a right to the property. The surveyor for Fairfax was Thomas Rutherford, whose son eventually married Van's daughter Drucilla. Van Swearingen may have been living on Peter Beller's property (Springwood) by this time, but hadn't paid for it yet. His neighbor out on the end of the Neck, Jeremiah York, sold his 323 acres for which he had received a Fairfax grant two years before to a William Chapline for £58 – thus indicating that Chapline was not particularly worried about the Hite/Browning claim at this point (FCDB 3, p. 90). York, on the other hand, avoided any further legal machinations over title to land in the Fairfax Proprietary by selling out and moving to North Carolina with several other local families.

1754 - British settlers, traders and explorers heading west over the Appalachian mountains ran into French settlers and explorers heading south and east, with tensions rising over which European group would control the upper Potomac area and the Ohio River Valley. Many of the Native American groups living in what are now Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and New York had become familiar with the French traders and settlers during the more than 100 years of French exploration of the area, and some were convinced to ally with the French in their dispute with the British colonies. Several years later the British had their own Native allies for a short time, when the Cherokee and other groups in the Carolinas decided to weigh in on the side of the British. Later the Iroquois Confederacy sided with the British to use the growing British power to retain control over Native groups in the Ohio River valley. The various Indian groups across the continent had old alliances and scores to settle dating back decades or even hundreds of years, and it had long been common practice for them to travel thousands of miles to trade or fight with other Natives - their participation in the British-French squabble over half a continent was a variation on a very familiar lifestyle for many of them. By 1754 the French and Indian War had begun in earnest, the conflict – international in scope and also referred to as the Seven Years War – sparked by a young George Washington and a group of Virginians and Native Americans who together attacked a small party of Frenchmen sent to parley with the British group, killing and wounding (and eventually scalping) a number of them in a treacherous, less-than-honorable fashion even after a cease-fire had been in effect (*who* did *what* and *when* is still a matter of some controversy). Virginia's Governor Dinwiddie, who had picked Washington to lead the expedition, was a major stockholder in a

business venture known as The Ohio Company, which hoped to realize enormous profits by settling and trading in the upper Ohio River country. (Note that this venture was located in what is now western Pennsylvania, an area well north of the Potomac River which had been clearly defined as the boundary of the Virginia colony – a Virginia claim for this area took some real chutzpah). This gave him a personal incentive to send an inexperienced, unmotivated, poorly outfitted, unpopular, expensive military expedition to protect the company's trading posts near present-day Pittsburgh, led by an enthusiastic 21-year-old surveyor named Washington intent on making a name for himself (see Anderson, 2001). Settlements in the lower Shenandoah Valley were attacked repeatedly by Indians over the next few years, and the terrified settlers occasionally dropped everything they were doing and banded together in panic-stricken caravans heading back east over the Blue Ridge. Several families and forts in the Martinsburg-Shepherdstown area were annihilated in raids; note that the terror was not a vicarious experience the Terrapin Neck settlers read about in the paper, but a horror that preyed on their imaginations every time a noise was heard in the night over a several year period. Peace would not come soon for the settlements further west; in fact, intermittent fighting in the upper Potomac Highlands and further west along the Ohio River would continue for more than 40 years. Authorities in Virginia committed a portion of their military forces to frontier forts to protect against war parties coming from the north, but an even larger number of militia were kept near home to protect the colony from a potential slave uprising. A fort was built in Thomas Shepherd's little town around this time to protect the local settlers, and most of the men were required to join the local militia. Shepherd had begun to lay out town lots by this time and felt compelled to offer them on good terms to keep people from running away from the strife-torn area (see Dandridge, 1910). Interestingly, his wife Elizabeth's name was included on all the deeds over the years as co-owner and co-seller, indicating she considered herself a partner in the land business, an interest she may have picked up from her father John Van Meter. Thomas and Elizabeth Shepherd this year also became the proud parents of a fifth son, the eighth of their nine children; they named him Abraham. Abraham will become a salient figure in the history of Terrapin Neck.

In his capacity now as a Justice of Frederick County, Thomas Swearingen took several depositions regarding the granting of land by the Fairfax land office (McKay, 1951).

1755 - Title problems continued to plague many settlers in the area. For example, 100 acres of Thomas Swearingen's 222 acres near Scrabble were bought and sold several times by other parties who had bought it from Joseph Mounts, even though J. Poulson had sold all 222 acres in 1748 to Swearingen (Frederick Cty VA DB 4, p. 190 and 193). It's unknown if Swearingen knew about this at the time. Thomas Swearingen also received official sanction from the Virginia Council to operate a Ferry *"from the land of Thomas Swearingen in the county of Frederick, over Potomack River, to the land opposite thereto in the province of Maryland"* just north of the land owned and being developed by the Shepherds as a new town; this area also became known as Swearingen's Ferry at the time - distinguishing this river crossing from Harper's Ferry, which was down the river a few miles, and Watkin's Ferry to the north. Thomas would be remembered ever after as "Thomas of the Ferry". The regulation of ferries in Virginia was controlled at the Virginia Assembly, meaning Thomas had to get a bill passed in the Virginia Assembly before ferry operations could begin. Ferries in Maryland, on the other hand, were either sponsored by the county (the ferryman was a salaried county employee), or unregulated private enterprise until a ferry regulation law was passed in 1781, meaning that Thomas Swearingen did not have to get a separate license from the colonial authorities in Maryland. The growing little community near Pack Horse Ford (i.e. the Shepherds) agreed to maintain a road from the town to the ferry landing near the present-day Bellevue property, while Marylanders built a road along the route through present-day Boonsboro and Sharpsburg to the ferry landing on the Maryland side of the Potomac. Thomas charged three pence per person, and an additional three pence per horse. In his first year of operation he ferried General Edward Braddock and part of his military force across the river on their ill-fated expedition to fight the French and Indians near the site of present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Maryland Governor Horatio Sharpe, namesake of Sharpsburg, accompanied the expedition, and later reported paying *"to Thomas Swearingen on Potomac for ferriage of General Braddock party and guard £8.2.0"* (Green and Hahn, Ferry Hill Plantation Journal). Thomas Swearingen Jr. is mentioned as a Captain of a militia company at this time, as was his father Thomas and later his uncle Van Swearingen (Chalkley, v.2, p.503).

Thomas Swearingen's ferry landing on the Virginia side of the river presented no problem because it was located on his own property. The ferry landing on the opposite side, though, was an issue because the

property was owned at first by his neighbors in Virginia. Directly across the river from his Virginia property was the black walnut tree dividing the property known as Pell Mell, then owned by the Shepherd family, from the property called Spurgin's Lot, owned by William Spurgin, part of a larger tract called Antietam Bottom. Swearingen chose to land the ferry on the downstream side of the black walnut on Spurgin's property, which seems not to have bothered Spurgin since he sold the 50 acre property to Swearingen three years later (Fred. Cty Md DB F, p. 504). The Shepherds, on the other hand, later seem to seriously question the property boundary between the ferry landing and Pell Mell and claimed that the Swearingens were using the wrong walnut tree as a boundary marker. And so the controversy begins.

In January of 1755, Maryland's Governor Sharpe traveled the Potomac River in a small boat from upstream near present-day Cumberland to tidewater at Georgetown, in order to assess what work needed to be done to make the river more navigable for boats floating military equipment and farm products. Baltimore merchants tended to balk at any scheme to promote Potomac River commerce, preferring that goods move through their own ports, so the lead for development of the Potomac River was carried on by Virginia mercantile interests, most notably a young George Washington who had been on his own inspection tours of the Potomac in August of that year (Hahn, 1984). The Swearingens were likely using the Potomac to transport flour, tobacco, wheat and various other goods to the growing markets downstream in Alexandria and Georgetown. They were no doubt very familiar with the impassable Great Falls and Little Falls and other navigation hazards on the lower Potomac because they had grown up near the Fall Line, and still had relatives living there. Their farm products were likely offloaded above Great Falls and then loaded onto wagons for transport to the developing shipping ports on the tidal section of the river.

1756 - Van Swearingen purchased from Peter Beller 317 acres of the original Poulson, Mounts and Jones patent for £135 (FCDB 4, p. 121). Now he officially owned the Springwood tract, which was just north of the Fairfax grant he had purchased several years before. Peter Beller may have been trying to escape all the troubles with title on Terrapin Neck - including waiting for the "infant" Simmons to sign a release when he reached the age of majority, the dispute between Hite and Fairfax on neighboring land, plus there were a lot of slaves and slave owners moving

into the neighborhood which German Protestants generally objected to. Beller also gave Van Swearingen power of attorney to deal with any problems arising from this sale and young Simmons (FCDB 4, p.123). Apparently none of these problems dissuaded his neighbor Van Swearingen, who was a slave owner and may have been a distant relative of Simmons (Van's cousin and sister-in-law Elizabeth was married to another Jonathon Simmons, who died in 1761 in Prince George's County, MD). The Swearingen family also had the experience of the past two generations that settled frontier lands of Maryland; they may have been more comfortable with the inevitable problems in a new country. For example, Van's uncle (and father-in-law) had settled on a piece of property in Maryland about 5 miles north of Terrapin Neck on St. James Run, built a house and other improvements, and then discovered someone else (probably Lord Baltimore's 10,594 acre Conococheague Manor tract) had a prior claim – he had to settle for negotiating a lifetime lease for himself and his sons.

Note that some or all of the Springwood tract (now the eastern portion of NCTC) had been farmed by Europeans for more than 25 years before Van Swearingen acquired it officially, suggesting that reduced soil fertility may already have impacted the types of farming activities taking place on the new Swearingen plantation.

1757 - Thomas Swearingen polled 270 votes to George Washington's 40 votes for a seat in the Virginia House of Burgesses. His successful election meant that he, along with Hugh West, would represent Frederick County in the House sessions of March 25, 1756, April 30, 1757, and March 30, 1758. His son, also named Thomas Swearingen, 22 years old and married to Mary Morgan, built a stone house next to his father's mill just west of present-day NCTC, which is still a private residence today. They had a son named Thomas (of course) that same year.

1758 - In September Van Swearingen purchased an adjacent 132 acres of the Poulson, Mounts and Jones patent for £70 "Pennsylvania money" that eventually became RiverView Farm (FCDB 5, p. 187) and is now the western portion of NCTC; the boundaries were somewhat different than present. This was purchased from Joseph Poulson; there is no evidence that this was later regranted by Fairfax, but like the adjacent Springwood parcel a patent from the 1730s already covered it. Van and his brother Thomas together now owned several miles of contiguous waterfront on

the Potomac adjacent to Terrapin Neck. Thomas was likely the wealthier and more influential of the two brothers by this time, having acquired over 1600 acres of land on the Virginia side of the river alone, in addition to his property in Maryland (where his ferry landed) and elsewhere. He was the elected representative from Frederick County in the Virginia House of Burgesses and a captain in the local militia. He also owned a mill near Scrabble (Jones Mill), and owned the ferry business across the Potomac River. His ferry alone had the potential to make him a wealthy man. In Fry and Jefferson's map of Virginia for this time period, the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road is shown crossing the Potomac at Swearingen's Ferry. Settler families and assorted travelers numbering in the tens of thousands formed a steady procession south over this road at the time. Relatively low land prices in the Carolinas attracted newly-arrived immigrants as well as many settlers from the more northern colonies. It has been described as the most heavily traveled road in all America at the time, with perhaps more traffic than all the other main roads together (Rouse, 1995). Some of these settlers, of course, chose to cross the Potomac further north at Watkins Ferry, established by the Virginia House of Burgesses Oct 9, 1744 at the site of present-day Williamsport, and they could cross at various fords when the water was low enough, but the Swearingen ferry, no doubt, did a considerable business. Harpers Ferry, a few river miles to the south, would be established officially a few years later in 1761. Travelers in Virginia at this time could generally beg or barter meals, lodging and other needs, but if they wanted to cross the river without getting wet, they generally had to pay cash. A busy ferry operator therefore could expect to acquire bags of coin that other businesses and individuals would, of course, covet.

Thomas Swearingen was later described by George Washington *"as a man of great weight with the meaner class of people, and supposed by them to possess extensive knowledge"* (noted in Swearingen genealogical file, Belle Boyd House), though this may have been political rhetoric and it should be remembered that George Washington as a young man had also described the settlers of the Shenandoah Valley as a *"parcel of barbarians"* (Brown, 1965). Lord Fairfax in a letter to Washington also expressed his less-than-enthusiastic opinion of Thomas Swearingen's handling of militia matters during the French and Indian War by writing *"[Swearingen] has always done everything in his power to occasion confusion if his advice was not taken in everything"* (Brown, 1965). The

Swearingen's militia company at least had strict requirements for attendance: *"At a Court Martial held for Frederick County on Fryday the 27th October 1758 Ordered that Joshua Hedges of the Company commanded by Captain Thomas Swearingen be fined 10 shillings for absenting himself from One General Muster within a twelve months this last past"* (Hedges family genealogy forum entry).

George Washington again ran for election for a seat in the Virginia House of Burgesses – in absentia because of military duties during the hostilities with the French (which he had helped instigate). Necessarily this time he had the campaign handled by friends. He defeated Thomas Swearingen by being much in the news with his military exploits and was perhaps aided by providing about a quart and a half of liquor per voter at the polls (Couper, 1952). Locals Thomas Shepherd and his son David preferred not to back their close neighbor Thomas of the Ferry, and instead voted for Washington (Smyth, 1909). Washington would now represent the "parcel of barbarians" at the Virginia Assembly. The war with the natives was still very much a concern for residents of the Shenandoah Valley. George Washington received a letter in July this year from Joist Hite's son John addressed to *"Coll°. George Wasenton: ...Our Inhabitants is all Fled...and we are Generally in Great Fair of the Enemy upon us"* (S. M. Hamilton [ed.] Letters to Washington, in Jones et. al 1979).

1759 - Van Swearingen built a large, fine stone house on the Springwood tract, which included a fireplace in every room (several with beautiful surrounds) and such architectural details as marble hearthstones, wood moldings and other fine details – by no means a small, rough cabin like many of his neighbors lived in. The present house on the site, the private residence of Mrs. Hendrix, includes several later additions. Despite the French and Indian War, or perhaps because of the war and the profits that could be made, the latter half of the 1750s must have been flush times for the Swearingen clan, as Van, Thomas Sr and Thomas Jr were all able to complete fairly large new stone homes near the Potomac. Many British colonists in the Tidewater country at the time avoided building brick or stone homes because of a deep-rooted fear that they were unhealthy (Wiencek, 1988, p.8), so the Swearingen's choice of building materials may have been noteworthy at the time, at least among the British crowd. Their Dutch heritage and German neighbors, as well as the assuredly unhealthy pyrhic habits of marauding natives during the

ongoing war, and limestone rock lying readily at hand in their fields may have all been factors in their decision to use stone.

By this time tobacco had started to stagnate as the major cash crop from Virginia as wheat and other cereal grains became increasingly more attractive for export. Demand for wheat and flour in the West Indies and southern Europe provided a ready market for American grains despite the Corn Laws that disallowed importation of grains into Great Britain. Virginia has been described as the premier exporter of Indian corn by the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The growing of grains rather than tobacco also had the effect of facilitating the establishment of towns rather than plantations because of all the services required to plant, harvest, mill, barrel, bake, and transport the grains (Siener 1985). Tobacco is mentioned as late as 1788 as a crop grown by the Swearingens, but records indicate they were growing a significant amount of wheat and other grains for market as well during this time period.

1760 - So much for the big new home on Thomas Swearingen's ferry property. June of 1760 marks the death of Van's brother Thomas of the Ferry, 52-year-old patriarch of a large family (his will was signed 4 April 1760, proved 3 June 1760, suggesting an illness [Fred. Cty Courthouse, Winchester VA]). Thomas left behind a wife and 9 children, five of them 15 years old or younger; their uncle Van likely helped raise and support these children, including a boy who was later known to some as Van Swearingen Junior, though he was actually Col. Van Swearingen's nephew. Lands near Scrabble were willed to Thomas' sons, mostly to Thomas, Jr. (a.k.a. Major Thomas Swearingen) who continued to operate the mill with his brother Andrew. Major Thomas's son Thomas (b. 1757), with his wife Margery, would eventually lay out a town they named "Hardscrabble" in the vicinity of the mill, which has been shortened to "Scrabble" – they may have been trying to develop a town like their neighbors the Shepherds. The ferry operation was left to son Benoni, along with the plantation on the Maryland side of the river. The actual operation of the ferry was undertaken by his brother Major Thomas for some time, as Benoni was only 5 years old at the time of his father's death. (It's unclear when Thomas actually became a Major, perhaps not until the Revolutionary War, but it will be used here to distinguish him from the other Thomas Swearingens around at the time).

Col. Van Swearingen finally received two grants from Fairfax that had

been surveyed some years earlier, one of them the 321 acres near his original home tract and his brother's ferry (now east of the Cress Creek golf course). The other was the 200-acre tract next door on Terrapin Neck, which seemed a safe bet after 24 years of being unclaimed by the Brownings. Little did he know.

Van Swearingen's neighbor and cousin William Chapline, who had bought the old York place out on the end of Terrapin Neck seven years earlier, died this year as well. His estate, including the neck of land where the Steamboat Run subdivision is today, was divided among his several children, with son Benjamin inheriting the Terrapin Neck property.

British military victories in Canada resulted in a change of colonial administration of that huge area to the north, putting an end to the formal military hostilities between the two European powers in America for the time being. The French were no longer sending large groups of soldiers and natives to attack the colonies in the mid-Atlantic region, but nonetheless the western periphery of the colonies remained a dangerous place to live for several generations of settlers. Because of their military service, the Swearingens would eventually be eligible for land grants in the territory west of the Appalachian mountains in what became known as the state of Kentucky. But the remoteness and continual danger from Indian attack, as well as British treaties allowing the land to remain with the Cherokees, kept Virginia's surveying parties who were responsible for recording the new military land grant boundaries from carrying out their surveys in the Bluegrass region for more than a dozen years. The French may have been forced to give up their claim to the area, but the native inhabitants certainly had not and were more than willing to continue using violent means to make their point.

By 1761, Van Swearingen was Deputy of the King (Sheriff) and Colonel of the county militia, and seemed fairly well connected with policy makers in the colony. For example this year he received a letter from a politically active George Washington looking for support in his bid for re-election to the House of Burgesses (note that G.W. *almost* slept here):

Mr. Stogden's
May 15, 1761
Dear Sir:

At the Cock fight on Saturday last I promis'd to be at a Wedding at Mendenhall's Mill yesterday, which together with an Affair that I had to

settle on Bullskin (that detain'd me a day longer there than I expected) prevented my taking Shepherds Town and your House in my way, I intend this day to pass along the North Mountain, and to morrow attend a Meeting at McGills on the Cumberland Road and from thence to Winchester in order to wait my doom on Monday. I have made a just and proper use of the Inclos'd and as I shall pretty near finish my Tour to day, I send to you, that you may, if you think it expedient, communicate the contents to your Neighbors and Friends, Col. Stephens proceedings is a matter of the greatest amazement to me. I have come across sundry of his Letters directed to the Freeholders wherein he informs them that he acquitted himself of what was charged to him in the streets of Winchester while you were present, and goes on to draw Comparisons to prove his Innocence, which are by no means applicable unless he had continued them. However, His conduct throughout the whole is very obvious to all who will be convinced, but I find there are some that do not choose to have their Eyes opened. I hope my Interest in your Neighborhood still stands good, and as I have the greatest reason to believe you can be no Friend to a Person of Colo. Stephens Principles; I hope, and indeed make no doubt that you will contribute your aid towards shutting him out of the Public trust he is seeking, could Mercer's Friends and mine be hurried in at the first of the Poll it might be an advantage, but as Sheriff I know you cannot appear in this, nor would I by any mean have you do any thing that can give so designing a Man as Colo. Stephens the least trouble.* (Doherty 1972)

Van has been called King Swearingen because of his position as a King's Deputy; he also held a position as a vestryman in the politically-important Anglican Church. The letter from candidate Washington above is interesting in that Washington was corresponding with the Sheriff, the local official charged with the responsibility for how and when elections were held, including when to open and close the polls. Washington clearly was advising Van on how to run an election that would give

* Note: Colo. Stephens was the founder of Martinsburg and served with Washington as a leader in the Virginia Regiment during the French and Indian War and under Washington as a General during the Revolutionary War. Stephen's early military career was often dogged by controversy over poor record keeping, profiteering and insubordination in part brought on by the contempt that British officers in the regular army held for militia officers from the back woods of Virginia. Washington eventually dismissed him during the Revolution, partly for strategic mistakes on the battlefield, and partly for his reputation as a drunk. At least some of Stephen's men defended him by claiming he wasn't any more drunk than an officer ought to be under the circumstances (see Ward, 1989). Stephens was very bitter and wrote disapprovingly of the ungentlemanly language Washington used toward him in the heat of the moment.

Washington an edge. In those days votes were proclaimed by voice, rather than by secret ballot, it being considered a manly act to voice your opinion loudly and clearly in public. Washington was hoping that the polling procedures would allow his name to be proclaimed first by a succession of men, which hopefully would generate enthusiasm and lead the way for other undecided voters who were standing nearby imbibing alcoholic beverages. Of course we now know that he did win re-election to the Virginia House of Burgesses, perhaps with a little help from Sheriff Van Swearingen. (Sheriffs were only allowed a two-year term of office, so this was not a position that Swearingen held for long, though he may have had other two-year terms.)

Joist Hite died in 1761, his lawsuit against the Fairfax Proprietary still unresolved. His heirs had no intention of letting the issue go away quietly, though, since given the right circumstances there was still the possibility that those old surveys could yield a small fortune.

1762 - On the 6th of October, Van Swearingen purchased the 334-acre Springwood tract again, this time from Jonathon Simmons, Jr. (Frederick County VA DB 7, p.56). The former infant Jonathon Simmons would have turned 21 this year, finally "of age" to legally turn over his right to the property acquired after his father's death. Thomas Swearingen, Jr. bought a 100 acre property near Scrabble again (his father had first bought it in 1748) because of double titles from John and Mary Pearce (Frederick County Deed Book 7, p. 257). This now consolidated several miles of river frontage near Terrapin Neck between Van and his nephew Thomas.

Thomas Shepherd, who had laid out town lots for sale more than a decade before, incorporated Mecklenberg this year. He may have chosen the name Mecklenburg in honor of the new English Queen, Charlotte of Mecklenburg, who had recently become the blushing bride of King George the 3rd; (the town of Charlottesville, Virginia was incorporated the same day - Kenamond, 1963). The new name may have also been an effort on the part of the Shepherds to head off any tendency for people to call the town Swearingen's Ferry, since after all, this was the Shepherd's little town. The little community included both German and English schools for the children (Dandridge, 1910).

Apparently the money that could be made from a ferry across the river tempted another man to give it a try. An Act of the Virginia Assembly granted Thomas *Shepherd* the right to start a ferry service across the

Potomac (Henings Statutes v8, p.164). Shepherd apparently had avoided mentioning the proximity of the Swearingen Ferry in his petition, perhaps trying to take advantage of the recent death of "Thomas of the Ferry", whose will had specified the ferry operation was to go to his 5-year-old son Benoni. Unfortunately for Shepherd, his ferry Act was repealed by the Assembly a year later *"because the same being at a very small distance from a ferry already established from the land of Thomas Swearingen over Potomac in Maryland"*. Note that the Shepherds owned the adjacent riverside property upstream and north of the Swearingen Ferry landing in *Maryland*, known as Pell Mell, but did not yet officially own land on the riverbank in Virginia, and wouldn't until 1768. A land grant in 1763 to one William Brown (it includes much of the north side of the ravine through which present-day Princess Street traverses the slope to the public boat landing) mentions a ferry landing at the site, but the Shepherds had not received a grant yet for title to the property. Exactly who owned this ferry landing site became quite a contentious matter for a number of years. At any rate, Swearingen heirs would continue their lucrative ferry monopoly for more than 60 years, though later legal battles with the Shepherd clan forced an occasional pause. As will be seen later in this manuscript, the debate between the Swearingens and Shepherds over a ferry carried on into the next generation—with repercussions for Terrapin Neck.

1763 - Perhaps in an attempt to cover all contingencies, Thomas Swearingen Jr applied for and received a 324-acre Fairfax grant for his lands around present-day Scrabble. He now held title both via Fairfax and via the original Hite survey and King's patent for Poulson, Mounts and Jones. He also owned an adjacent Fairfax grant of 155 acres from his father's will.

The King and his Privy Council in England, trying to avoid further antagonism, and also to live up to promises made to the Natives living in the Ohio River valley during the recent war, forbid the American colonists to take possession of land west of the Alleghenies. Wealthier Virginians, who were looking forward to the day when large tracts of land could be acquired to the west, were contemptuous and critical of the Proclamation Line, and were incensed that they were being asked to pay taxes to support British soldiers that would protect these Indian lands, a factor that loomed large in the eventual decision to overturn the existing order in the upcoming American Revolution. For their part, the Privy

Council in Great Britain did not want to continue to pay for expensive military expeditions to rescue settlers and forts on the frontier. The colony of Virginia, nevertheless, had designs on the region known as Kentucky for use as payment to officers and soldiers for their service in the French and Indian War, and many wealthy prominent Virginians, including Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and James Madison were involved in various Kentucky land speculations in hopes of getting rich by selling tracts to settlers. Squatters and debtors fleeing their creditors were already flocking to the area, and the treaty, so galling to the land speculators whose success depended on a clear title, actually freed the squatters from the confining rules of the swarms of surveyors, land agents and other minor officials; they could rely on the old adage that "possession is nine-tenths of the law" and patiently wait for an opportunity to gain a patent, citing prior occupancy. (Holton, 1999).

In a widespread uprising throughout the upper Great Lakes and Ohio River region, Native tribal warriors forced many of the recently-arrived British colonial soldiers to withdraw from the region, in a year of vicious fighting referred to as Pontiac's Rebellion; raids were conducted as far east as Winchester, Virginia. Virginia's frontier was under attack again, and the authorities were particularly worried about the natives and enslaved blacks joining forces against the white colonists.

1764 - Van Swearingen bought lots 54 and 56 in Mecklenberg (Shepherdstown). He also received a Fairfax grant for 234 acres along both sides of Back Creek, west of present-day Hedgesville. He and 2nd wife Priscilla eventually sold this to a Snodgrass in 1779, who opened the historic Snodgrass tavern on the site, favored by George Washington and others (BCDB 5, p.345, deed describes it as recorded in Book M, p. 314 in the Proprietor's office as well).

David Shepherd, son of the town founder, entered a lawsuit in a Maryland court to establish once and for all the boundaries of a piece of property he had inherited from his mother across the river from the town, which was adjacent to and just upstream of the ferry landing in Maryland. This 162-acre property, referred to as "Pell Mell" was initially surveyed for David's grandfather John Van Meter back in 1743, several years before he died. After John's death, title passed to his daughter Elizabeth, who in turn passed it to her son David (Smyth, 1909). The court appointed three neutral commissioners to referee the property boundary dispute and take testimony from witnesses. Whatever the source of the

dispute, the original surveyors Joseph Chapline (the founder of Sharpsburg) and Jacob Van Meter remembered the location of the black walnut tree dividing the properties in Maryland as being *above* the present location of the Swearingen Ferry landing. They furthermore stated that the reason the walnut tree in question was not "bounded" or marked at the time was because John Van Meter had instructed them not to mark it until the adjacent Antietam Bottom survey lines were known. In trying to establish their own ferry at their town, perhaps the Shepherds wanted to try to extend their Pell Mell property in Maryland down around the river meander as far as possible in order to line up with land not already owned by the Swearingens on the Virginia side, but the above ruling may have stymied their efforts considerably. Nevertheless, a year later on August 8, 1765 David Shepherd and his friend Hugh Stephenson were recorded as giving bond to the King for the faithful keeping of the Ferry from "the land of Thomas Shepherd at Mecklenburg to the opposite shore in Maryland", in another attempt to acquire the rights to the ferry (Fred. Co. Va Order Book 10, p.460 in Smyth 1909). The details are unclear, but this business seems to have been short-lived as well. Perhaps part of the problem was the Shepherds did not actually own any waterfront property on the Virginia shore as yet, but they were working on it. A glance at the legal description and map included on the old Hite survey in Virginia from 1734 shows that the surveyor drew the eastern boundary of the Shepherd patent several hundred feet back from the river's edge; this may have been a deliberate omission by Thomas Shepherd at the time in order to avoid having to pay for steep and rocky land. But by the 1760s the bluff next to the river had become valuable enough to the Shepherds to apply for a Fairfax grant, which was finally issued in 1768. A William Brown had already laid claim to a small parcel on the north side of the ravine leading to the river where Princess Street is today, and Richard Morgan held title to the rest of the ravine except for a small sliver at the riverbank, so the new Shepherd riverside grant had to be located downstream of Brown below the mouth of the creek.

1766 - Another loss in the Swearingen family – Van Swearingen's first wife Sarah died, 44 years old; their youngest children were teenagers at the time. Her burial site is unknown but it could have been at the new Springwood property, or was perhaps near their old home (they had lived there about 15 years) in the present-day Cress Creek subdivision where a daughter also likely was buried. Van eventually (before 1779) remarried

to a Priscilla Metcalf, who may have already had a daughter named Peggy. (The Metcalf family also owned property on Terrapin Neck; Priscilla must have been quite a bit younger than Van, probably closer to the age of his children).

1768 - In October Col. Van Swearingen bought two separate tracts of 101 acres and 63 acres near North Mountain and present-day Hedgesville, now in the western portion of Berkeley County (FCDB 13, p.1, 88) and over 12 miles west of Terrapin Neck. These parcels were both originally Kings Patents, and were also near his Fairfax grants. This continued a pattern seen in his land acquisition strategy near Terrapin Neck, where he acquired land both by Fairfax grant, and within colonial Virginia patents (Kings patents).

On January 15th, Thomas Shepherd received a Fairfax grant for a narrow strip of land bordering the Potomac, located just downstream of a ravine through which Princess Street now leads from the town to the river. The Shepherds now held title to shoreline property on both sides of the river, like their neighbors to the north, the Swearingens. Unfortunately Pell Mell in Maryland was located around the corner several hundred meters upstream, and the property directly across the river from their new grant, part of the Antietam Bottom survey known as "Easy Lot", was still owned by a Levi Mills; no doubt the Shepherds were inquiring about purchasing this property, since it would give them a straight route across the river. Fortunately, and probably deliberately, their new narrow strip of a grant on the Virginia shore contained a very good site for a ferry landing at its northern tip. In fact a 1763 grant to a William Brown mentioned a ferry landing here, probably used by the Shepherds during their short-lived attempt to operate a ferry here in 1762-63. So the Shepherds likely had earlier purchased a warrant from the Northern Neck Proprietary for this narrow strip of land alongside the river, but like so many others in the Proprietary, had to wait several years until 1768 before the grant was finally issued. The corner between this Brown survey and the new Shepherd grant was about to become embroiled in controversy: the Shepherds seem to have assumed that the Brown tract began at the river's edge, just above their landing near the mouth of the creek. The corner was actually a basswood tree about 60 feet back from the river, leaving a narrow sliver of unclaimed land just upstream of the Shepherd ferry landing that still had access to the ravine heading up into town.

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Storer College and African American Home Ownership in Jefferson County

James A. Beckman,[1]

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Editor's Note: From its beginnings at the end of the Civil War until its closure ninety years later, Storer College played a central role in Jefferson County history. Its importance for the higher education of Jefferson County African Americans has long been acknowledged, while the two current articles note the college's influence on county politics and the public education budget in Jefferson County. James Beckman explores the financial aid that Storer College offered black county residents for the purchase of land in the decades after the Civil War and that aid's connection to black male voting. James Taylor's brief history of Page-Jackson High School demonstrates that the black high school in Jefferson County was constructed after Storer College shut down its secondary education program. The influence of Storer and the activities of its teachers reached far beyond the campus into Jefferson County in ways that are newly researched and ways that remain to be researched.

Commencing in 1862, thousands of newly freed blacks fled to the lower Shenandoah Valley to towns and villages in Jefferson County in order to find federal protection against Southern authorities, and to find gainful employment and sustenance behind Union lines. However, the migrating black population was described as extremely impoverished, "huddled together with almost no where to live and nothing to live on."[2] In large part due to the massive influx of impoverished blacks, the town of Harpers Ferry, for example, was referred to by a Freedmen's Bureau

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[2] Letter from N.C. Brackett to Rev. Geo. Whipple, February 14, 1866, AMA MSS (H2-73), as quoted in Stealey, John Edmund III, 2002 (reprint of 1978 article), "The Freedmen's Bureau in West Virginia," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society*, Volume LXVIII, December 2002, at 31.

officer as a "nest of paupers."[3] Yet, within several years of their arrival, many of these newly freed black citizens were buying homes and property in Jefferson County, some paying hundreds of dollars for property. For example, in February 1867, George L. Weaver, a 24 year old black "farm laborer" living in Harpers Ferry,[4] was able to purchase a middle class home on Union Street in Bolivar, for $190.[5] Where did Mr. Weaver, and other impoverished freedmen like him, obtain the funding to buy homes in the area? As this brief article will explain, this question might still be largely a mystery today if not for a public disclosure by Storer College in 1897, delineating its role in assisting black citizens in purchasing property.

Over the years, there have been several published articles on the role of Storer College in the education and advancement of freedmen and women in Jefferson County. Storer College first opened its doors as a missionary school[6] in 1865. With the help of the northern Freewill Baptist Home Mission Society from Maine, in conjunction with the Freedman's Bureau[7] and the American Missionary Association, and with a $10,000 donation from northern philanthropist John Storer and matching funds from the Freedman's Bureau, "Mr. and Mrs. Brackett opened this school in October, 1867, with nineteen earnest students."[8]

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[3] Lt. A. F. Higgs to Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield, February 28, 1867, Reports of Operations Received, Assistant Commissioner, Va., BRFAL, as quoted in Stealey, John Edmund III, 2002 (reprint of 1978 article), "The Freedmen's Bureau in West Virginia," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society*, Volume LXVIII, December 2002, at 31.

[4] George L. Weaver became a long-time black resident of Jefferson County, living in Jefferson County until his death in April 1918. *Farmers Advocate*, "George L. Weaver, 84, Respected Colored Citizen Known as "Buck" Dies at Home on Union Street," April 20, 1918. Mr. Weaver is listed as being 27 years old and a "farm laborer" in the 1870 Census. He is mentioned in an editorial in the *Spirit of Jefferson* as being a "Harpers Ferry Negro," see Editorial, September 24, 1867, "New England Meanness," in *Spirit of Jefferson*.

[5] Deed from Samuel V.B. Strider to George L. Weaver, dated February 2, 1867, and recorded and on file at the Jefferson County Courthouse, Charles Town, West Virginia.

[6] The school first operated from 1865-1867 as a missionary school run by the Freewill Baptists, along with support from the Freedmen's Bureau. In 1867, it made the transition to a permanent school for blacks in Harpers Ferry. An excellent resource on the school's operations during its most earliest years, from 1865-1866, is Reilly, Wayne E., editor, *Sarah Jane Foster, Teacher of the Freedmen, A Diary and Letters*, Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia (1990).

[7] Beckman, James A., "Freedmen's Bureau," in *Affirmative Action, An Encyclopedia*, edited by James A. Beckman, Volume I, pp. 414-419, Westport, CT and London, England: Greenwood Press, 2004.

[8] C.G. Woodson, "Early Negro Education in West Virginia," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Volume 27, No. 3, pages 23-63 (with quote appearing on page 35) (Jan. 1922).

The intention was to move from a missionary school operating at the elementary level to a normal school with a college curriculum. The school ultimately received its educational charter from the State of West Virginia in 1868,[9] as an "institution of learning for education of youth, without distinction of race or color," and with "power to confer such degrees as are usually conferred by colleges and universities." Despite the race neutral language in the charter, the school would cater to only black students, as the 1872 West Virginia Constitution (Article XII, Sec. 8 [repealed November 8, 1994]) expressly required separate schools for white and black students.

With the donation of several large abandoned federal government buildings in the Camp Hill area of Harpers Ferry in December 1869, the fledgling institution's roots took hold in the rocky terrain of the hill overlooking the town that witnessed John Brown's strike at the institution of slavery in 1859. Like many other historically black colleges which sprang up throughout the United States following the Civil War,[10] however, Storer College started out as a "college" in name only. The school spent its early formative years teaching the rudiments of reading and writing and instilling the basics of learning (spelling, writing and arithmetic), as well as industrial skills (e.g., carpentry) and domestic related skills (e.g., cooking and sewing).[11] The focus on teaching industrial and domestic related skills certainly, over time, led to an advancement of the black community, and indirectly allowed blacks to become sufficiently economically self-sustaining to purchase real estate in Jefferson County. However, this process of economic elevation took time.[12]

For readers interested in pursuing the general history of Storer

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[9] Acts of West Virginia Legislature (6th Session), Chapter 117, March 3, 1868, pages 106-107.

[10] Russ, Robert A., "Historically Black Colleges and Universities," in *Affirmative Action, An Encyclopedia*, edited by James A. Beckman, Volume I, pp. 478-485, Westport, CT and London, England: Greenwood Press, 2004.

[11] This is reflected in comments made by members of the school board in 1870: "It is the design that this institution shall ultimately become a College, and to this end, a charter granting full College powers has been obtained. It will, however, be run for the present as a Normal School or Academy, as it is believed that in this way it will best meet the wants of the colored people for whose benefit it is especially designed." Gordon, Vivian Verdell, "A History of Storer College, Harpers Ferry, W.Va." *Journal of Negro Education* 30 (Fall 1961): 445-449 (with quote appearing on page 446).

[12] The theory of black education that focused more on industrial and domestic skills than academic courses is largely attributed to Booker T. Washington and was later criticized by W.E.B. DuBois and others.

College, some of the more prominent work published on the college is referenced below.[13] However, little has been written on the other roles that Storer College played in elevating the living conditions and lives of some of the black residents of Jefferson County in the years following the Civil War. For example, in the first several years of operation, Storer College not only opened its doors to students for learning, but provided clothing,[14] temporary room and board, and other necessities, for students who lacked these resources. Much of the spirit of philanthropy at Storer College in the first half century can be traced to the instrumental leadership of one of the chief founders of Storer College, the Reverend Nathan Cook Brackett.

Reverend Brackett served as Principal and President of Storer College from its founding in 1867 until 1899 when he handed the presidency of the school over to another famous figure in the school's history, Henry MacDonald. Brackett was born in Phillips, Maine, in 1836 and educated at the Maine State Seminary and at Dartmouth College. Brackett came to the Shenandoah Valley from Maine during the Civil War. He served as a field agent of the U.S. Christian Commission, attached to General Sheridan's army at Winchester, Virginia. At the conclusion of the Civil War, Brackett served as superintendent of the Shenandoah Mission, and sought to set up normal schools for the newly freed black population at Charles Town, Shepherdstown, Martinsburg, and Harpers Ferry. Brackett was keenly interested in local politics as well, and, among other things, served a two year appointed term as County Superintendent of Free

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[13] In terms of full length articles on Storer College, the following articles are recommended to any reader wishing to further pursue the general history of the institution: Anthony, Kate J., *Storer College, Harper's Ferry, W.Va., A Brief Historical Sketch*, Boston: Morning Star Publishing House, 1891; Gordon, Vivian Verdell, "A History of Storer College, Harpers Ferry, W.Va." *Journal of Negro Education* 30 (Fall 1961): 445-449; Mongin, Alfred, "A College in Secessia: The Early Years of Storer College," *West Virginia History*, Volume XXIII, July 1962, pp. 263-268; Rasmussen, Barbara, "Neo-Abolitionists and the Founding of Storer College," Masters Thesis, West Virginia University, 1986 (available for review both at the Harpers Ferry National Park Service Museum/Archives, as well as in the Thornton Perry reading room in the Charles Town public library); Rasmussen, Barbara, "Sixty Four Edited Letters of the Founders of Storer College, Masters Thesis, West Virginia University, 1986 (available for review in the Thorton Perry reading room in the Charles Town public library); Johnson, Mary, "An 'Ever Present Bone of Contention:' The Heyward Shepard Memorial," *West Virginia History*, Volume 56, 1997, pp. 1-27; and Fairburn, E.W., "History of the Lockwood House, *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Association*, December 1961, pp. 11-14.

[14] Reilly, Wayne E., editor, *Sarah Jane Foster*, page 41.

Schools (1869-1871).

In the immediate years after the Civil War, the leadership of Storer College and particularly the Reverend Brackett deemed immediate and direct financial assistance necessary to aid the black community in legally obtaining property. Part of the motivation may have been to expedite the speed of political enfranchisement and social assimilation of the black community through property and homeownership, as may be deduced from relatively strong voter registration. Jefferson County had a large black vote, at least in relation to the percentage of black voters in other counties in the state. For example, of the fifty-three counties of West Virginia, Jefferson County was responsible for twenty percent of the total black vote in the state in 1870. In that election, there were 2,849 black votes in West Virginia and 581 were from Jefferson County.[15] Black voter registration remained strong into the early 1890s and newspaper articles at the time chronicled the assimilation of blacks into the fabric of Jefferson County society. However, more immediately, Storer College assistance would ameliorate the effects of the harsh economic climate in Jefferson County in the years following the Civil War. Thus, the management of Storer went directly and silently about the business of lending money and deeding property to blacks in the community. Phrased another way, in addition to its primary objective of educating African-Americans, the leaders of Storer College in its first several decades allocated, or re-channeled, institutional assets to assist newly freed citizens in achieving outright ownership of property in the communities in and around Harpers Ferry.

The administration of the school officially acknowledged its role in assisting the black population in buying and owning homes in an article which appeared in the February 1897 issue of the college newspaper, the *Storer Record*.[16] In this article, the administration first acknowledged that "though it is not the business of a school to furnish homes for the people, the management of Storer College has from the first labored to encourage the people to become owners of real estate." However, as the article points out, the management of the college did more than passively encouraging blacks of the county to buy property. Rather, "the Principal of the School has during the past thirty years, deeded property, ranging

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[15] The next highest county was Kanawha, with 363 voters. See Engle, p. 165.

[16] *Storer Record*, February 1897, Volume 14, Number 3, page 2. A copy of this particular issue of the Storer Record is available on Microfilm (Reel #122, titled "Storer Record") at the Harpers Ferry National Park Service Museum in lower town.

from one-fourth of an acre to eight or nine acres each." These properties were all deeded "...in fee simple though a few of them have since mortgaged their property to other parties to get money to build or enlarge their buildings."

In all, by its own account, Storer College was able to assist approximately forty-two blacks in purchasing property in Jefferson County in the thirty years following the Civil War. Fortunately, in addition to the acknowledgement, the 1897 article stated that "it might interest some of our readers to look over a list of the names of persons" that were able to own property through the efforts of Storer College. The exact spelling, abbreviation, and punctuation of the list of names as it appeared in the *Storer Record* are reproduced here as follows: "Wm. B. Hill, Allen P. Daniel, Brown W. McDowell, Harrison and Julia Robinson, C.L., Franklin, Lizzie Sims, Thomas Jefferson, T.N. Blackburn, Maggie Smith, Mary Toler, L. Dennis, Alex. Freeman, Geo. Weaver, Hannah Bakman, Baton Dixon, Thornton Reed, Thomas Johnson, L.L. Page, Basil Clinton, Jeff. Page, J.B. Spriggs, H. Hatter, Hunter Winters, Mr. Strother, C.C. Wainwright, John Hamilton, Wesley Gordon, Henry Crane, R. Hedgeman, Robert McDaniel, Edward Robinson, Mrs. Turner, John and Joanna Edwards, Irene C. Dixon, Mary Taylor, Harry Johnson, Peter Beal, Richard Beener, and at least two others whose names are not at hand."

Of course, it was only several years earlier, in 1870, that the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified. The Fifteenth Amendment specified that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." While West Virginia did not impose property ownership requirements as a means to circumvent the right to vote under the Fifteenth Amendment as was the practice in many Southern states, homeownership was nonetheless important in giving the black community "a sense of community"[17] within the larger white population of West Virginia, and assisting in the social and political assimilation process of the black community.

While somewhat speculative, one could reasonably argue that

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[17] Engle, Stephen D., "Mountaineer Reconstruction: Blacks in the Political Reconstruction of West Virginia," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 78, No. 3 (Summer, 1993), pp. 137-165 (quote appearing on page 146).

Brackett, in addition to ameliorating the harsh financial conditions and improving the plight of a few by homeownership, also had the goal of increasing the power of the black vote in the county. The historical record clearly indicates that Brackett was instrumental in organizing the black vote in Jefferson County,[18] was described as "a man with a white face and black principles," in a local newspaper article critical of him and even ran on the black-endorsed ticket for a position in the state legislature in 1870. When Brackett lost the race for the state legislature, one observer wrote in his diary that Brackett's defeat "has humbled the Negroes at Harpers Ferry," and that "there would have been no living [with] them if the Brackett ticket had triumphed."[19]

Further evidence to support this argument may be found in the voter registration rolls for Jefferson County. Of the forty names listed in the *Storer Record* as receiving assistance in buying homes, thirty of the individuals were male, and ten were female. Of the male individuals listed in the article, twenty[20] are listed as being registered voters on the 1892 Voter Registration List for Jefferson County, West Virginia. As women were not given the right to vote until the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, if one considers only the men on the list, sixty-six percent of those receiving assistance from Storer College are enfranchised registered voters in Jefferson County by the early 1890s. As further evidence of how property ownership and political activity are intertwined, many of the individuals (e.g., Hamilton Hatter, Thomas Johnson, William B. Hill, Edward Robinson, Harrison Robinson, *et cetera*) are also listed in articles in such local papers as the *Free Press* and the *Spirit of Jefferson* in accounts of the political activities of these new enfranchised citizens, usually linked with the Republican party and

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[18] Engle, p. 147 ("...because blacks were excluded from white social organizations and politics within the local community, they became very active within their communities. George Thompson and Alfred Wilson were among the more prominent black civic leaders in organizing the black populous into a political coalition in the Eastern Panhandle. With the aid of local attorneys, Charles Davies, and James S. Leisenring, and Jefferson County Superintendent of Free Schools Nathan Cook Brackett, blacks formed Union Leagues in the Eastern Panhandle").

[19] Engle, p. 152.

[20] The individuals who were listed as registered voters on the 1892 Voter Registration List for Jefferson County, West Virginia, are as follows: Wm. B. Hill; Allen P. Daniel; Brown W. McDowell; Harrison Robinson; Thomas Jefferson; Lucas Dennis; George Weaver; Thornton Reed; Thomas Johnson; Basil Clinton; Jefferson Page; Hatter Hamilton; John Strother; John Hamilton; Wesley Gordon; Henry Crane; Richard Hedgeman; Robert McDaniel; John Edwards; and Harry Johnson.

usually with N.C. Brackett.[21] One of the individuals, Hamilton Hatter, was even the first black to receive a regular party nomination[22] for the West Virginia legislature in 1892, which caused a good degree of excitement among Republicans and Republican papers of West Virginia at the time.[23] Many of the other individuals on the list became very productive and prominent educational leaders and teachers in the years that followed. Hatter, for example, was prominent in West Virginia politics, and also served as a professor at Storer College and President/Principal of Bluefield State College from 1895-1906.[24]

Two final points should be mentioned. First, many of the individuals who received the assistance of Storer College in buying property likely had pre-existing connections with the school, or with the teachers and/or administrators of the school, which prompted the aid or assistance. For example, Maggie Smith was listed in the 1880 census as a domestic servant of Alexander Morrill (a trustee to Storer College). Mary Toler was listed in the 1900 census as a cook at the Lockwood House Hotel, a boarder of Principal Henry McDonald, and according to her obituary, one of the earliest enrolled students at Storer College and a long time domestic employee for the school.[25] John Spriggs is listed in the 1880

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[21] See, for example, *Spirit of Jefferson*, May 8, 1888, "Harpers Ferry Republicans Held Meeting," page 2 (recounting meeting and listing N.C. Brackett and William B. Hill as delegates); *Spirit of Jefferson*, May 3, 1892, "Report on Republican Convention at Courthouse Last Saturday," page 2 (recounting meeting and listing Hamilton Hatter ("colored") as being elected Secretary of the meeting, and both Hatter and Edward Robinson as being elected delegates to state conventions); *Spirit of Jefferson*, June 14, 1870, "Republican Convention," (recounting attendance of Harrison Robinson at convention); *Virginia Free Press*, June 18, 1870, "Republican County Convention," page 3 (recounting attendance of Harrison Robinson at convention); *Spirit of Jefferson*, July 11, 1876, "Republican County Convention Held At Harpers Ferry," page 3 (mentioning Thomas Johnson's attendance at meeting); *Spirit of Jefferson*, May 4, 1880, "Jefferson County Republicans Met Last Saturday," page 3 (indicating that Thomas Johnson was selected as one of 10 delegates to the state convention); *et cetera*.

[22] See, "Hamilton Hatter," West Virginia History Center, at http://www.wvculture.org/history/histamne/hatter.html (accessed on September 15, 2004)

[23] See, for example, *Spirit of Jefferson*, October 4, 1892, "Editorial," page 2 (discusses the nomination of "colored" Hamilton Hatter for the State Legislature, and the resulting excitement and controversy resulting from this nomination); also, *Spirit of Jefferson*, October 4, 1892, "Editorial," page 2 (discusses Hatter's nomination to legislature and that Republicans of Kanawha are denying nomination).

[24] See, "Bluefield State College Presidents: Principal Hamilton Hatter 1895-1906," published by Bluefield State College Archives Department, at http://www.bluefieldstate.edu/archives/website/hatter.htm (accessed September 28, 2004).

[25] See, Obituaries, January 13, 1917, *Farmers Advocate*, page 2.

census as being a school teacher and student of Reverend N.C. Brackett. Hunter Winters is listed in the 1920 census as living in Harpers Ferry and being employed as a college teacher presumably at Storer College.

In fact, many of the individuals are listed in the various censuses between 1870 and 1920 as being students, teachers, or the parents of children who are "attending school." George Weaver, mentioned at the beginning of this article, is listed alongside of Reverend Nathan Cook Brackett in an editorial which appeared in the *Spirit of Jefferson* on September 24, 1867, entitled "New England Meanness." In this editorial, this young black "farm laborer" was accused of attending secret meetings in Bolivar and Charles Town, in which the Reverend Nathan Cook Brackett was accused of attempting "to array the negro race against the white."[26] While George Weaver never attended classes at Storer College (at least according to the early school records retained at the National Park Service in Harpers Ferry), the school records do indicate that several of George Weaver's children, while not ultimately earning a degree, took classes at Storer in the years between the late 1860s and the late 1890s. Most of the other names on the list also had some sort of contact with the school and its leadership. Thus, again, for those doing modern research on a house originally belonging to one of these individuals, the 1897 article is very important in not only establishing the financial assistance rendered by Storer College, but also in suggesting that the individuals who received the assistance of Storer College perhaps had deeper ties or connections to the leadership of Storer College, and/or the institution itself.

Second, again for those doing research on particular houses or properties in Jefferson County, a review of property deeds alone might not reveal the role of Storer College in the transaction. In order to fully document the role of Storer College, in addition to this article and the property deeds, this author recommends that the researcher search the owners' names in the *Virginia Free Press* and the *Spirit of Jefferson* newspapers utilizing the West Virginia Explorer database composed and collected by William Theriault. Many of the owners' names are listed in one or both of the above papers (usually in the 1870s-1880s time frame) in articles which describe the recording of property deeds. Many of these

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[26] Editorial, September 24, 1867, "New England Meanness," *Spirit of Jefferson*. In general, there was considerable white hostility to Storer College by the local press, especially during the era of Reconstruction when whites who supported black citizenship were frequently accused of creating racial animosity.

articles list the individual receiving deeded property from several different possible sources, including N.C. Brackett, a trustee of Storer College (for example, S.W. Lightner), the school itself, or another African American residing in town and affiliated with N.C. Brackett. Armed with the February 1897 article in the Storer Record, a researcher reviewing these deeds can now make sense of why N.C. Brackett or Storer College was involved in the transaction and referenced in some context in the property deeds and records.

Finally, in closing, the reader should note that many of the homes bought or built by the above individuals still stand today in Jefferson County. These houses are monuments not only to the old individual owners, but also to the institution (and its leadership) that assisted these individuals in their struggle for equality and their furtherance of their inalienable rights of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, in Jefferson County, West Virginia.

Page-Jackson High School Charles Town, WV

James L. Taylor

The first school for Black students in Charles Town was established in 1865 by the Freedman's Bureau and was taught by women of the Freewill Baptist Home Mission Society from the north. That school was located on the corner of Liberty and Samuel Streets. Between 1868 and 1874, the Charles Town District Board of Education began free public education for Black students. They purchased a lot on Harewood Avenue, now Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, and built a school there called the Charles Town District Colored Graded School. The first teacher and principal appointed at this school was Mr. Littleton L. Page. Later Mr. Philip Jackson, who had been teaching in Frederick, Maryland, became Mr. Page's assistant.

In 1897, the Charles Town District Board of Education built a new school on Eagle Avenue. Mr. Page remained principal until his death in 1914, at which time Mr. Jackson was appointed principal. Because of the large enrollment at the school by 1929, the Board built another school. This school was located on the corner of Harewood (Martin Luther King, Jr.) and Eagle Avenue. As with the earlier school, it was intended to offer grades one through eight.

When Principal Philip Jackson died in 1937, the Jefferson County Board of Education hired Mr. Donald Wingo as principal of that school. In the fall of 1937, when Mr. Wingo inherited the mantle of Principal Jackson, a new era for Eagle Avenue School began. In one short year, Mr. Wingo accomplished the Herculean task of reorganizing, departmentalizing, and grading the school. He beautified the lawn, laid a sidewalk to the front and side of the building, secured a fifty-foot iron flag pole, installed play ground equipment, organized the Parent-Teacher Association, had furnishings made for the classrooms and offices, and received the school's first state rating as a first class elementary school.

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During this year, forty-two eighth grade pupils graduated and were looking forward to the establishment of a high school. Mr. Wingo, parents, and teachers pleaded with the school board to establish a county high school for Black students at the Eagle Avenue Elementary School. In the fall of 1938, Mr. Wingo resigned to become principal of Peabody High School in Petersburg, Virginia.

Mr. O. M. Steward, principal of Nottoway Training High School at Blackstone, Virginia succeeded Mr. Wingo. He found thirty pupils eager to begin high school work, but the school board was unable to furnish the necessary equipment or another teacher. He was told that he could start the high school if he could find a way. To the everlasting credit of the teachers who took on extra duties, the high school was started.

Before 1938, the Jefferson County Board of Education provided education for Black students only up until the eighth grade. Those students wishing to complete high school had to go to Storer College in order to do so. Storer College was established in 1867 and was the first institution of higher learning for Black students not only in West Virginia but also in the South. In the early years, Black students had to pay tuition to attend Storer in order to get a high school diploma. Later, the state began to pay tuition for those students completing eighth grade, providing that they met the age requirement and passed a competency test. But in 1938 Storer College closed down its secondary education division and the state became responsible for Black secondary education. This encouraged cooperation with the efforts of parents and teachers at Eagle Avenue school.

In the second year of the high school, the school board purchased necessary science equipment and books and magazines for the library. To give a semblance of industrial work, the basement of Mrs. Emma Shorts' home was rented. Patrons and friends equipped it and home economics was taught by a W.P.A. teacher. The old blacksmith shop on the property was made comfortable and, with tools donated by Mr. and Mrs. William Payne; the boys were taught woodwork by a W.P.A. teacher.

A mass meeting called by the Parent Teacher Association had as its outcome the decision to send a committee to the school board to request a physical addition to the school. The committee was courteously received and told that the board was as anxious as they were and that as soon as possible their request would be granted. In 1942, dreams came true.

The school board had secured the necessary funds and, through the

foresight of Superintendent H.M. Sydnor, work was started on the annex just before World War II priorities on building supplies went into effect.

The annex consisted of two classrooms, a home economics room, a shop and a lunchroom and kitchen. To the delight of the administration and pupils, the school was granted the right of occupancy about March 1 of that year. In honor of two pioneering souls, Mr. Littleton Lorton Page and Mr. Philip Jackson, whose lives were dedicated to the the educational advancement of the community, the school board named the school Page-Jackson High School.

Happy indeed were those thirty young students who had entered the freshman class on that bright September morning in 1938. However, this number was soon diminished, for in the fall of 1939 there were only twenty-four of the original thirty, plus an additional two new students. Sixteen of this number were enrolled as juniors at the beginning of the 1940 school term, and only ten of these completed the school year 1941-42. These were the members of the first graduating class in the history of Page-Jackson High School.

Page-Jackson High School was in operation at the same location at the Eagle Avenue Elementary School until 1951. It was then relocated to Mordington Avenue where a new structure was erected. This marked the beginning of the first complete high school for Blacks in Jefferson County, one in which only grades 9 through 12 were taught. Grades 7 and 8 were later added. This school was a one-story structure occupying eight and one-half acres. It had eight classrooms, special rooms for home-making, industrial art and agriculture, a library, private and administration offices, and a cafeteria. Other special facilities were an auditorium-gymnasium having a capacity of 300, a stage, locker rooms and shower.

In the year that the school opened, Mr. E. M. Dandridge became principal and served in this position until his retirement in 1965. This was the year in which Page-Jackson also ended its instruction for high school students. Eleven years after the Supreme Court's 1954 decision, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, that racially segregated schools were inherently unequal, Jefferson County integrated the Page-Jackson students into the high schools nearest their homes. Page Jackson operated as an elementary school for grades 4 through 6 thereafter.

Although Page-Jackson High School no longer exists, memories of it live on in the hearts of its many former students. The school building still stands and is presently the headquarters for the Jefferson County Board of

Education. In this building, a special room has been reserved and named the Page-Jackson room. It houses the documents, records, and other memorabilia pertaining to this former school. The name Page-Jackson also lives on. A school located on Route 340 in Jefferson County has been named Page-Jackson Elementary School in memory of two dedicated men who were the real founders of Page-Jackson High School.

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Jefferson County Ironworks

By David G. Allen
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Editor's Note: The topics of iron ore extraction, bloomeries and furnaces, blacksmithing and other metal-working trades in Jefferson County are of unending interest to those who read and investigate county and regional history. Iron extraction and manufacture suggest the industrial and commercial ambitions of early Berkeley and Jefferson Counties and place a proper emphasis on the diversity of the region's economic base. Many researchers have taken up this topic with important results (see the recent work of William Theriault in particular), but iron ore seems more inexhaustible as historic research than it does as a finite mineral.

In this issue, two authors examine aspects of this topic. David Allen has written an overview of the iron-making process in this region. Portions of his essay appeared earlier this year in the Appalachian Blacksmith's Association Newsletter. Stanley Dickinson takes another approach – seeking place names and historic references on maps and physical remnants of iron production on the ground, while describing the geological and chemical features that made an iron industry possible.

The nation's westward march took a small but noticeable step on May 10, 1742, when Thomas Mayberry[1] entered into an agreement to "erect a bloomery[2] for making bar iron on the plantation of William Vestal lying on the Shunnandore [Shenandoah] River." Located south of Harpers

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[1] Thomas Mayberry (also Maybury) was born about 1692 in Herefordshire, England. He is believed to have arrived in America before 1717. He purchased 1000 acres of land in Berks County, Pennsylvania in October 1742. On this land, he established the Green Lane Forge and the Hereford Furnace. He died in 1764 having been known as "the ironmaster."

One might speculate that Mayberry demanded payment for building Vestal's Bloomery in Pennsylvania currency because he had already made plans to purchase the 1000 acres land in Berks County.

The Hereford Furnace operated from 1734-1768 and produced the first cast iron cook stove with oven made in America (1767). Green Lane Forge remained in the Mayberry family until it was sold in 1814.

[2] A bloomery was a small furnace built with locally available stone and lined with clay. The furnace was fired with charcoal using a forced air draft. This forced air draft (the blast)

Ferry, Vestal's Bloomery was the first iron furnace west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Mayberry was paid "£400 Curr. Money of Pennsylvania" for his services and also retained an operating interest.

William Vestal's plantation contained all of the necessary ingredients for an iron works. Besides iron ore, the smelt required a fluxing agent—limestone—which was present. A strong-flowing spring powered the water wheel which, in turn, cranked the bellows. And most importantly, there was a large tract of woodland from which to make charcoal. Depending on ore yield and furnace efficiency, it took 130 or more bushels of charcoal[3] to make one ton of iron.

In 1755, Mayberry received a Fairfax grant for 400 acres near the mouth of the Shenandoah. This acquisition may be indicative of the Bloomery's success. Mayberry may have acquired the land as a woodlot reserve for future charcoal production.

The bloomery furnace was charged with a batch of ore, limestone, and

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was necessary to generate the high temperature (minimum 2200° F) needed to smelt the ore. In the bloomery process, the iron is not heated to a molten state as it is in a large blast furnace. Instead, the air blast melts the gangue (minerals other than iron; they have a lower melting point), oxidizes most impurities, and renders the iron into blooms.

The operator located his furnace near a strong flowing spring and used its constant flow to turn the waterwheel rather than depend on the changing flow of rivers and streams. Waterways were valued as transportation routes.

Some bloomery operators installed a helve to hammer the blooms rather than hire laborers as strikers. A helve was a water-powered trip hammer. The same waterwheel would have operated the bellows and the helve.

[3] Mr. Jack Thorp, a charcoal burner at the Capon Furnace in Hardy County, WV gives the following description of their method of burning or coaling:

> A piece of ground was made level for about 90 feet across and sufficient size to hold 30 cords of wood. The lap wood was first placed around the level area and the cord wood piled on the space against it. A chimney was made in three-corner shape, out of cord wood, laid horizontal. The second tier of cord wood laid around it and covered with leaves so as to make the pile airtight and prevent dirt from coming in.
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> The whole pile was then covered with dirt, 2 or 3 inches thick at the bottom and 7 or 8 inches on the top.
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> In firing, small pieces of wood were placed in the chimney flue and a bed of hot coals thrown in on this wood. After the fire was well-started, the chimney was filled with wood and the rapidity controlled by a cover over the top of the chimney. When all of the wood was burned out in the flue, more was thrown in. Around the bottom of the coal heap, pipe holes were made and opened and closed so as to draw the fire to the different parts of the mass.
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> It required six full days of burning before any [char]coal could be drawn. If carefully burned, the yield should be 40 bushels of [char]coal to the cord of wood.
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> A pit holding more than 40 cords of wood, in Mr. Thorp's experience, would not give good result in drawing; 400 bushels of [char]coal could be removed at a time, using great care that it did not take too much air and catch fire.

Morland, James R., *The Early Cheat Mountain Ironworks*, pp. 110-11

charcoal. As the ore smelted, the free iron formed lumps, or "blooms". The forgemaster pulled the bloom from the furnace with long tongs, then placed it on the anvil and directed his strikers to hammer the bloom into a bar. The bloom was hammered out, folded and welded, and hammered again. This process continued until the slag had been expelled. Typically, these bars measured 2" square by 3' long and weighed 40 pounds.

Bar iron, more commonly known to you as wrought iron, was the raw material that the local blacksmith could use to make axes, hammers, knives, hoes and plows. A skilled blacksmith could forge a sewing needle or fish hook or forks and spoons as easily as he could make the links for a logging chain or hinges for a door. It could be said that Vestal's Bloomery and the local blacksmiths, rather than two major rivers, are what put Harpers Ferry on the map.

George Washington was quite familiar with Harpers Ferry. When just sixteen, he joined the survey party that mapped Lord Fairfax's extensive holdings in the Northern Neck of Virginia (1738). His trip into the wilderness certainly gave him knowledge of the Potomac River basin. By 1754, he came to believe that a canal route linking the Chesapeake Bay with the Ohio River was feasible.

Washington had a personal interest in western development. Governor Dinwiddie awarded a military bounty of Ohio River land in 1754 to soldiers of the Virginia Regiment who fought under General Braddock. Though it would take years to perfect his land claim, Washington's westward vision had been firmly set.

Upon his return from a trip to Pittsburgh, Washington became an investor in the Potomac Company (1785). Work on what would later become the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal[4] commenced at Georgetown. George Washington hoped that industrial development in the Potomac Valley would in turn spur commerce in the nation's capitol. Washington

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[4] Canal construction suffered years of fits and starts. The Potomac Valley was remote. The work was rugged. And when the workers got paid, they sometimes headed for a distant tavern, never to return to their canal jobs. Yellow Fever (often referred to as Bilious Fever) was such a scourge in that age that the slightest rumor of an outbreak of the fever caused labor gangs to throw down their shovels and flee.

Beginning at Georgetown, the canal was not completed to Harpers Ferry until 1833—the same year that the railroad arrived. The canal was built to Cumberland in 1850 and that is where it stopped. By then, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had crossed the Alleghenies and its track crews were headed toward Wheeling. Unforeseen by Washington, it was the railroad, not a canal, that would link the Chesapeake Bay with the Midwest.

understood that the capitol—the Federal city as he called it—would never be a great city if it existed solely as the seat of government.

One of the early industries on the upper Potomac was Friend's Orebank, an iron ore mine named for the tract's original owner, Israel Friend. Commissioned by Governor Calvert as an ambassador to the Shawnees in 1725, Friend was one of the first whites to settle west of the Shenandoah. Two years later, he purchased land on the Maryland side of the river from the Indian Chiefs of the Five Nations. This property would become the site of Frederick Forge and later, Antietam Iron Works.

Interestingly, Israel Friend's Antietam tract was measured by "arrow shoots"—a shoot being the farthest distance that an archer could shoot an arrow. The Indians knew nothing of surveying but nevertheless had devised this rudimentary way to measure land area. Friend's land measured 200 shoots along the river with a depth of 100 shoots and then the backside was squared off to intersect with and then follow Antietam Creek back to the beginning point on the Potomac.

Israel Friend also received a regal land grant of 300 acres[5] in 1734. Narrow in breadth but five miles long, this Virginia property followed the Potomac's meander, lying upstream of Harpers Ferry from River Bend to near Elk Run. This was Friend's Orebank, a rich deposit of brown hematite[6] yielding up to 78% iron.

Israel Friend died about 1750. Despite anecdotes that he produced iron, there is no evidence that he did so. His estate inventory does not reveal any mining tools and there are no historical references to pre-1750 ironworks. Though he did not develop the Orebank, he apparently was aware that he owned a valuable mineral deposit. He sold 100 acres of the original grant in 1746 but retained all of the acreage where iron ore was present.

Enter John Semple in 1763. Semple, owner of Occoquan Iron Works in Prince William County, took control of Friend's Orebank from John Ballendine. Ballendine had purchased the Orebank from Jacob Friend, Israel's son. Semple had financed Ballendine in the Occoquan venture and when Ballendine defaulted, Semple took over both operations.

To develop the Orebank, Semple built a blast furnace at the confluence

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[5] Surveyed in 1802 as 398 acres.

[6] Found as both ledgerock and boulders. Hematite boulders, mixed with clay, were found in fissures of the underlying dolomitic limestone formation. Workers sluiced river water to the site wash the clay from the hematite rocks. The ore is also often referred to as limonite.

of Elk Run and the Potomac. He named it Keep Triste Furnace and began operating in 1764. The words "Keep Triste" appeared in Semple's family motto (Scottish).

Keep Triste was a continuous blast furnace. At 30'-50'tall, this type of furnace[7] is built to run around the clock. And rather than produce bloom iron, the blast furnace operated at a much higher temperature producing cast, or pig iron. When the founder tapped the furnace, molten iron ran out into a series of moulds that looked like a sow with her suckling piglets. Hence, the name.

Pig iron from Keep Triste would have had a high carbon content making it too brittle for general use. Pig iron was refined further in either a puddling furnace or a finery and then rolled or hammered into bars or strips.

Aside from his ventures in iron, John Semple was a man with big dreams. His dreams[8] paralleled those of Washington's when it came to making the Potomac navigable. He bought thousands of acres of land on credit and, in the span of a decade, his empire crumbled. John Semple died in debtor's prison in 1773.

Semple's holdings went through foreclosure in 1786 and the successor owners built a second furnace at the Orebank about 1788. One of the successor owners was Henry Lee, father of Robert E. Lee. Keep Triste Furnace was rebuilt in 1792 and employment at the works expanded to fifty.

Pig iron production continued at Keep Triste until 1800 when two events coincided. The US government purchased the mining rights at Friend's Orebank and wood for charcoal had all but been depleted.

As hoped for by Washington, industry did develop along the Potomac. Various mills took advantage of free water power. Then, in 1799, came the centerpiece of development, gratis the government—the nation's first armory was built at Harpers Ferry. Not merely an arms repository, Harpers Ferry Armory was a manufacturing plant. Rifles would now be

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[7] Ideally, the blast furnace, built with dimension stone and lined with clay, ran until it failed. However, we can assume that cold weather iced the waterwheel and snow brought transportation of ore and charcoal to a halt. Valley Furnace in Barbour County was one of the first ironworks to replace its water-powered bellows with a steam engine and fan (1850.)

[8] John Semple is also noted as a promoter of the C & O Canal. He had frequent meetings with George Washington about making the Potomac River navigable. Semple's company even opened a channel at one gravel shoal in order to ship ore to Antietam.

made from machined, interchangeable parts, a revolutionary change in technology.

President Thomas Jefferson, himself no stranger to the area, objected to federal ownership[9] of the Orebank. Perhaps Jefferson's objection carried weight. The federal government never mined the Orebank nor did it attempt to manufacture iron.[10]

In 1803, Capt. Meriwether Lewis procured rifles and supplies from Harpers Ferry Armory. The armory also fabricated a collapsible iron boat frame for the expedition. Of his visit to Harpers Ferry, Lewis wrote President Jefferson on April 20th:

> "My detention at Harper's Ferry was unavoidable for one month, a period much greater than could reasonably have been calculated on; my greatest difficulty was the frame of the canoe, which could not be completed without my personal attention to such portions of it as would enable the workmen to understand the design perfectly. My Rifles, Tomahawks & knives are already in a state of forwardness that leaves me little doubt of their being in readiness in due time."

The Model 1803 rifles performed admirably on the expedition. And the spare interchangeable gun locks proved a godsend when expedition blacksmiths could no longer repair the original actions. But the genius of Lewis and his "Experiment", as the iron boat was called, fell short of its goal on July 9th, 1805. He launched the boat on the Missouri River above Great Falls. There was no pine tar or pitch to be found in the area so the soldiers attempted to waterproof the hides that covered the iron frame with tallow. The boat sunk[11] and the iron frame was disassembled and buried in a cache the next day in case Lewis needed it to return home.

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[9] "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 is preferred, it will rest for their further consideration in what way the subjects of this purchase may be best employed or disposed of." Thomas Jefferson, February 2, 1802 in A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897. Vol. 1, p. 335. (From Theriault , William D., *Friend's Orebank and Keep Triste Furnace*, p. 55)

[10] In 1820, Harpers Ferry Armory installed a puddling furnace and recycled its considerable reserve of scrap iron and milling machine cuttings. Some 60 tons were recycled that year which was about one-third of the total iron used.

[11] From Lewis' journal, July 9, 1805: "... she leaked in such manner that she would not answer. I need not add that this circumstance mortifyed me not a little; ... therefore the evil was irraparable ... from these circumstances I am preswaided, that had I formed her with buffaloe skins singed not quite as close as I had done those I employed, that she

Was Vestal's Bloomery iron used for the Experiment's frame? The answer to this question is "Yes." Provided, of course, that armory Superintendent Joseph Perkin bought the wrought iron based on local availability. Keep in mind that he had no lead time to anticipate this project. But the answer might very well be "No." Given Lewis' meticulous planning, he may have demanded using only the best quality iron—gun barrel metal.

Harpers Ferry Armory purchased gun barrel skelps[12] from Pennsylvania works in the Juniata district and from Connecticut works in the Salisbury district. Though Antietam Iron Works made machine tool castings for the armory from 1827-1830, none of the Virginia and Maryland ironworks were geared to make gun metal.

Connecticut had two major advantages. First, ironmaking had been going on there for a much longer time. And second, the nation's other armory was located at easily accessible Springfield, Massachusetts. Whereas Harpers Ferry had continuing problems with a shortage of skilled workers because of its remote location, the Connecticut River Valley enjoyed a stable force of skilled millwrights. The area teemed with foundries and forges.

Eli Whitney[13] serves to illustrate. When Joseph Perkin died in 1806, Whitney was offered the superintendent's position at Harpers Ferry. He favorably considered the offer but had to decline because he was so

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would have answered even with this composition. but to make any further experiments in our present situation seemed to me madness; the buffaloe had principally d[e]serted us, and the season was now advancing fast. I therefore relinquished all further hope of my favorite boat and ordered her to be sunk in the water, that the skins might become soft in order the better to take her in peices tomorrow and deposited the iron fraim at this place as it could probably be of no further service to us. ... but it was now too late to introduce a remidy and I bid adieu to my boat, and her expected services."

Lewis buried the iron frame in a cache but did not retrieve it in 1806 when the expedition was heading home. Archaeologists are searching for the cache.

[12] Skelps (flat bars) were manufactured to strict dimensions—1/2" thick x 3" wide x 44" long. They were heated to yellow heat and then curled in a jig until the ends butted together. The seam was welded, thus making the barrel tube. The barrel was trimmed to length, one end plugged, and then trued for straightness. The final step was milling the bore.

Skelps had to be free of any defects lest the barrel explode. The barrels were proof fired before assembly. Using Pennsylvania skelps and then welding by hand hammering, the armory had failure rates of 25%. When the armory began using the Springfield Armory's mechanical trip hammers to weld Connecticut-manufactured skelps, the failure rate dropped to 10%.

[13] Eli Whitney was born in Massachusetts. He owned and operated a musket factory near New Haven, Connecticut and was a pioneer in the manufacture of identical parts.

involved in lawsuits to protect his cotton gin patents. Had Eli Whitney, a man of such knowledge and innumerable contacts, accepted the position, then the armory's future would surely have been bright. Instead, the armory's workforce and its arms quality continued to deteriorate until reaching their nadir in 1830.

In 1829, Thomas Dunn, the competent and able manager of Antietam Iron Works, was hired as armory superintendent. He was not popular; he was hired to improve production and quality control. But just six months after his appointment, in January 1830, a former armorer, Ebenezer Cox, walked into his office and shot him dead with a pistol. Cox was executed for the crime but things had gotten so bad that many locals considered him a folk hero. While news of Dunn's assassination may have played well locally, it sent shockwaves through the arms industry.[14]

The last ironworks developed in Jefferson County was in 1839 at Shannondale on the east side of the Shenandoah. Purdue, Nichols and Co. sited the Shenandoah Furnace alongside a stream that has since been called Furnace Run. Shenandoah Furnace produced up to three tons of pig iron daily with a workforce of fifty. Purdue, Nichols and Co. shipped iron pigs overland by wagon, by boat, and also ferried them to Harpers Ferry to load on the train.

Reports say that the furnace burned 200 bushels of charcoal per ton of iron. This amount seems high. On the other hand, the neighboring mountainside was denuded of trees during the furnace's twenty-year run.

Given the reports of charcoal consumption and depleted woodlands, this furnace was probably doomed to fail anyway. But the Civil War began before that happened and the Shenandoah's demise is now preserved in legend. Believing that Confederates were hiding there, the Yankees set the works ablaze.

During the period 1800-1869, the government did not mine Friend's Orebank. But the owners of the Antietam Iron Works did, and did so in a big way. For unknown reasons, the government did nothing until 1837 to prevent its property from being mined by others. When brought to court

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[14]Lemuel Pomeroy, a military contractor in Pittsfield, MA, wrote to Roswell Lee: "We ought to be thankful to that Kind Providence which has cast our lot in a part of the country where the moral sense of the people is our security … from such outrages."

Roswell Lee was superintendent of the Springfield Armory (1815-1833) and had been sent to Harpers Ferry as its acting superintendent for about 6 months in 1827 to establish reforms and guidelines. Thomas Dunn was trying to implement Lee's reforms and policies. As an example of how the working environment had deteriorated, Dunn rewrote the employment manual to forbid loitering, gambling, and drinking on armory property.

for a settlement of the question, the court ruled that the United States did not have exclusive mining rights. The government took no action afterward and finally sold its interest in 1869. Friend's Orebank was actively mined by various companies until about 1917.

Antietam Iron Works remained in operation during the antebellum years but its ownership changed hands several times. About 1842, Antietam's owners built a coke-fired furnace at Lonaconing in western Maryland. (Coke is to coal as charcoal is to wood.) In 1845, the company began blending coke with charcoal at Antietam Iron Works.

The introduction of coke as a blast furnace fuel signaled a major change in the industry. Tariffs on imported iron were significantly reduced in 1842 and would later be phased out altogether. The shift from charcoal to coke came about as a result of this. Charcoal had gotten too expensive because of the labor involved in making it.

While references give the Civil War as being the death knell to iron works such as Vestal's Bloomery and Shenandoah Furnace, their closure was already assured by changes in the industry. In 1855, the Soo Canal opened access to the rich iron ores of Michigan and Minnesota. The Bessemer converter was also patented that year. The Bessemer furnace turned iron into durable steel, the metal that the nation's railroads needed for both rails and rolling stock. America's appetite for iron and steel could no longer be sated by local ironworks in tucked-away valleys. The Industrial Age was on.

That Friend's Orebank had such a long run—about 155 years—is quite remarkable.

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Extracting Iron in Jefferson County

Stanley K. Dickinson, Ph.D.

In present-day Jefferson County, as well as in neighboring counties and states, when one comes upon a stream named Forge Run or Furnace Creek, or a throroughfare named Furnace Street or Mine Mountain Road, it is a near certainty that the name derives from the iron days of the 18th and 19th centuries. Communities have also been named for furnaces such as Columbia Furnace, Virginia and Catoctin Furnace, Maryland. Such names help the investigator to find artifacts and evidence for the geographical location of the iron facilities that were vital to settling the western counties of Virginia and Maryland. Though much of the detailed history of iron and its impact on life may have been lost, maps and signposts retain iron's essential claim on the landscape.

"Forge" and "furnace" are easily recognized as related to iron manufacture, but "bloomery" is also a basic term. A bloomery was at best a rudimentary furnace, similar to the hearth operated by a blacksmith. There are two communities in West Virginia named Bloomery, one of them on the west bank of the Shenandoah near the Route 9 bridge. The other is in Hampshire County on Route 127, near the Forks of the Cacapon River. Unfortunately, the author has been unable to discover remains of the furnace structure at the Jefferson County Bloomery. This should not be surprising since the bloomery furnace of that day more closely resembled the back yard fireplace of today rather than the later imposing stone structure of the Shenandoah Furnace located in Shannondale.

The bloomery operator (often referred to as bloomer or bloomsman) would break the iron ore into small pieces and heat them in a hearth to near the melting point of the ore. Charcoal was locally the fuel of choice, hard wood if charcoal was not available. Burning charcoal released

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Dr. Dickinson earned B.S. and M.S. degrees at West Virginia University and a Ph.D. at Harvard University, all in geological sciences. He is retired from Federal Service after 40 years performing and directing Air Force Research. He is a volunteer to the National Park Service and his publications include *A Celebration of Iron: A History, 1609-1892* (2003) and *The Epic Journey of George Quartz, A Young Person's Introduction to Geologic History* (with B. Joan Wilson) (2004). With photographer Jeff Norton, he is completing a third book, *Geological Attractions Along the C&O Canal* and they have constructed geology exhibits at the Williamsport MD National Park Service Visitor Center.

carbon oxide gases that reduced the hot iron oxide to metallic iron; the worthless impurities in the ore separated from the iron to form slag. Since the specific gravity of the iron granules was much greater than the soup they were released into, they sank to the bottom of the hearth. The heat at that point was sufficient to cause the iron granules to adhere. As the iron became semi-molten, it was stirred with a long bar until it gathered into a lump, called a loup or bloom.

This pasty lump, that had never completely melted, was removed from the fire and hammered into a bar while still hot to be used by blacksmiths and other iron workers. The hammering was required to weld the iron particles together and to force out as much of the slag as possible. This was not an efficient way to extract iron. Impurity levels were high and the process was hazardous. Hammering was done by men with sledges at such close proximity to the loup that the nearly molten material could splash onto the workmen. But the bloomery furnace was simple, inexpensive to construct and to operate; at most, two or three men were required. According to Robert Gordon, "bloom smelters reduced [iron] ore directly to solid wrought iron [while] blast furnace operators made liquid. . .iron that they then tapped from the furnace." Most often the "pigs" of iron, formed at the blast furnaces, were transported to forges where they were reheated and hammered into wrought iron bars to mitigate brittleness. Thus the bloomery cut out one step in the iron-making process, trading a higher level of impurity for ductility.[1]

The Jefferson County bloomery began operation about 1742 when William Vestal, his son, John, and John Traden, Richard Stevenson, and Daniel Burnet engaged Thomas Mayberry to construct a "Bloomery for making Barr iron upon the present plantation of William Vestal lying upon the Shunandore." The bloomery was built on the design of the Catalan forges of Spain and was in operation for an unspecified length of time. By 1762, the cold blast furnace was the furnace of choice in the Potomac River watershed. In the Adirondack region, where the ores were richer in iron, the bloomery remained the furnace of choice and new techniques were discovered by bloomers in that region that approached "theoretical efficiency."[2]

But the influence on furnace design by the type of iron ore available

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[1] Robert B. Gordon, *American Iron 1607-1900* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 90-94.

[2] G., C.S., "Iron Industry in Jefferson County," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society*, 1964 v. XXX, 19-20; Millard K. Bushong, *Historic Jefferson County*, (Boyce, VA: Carr Publishing Company, 1972), 81; Gordon, 94-96.

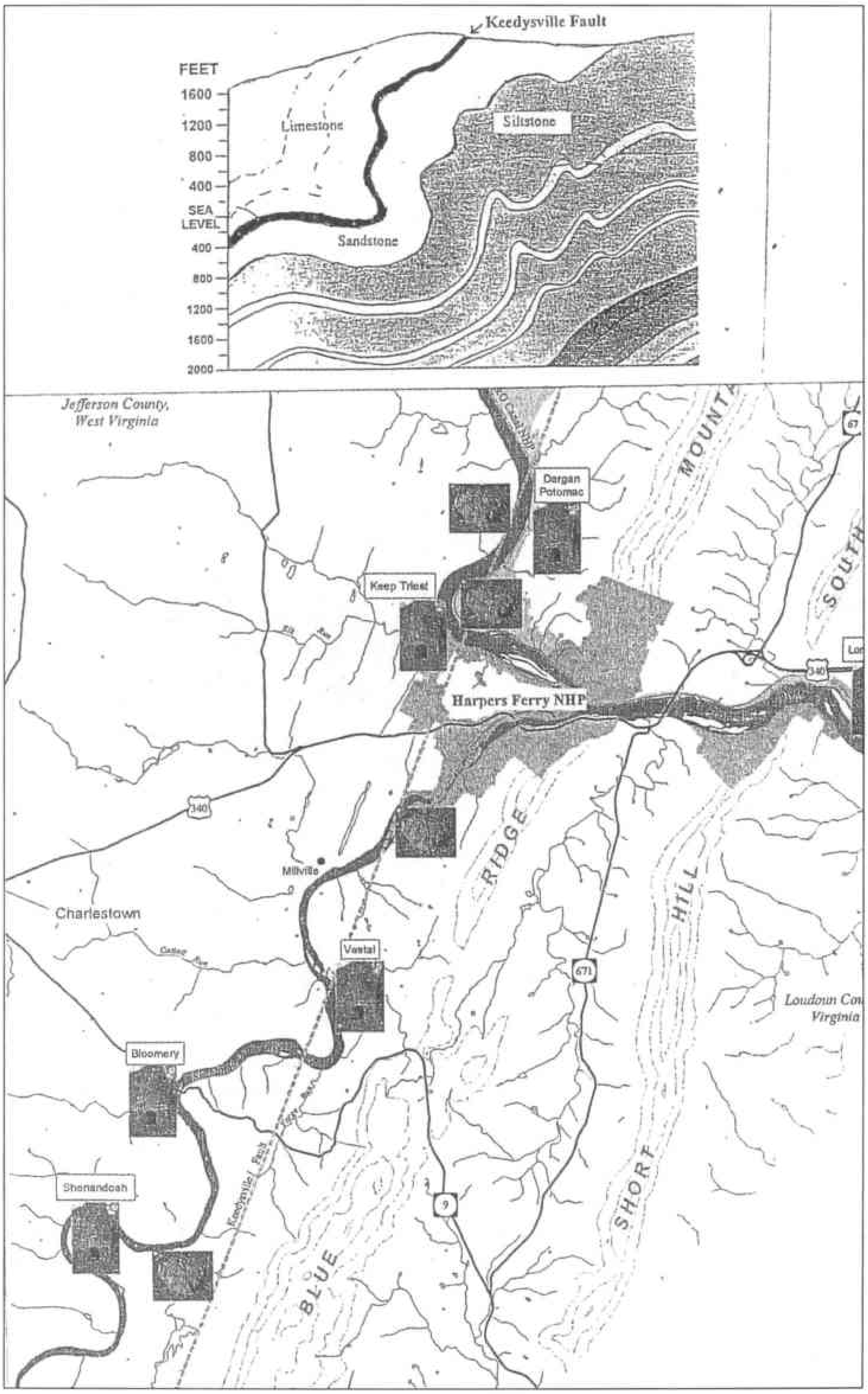


Figure 1: **Keedysville Dislocation along which iron ore was deposited. Locations of Jefferson County iron furnaces are identified.**

was never an issue in Jefferson County. There was only one ore, limonite, in the county, often times mistakenly called "brown hematite."[3] The general array of Jefferson County deposits defines a line across the county that reflects a disruption in the sequence of deposits caused by movement along a weakness between a carbonate deposit and a clastic one. This lineament is the Keedysville Detachment, named for the town of Keedysville, Maryland. In Jefferson County, the carbonate deposit is the Tomstown Dolomite, the clastic deposit is the Antietam Formation. The detachment can be followed north through Maryland and for more than 200 miles south where it defines the South Branch of the Shenandoah River above Front Royal. Limonite deposits were formed where iron-laden waters, deep beneath the earth's surface, used the Detachment as a conduit to the surface where carbonate rock was encountered. A reaction occurred that precipitated the iron into a solid oxide, but one that was enmeshed in other mineral species to form an iron oxide bearing rock. (see Figure 1)

These local deposits caused a large number of furnaces to be built over a distance of many miles as well as associated forges, foundries, manufactories and, of course, blacksmith's hearths. One of the locally well-recognized deposits of iron ore is Friend's Orebank, one of the deposits along the Detachment. Dr. William Theriault discussed this deposit in an earlier article in the Magazine.[4] Across the Potomac, at what is now known as Huckleberry Hill on the C&O Canal towpath, was an equally well-endowed deposit of limonite. The Detachment cuts across Bolivar Heights, just west of Harpers Ferry, where there is evidence of an old iron foundry. The author asked Millville inhabitants if they knew if there had been iron recovery prior to the long-lived cement industry there. No memory of that exists, but ore deposits cannot have been very far east of the Millville quarries. On the east bank of the Shenandoah, almost immediately upstream of Millville, is a quarry that may have provided ore deposits of iron, ore deposits of manganese, and the carbonate rock required for extracting both metals. It follows logically that these deposits encouraged the building of a furnace at some earlier time.

Dr. Theriault has carefully described the iron furnace named Keep Tryst, a.k.a. Keep Triest, and its role in the Jefferson County iron story. It

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[3] Other local names have caused added confusion, but limonite is a discrete mineral species of iron, Fe2O3.nH20. It does not resemble hematite, Fe2O3, or magnetite, Fe3O4, both of which were mined in the Potomac Valley.

[4] William D. Theriault, "History of Friends Orebank and Keeptryst Furnace," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society*, 1984, V. L, 12-21.

might be worthwhile to briefly recall the story of John Semple prior to 1763 at which point he was busy extracting iron at that site. Mr. Semple had partnered with one John Ballendine to operate the Occoquan Furnace and Iron Works well down the Potomac during the 1760-62 time frame. They prospected up the Potomac for iron deposits and purchased large acreage surrounding what is now known as Furnace Mountain, an appendage to the Catoctin Mountain in Virginia at the Route 15 Point of Rocks bridge. The partnership dissolved and John Semple moved on upstream to Elk Run. Mr. Semple was one of a group of iron entrepreneurs who wrote George Washington regarding the hazards of moving iron pigs and iron products on the Potomac River.

The author was introduced to a furnace complex that is located on the east bank of the Shenandoah opposite the limestone quarries that are active upstream of Millville. The furnaces are very interesting in that the original stone construction has had a concrete facing added to it. Tile pipes were installed into the concrete, leading back into the crucible area. Just downstream is a quarry that is flooded to the extent that only limestone walls can be investigated. One local resident recalls a neighbor telling of manganese having been extracted at the furnaces. The following interpretation seems plausible. The Vestal family, for whom the gap and the ferry, both now called Keyes, were originally named, is credited with the operation of this furnace for the extraction of iron. The characteristic stone structure is clearly apparent adjoining the hill slope. Particulars of operation such as dates are not recorded.[5] Sometime later, manganese was discovered, as at Dargan Bend, and the furnaces were modified by adding the concrete facings. It is proposed that the furnaces entered their new life as hot-blast furnaces; preheated air was injected into the furnaces by steam-powered blowing engines. The remains of the manganese operations at Dargan Bend support that explanation. These furnaces most likely had a third life – kilns for making agricultural lime or lime for cement. (see Figure 2)

Along Route 9 between the eastern banks of the Shenandoah and the western slope of the Blue Ridge Mountain lies the community of Mannings, WV. It is drained by a stream named Forge Run. The author investigated the course of the stream and found remains of a masonry foundation near its confluence with the Shenandoah. The concrete chunks are right at the point where an old vehicle track crosses Forge Run. The track runs to the top of the ridge and may have been used for cutting

[5] Tom Garrison, personal communication, 2003; Stanley Dickinson, *A Celebration of Iron* (Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press, 2003), 47.



Figure 2: **'Vestal's' Furnace, east bank of the Shenandoah River.**

timber to fuel the forge. It is not unusual to find a forge separated from an iron furnace source of iron pigs. Operating a tilt hammer or other device for pounding heat-softened pigs into bar iron required a more effective water flow than that required to turn a water wheel. Maps of Jefferson County in 1852 and 1883, both by S. Howell Brown, County Surveyor, identify the location of the South Bend Forge as that discovered by the author. The map of Frederick, Berkeley, and Jefferson Counties, Virginia, in 1809 by Charles Varle does not identify any iron works except the "Iron ore bank" near Bakerton (Friends' Orebank) and (Semple's) "Kepttrysts Old Furnace" on Elk Run.

The massive Shenandoah Furnace, a.k.a Shannondale Furnace according to the 1883 Map of Jefferson County, West Virginia by S. Howell Brown, is located along Furnace Run at the entrance to the Shannondale Wildlife Management Area. It is clearly the most remarkable artifact of the iron era in Jefferson County. The diary of George Washington for March 14, 1760 states, "Mr. Caryle and his wife remain here [Washington's home]. We talked a good deal of a scheme of setting up an Iron Works on Colonel Fairfax's land on the Shenandoah. Mr. Chapman, who was a perfect judge of the matter, was to go up and view the conveniences and determine the scheme." Henry McDonald notes: "George William Fairfax and his brother-in-law, John Caryle, duly organized the Bloomery Mills to make iron on Fairfax's land at Shannondate, near Harpers Ferry, but it does not appear that Washington

joined them."[6]

In the Jefferson County museum, Charles Town, there are two paintings of Bloomery mills on Evitts Run, but they are not iron works. I have been unable to understand the "Footnote" above and ask readers for help.

In 1810, Charles Varle, in his "Topographic Descriptions of the Counties of Frederick, Berkeley and Jefferson," mentioned "Mr. Ferdinand Fairfax is now erecting iron works on the Shenandoah that will soon be in operation." According to Bushong, in 1839, about a quarter of a mile up Furnace Run from its confluence with the Shenandoah River in the community of Shannondale, Perdue, Nichols and Company erected or began operating an iron works. A newspaper account of 1840 confirms the company had established an iron works. This included a large cold-blast furnace built of stone, actually laid up dry, that is, without using cement. Two buildings were attached: the eastern one was used for receiving iron ore and charcoal while the western one received the iron metal from the furnace. An overshot water wheel turned by a narrow canal activated a bellows that forced air through a pipe into the furnace. In addition, there were numerous small buildings that housed as many as fifty men.[7] (see Figure 3)

The Map of Jefferson County, 1852, by S. Howell Brown, indicates a "shop" at the site. Undoubtedly there must have been several "shops" of different kinds to service the iron as well as the employees of the iron works. One could speculate that the iron works included a forge as well as a blacksmith. Iron ore was abundant in the vicinity and could be easily obtained from near the surface. The adjoining ridge contributed ore but also forest tracks for making charcoal. It took 200 bushels of charcoal to smelt each ton of iron and the furnace output was reported to have been about 3 tons a day. Pigs of iron about a yard long and almost as heavy as a man could lift "were hauled overland to Alexandria by team and the returning wagons brought provisions and supplies of all kinds." "Some of the iron found its way to the city by way of the Shenandoah river to Washington and some was boated to Harpers Ferry and loaded aboard trains there."[8]

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[6] Henry T. MacDonald, "The Armory and Arsenal at Harpers Ferry," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society* 1936, V. II, 7-8.

[7] Millard K. Bushong, *Historic Jefferson County*, (Boyce, VA: Carr Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), 81-83.

[8] Thornton T. Perry, Jr., "Shannondale," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society* 1941, v. VII, 21-22.

The Shenandoah Furnace permits close inspection of the design of the furnace that replaced the bloomeries. Iron entrepreneurs turned to building cold-blast furnaces in Virginia because production was greatly increased, even though construction and operating costs were much higher. This design was first reduced to practice at the Saugus Iron Works, Massachusetts Colony, in 1624. Furnace designers used the principle of counter-current flow to create a furnace that could run continuously. Ore, fuel, and flux were fed as needed into the stack from the top and air was forced in at the bottom to increase the heat. "Furnace builders made the interior in the form of two sections of cones with the largest diameter partway up the stack. As the charge descended, the increasing diameter of the upper cone, [the bosh], allowed space for expansion of the heated ore.

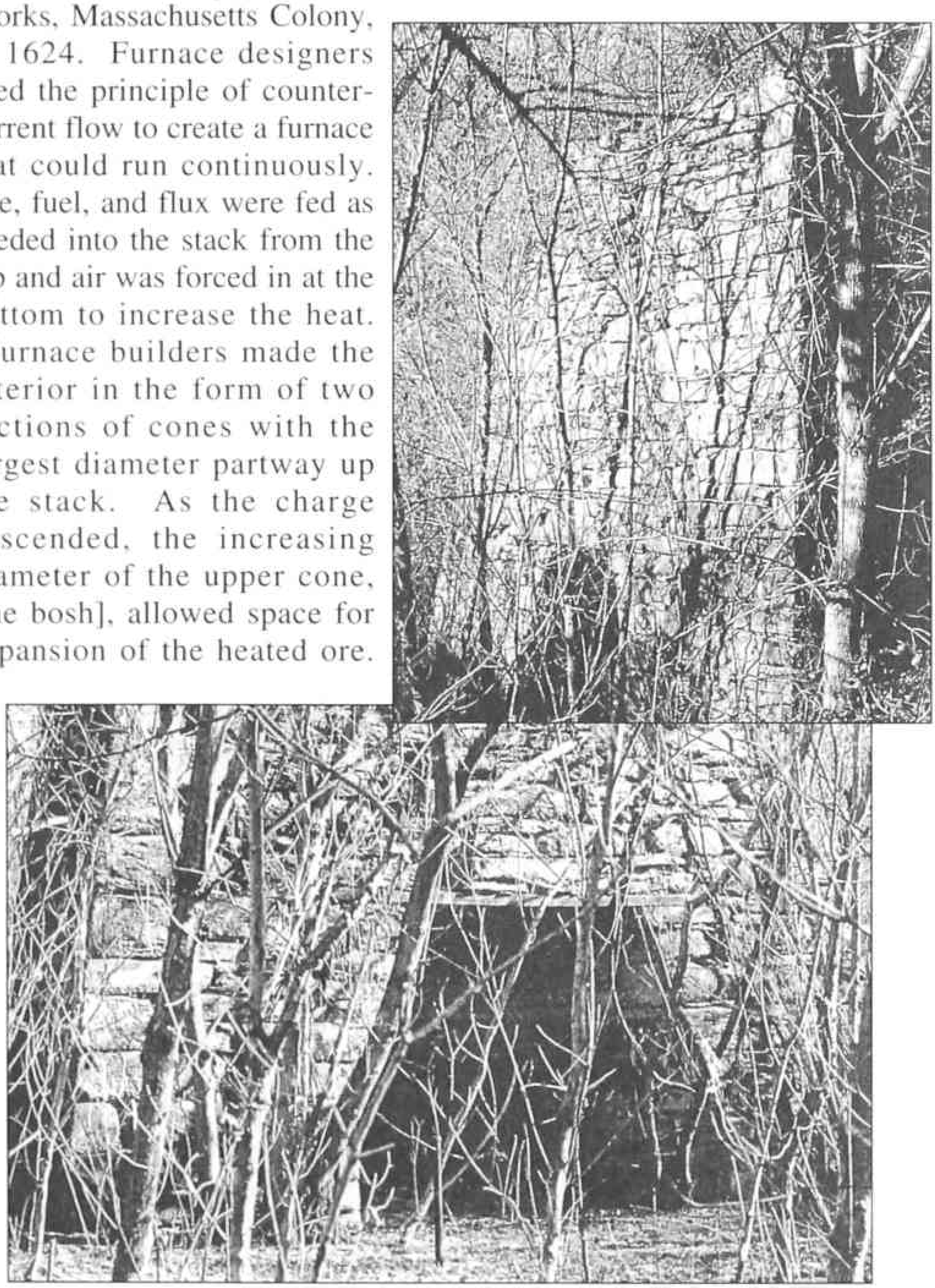


Figure 3: **The Shenandoah Furnace at Shannondale.**

The sloping surface of the lower cone [the hearth] supported most of the weight of the ore, fuel, and flux. As the air flowed up and the solid [came] down the stack, the burning fuel heated the charge and released the carbon monoxide gas that reduced the iron oxide in the ore . . . At the same time, the flux reacted with the gangue to form liquid slag."[9] The differences in the specific gravity of the liquid metal and the liquid slag provided a natural separation ; the slag floated while the iron sank. Depending on the volume of molten iron that was created over time, the iron master would "pull the cork" perhaps every six hours and allow the iron to flow out into "sows and pigs" iron molds. In addition to the pigs of iron, utensils such as pots and pans, nails and wedges, as well as other iron products could be made right at the furnace by allowing the molten iron to flow into molds of the required shapes. (see Figure 4)

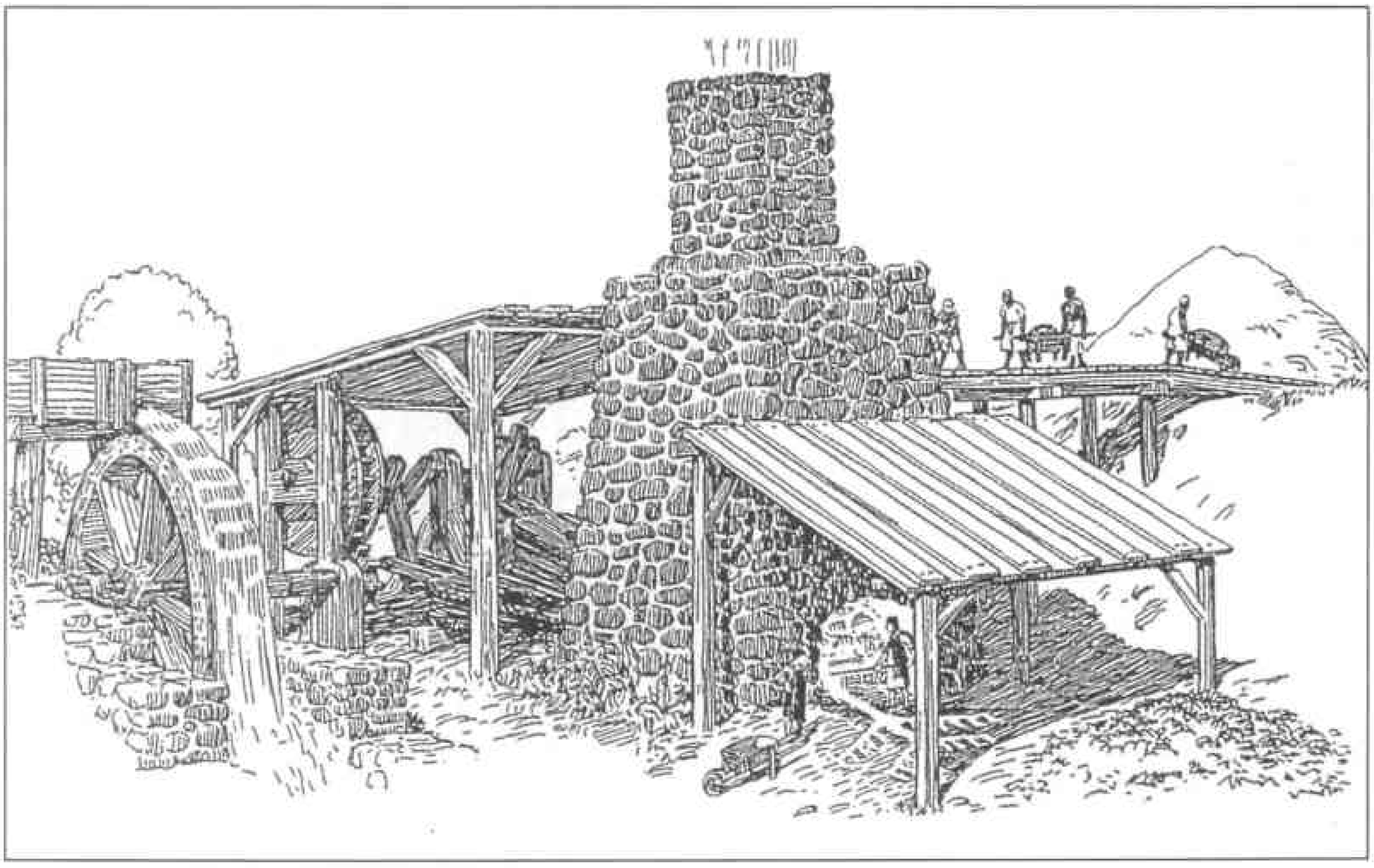


Figure 4: **Drawing of a cold-blast iron furnace in operation. Note waterwheel is actuating bellows that provide air blast to increase operating heat.**

The slag would also be drawn off as it accumulated. It was variable in its properties, varying from furnace to furnace. When the slag contained numerous gas-generated cavities, it resembled the vesicular igneous rock, scoria. When it displayed a glassy texture, it looked like colorful obsidian. A sky blue color indicated the presence of manganese in the ore

[9] Gordon, 100-104.

and/or the flux. High-grade iron ore rich in graphite carbon provided a gray color. Bright shades of orange and green were also prevalent.

U.S. Forest Service personnel of the Lee Ranger District, Virginia, have prepared a most detailed information tract entitled "The Historic Iron and Charcoaling Industries in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley." The brief discussion that follows is meant to evaluate the ecological impact of fueling iron extraction in Jefferson County. The "hearth" of a charcoal pit was a flat space 30 to 40 feet in diameter. It had to be flat in order to assure even burning and a hard, smooth surface to facilitate shoveling and raking of the charcoal. A master collier, working with one or two helpers, might have eight or nine pits "coaling" at one time. These would be spread over many acres of wood lot. Any type of wood/tree could be used to make charcoal, but it had to be "solid." It was generally thought that the harder the wood, for example oak, the better the charcoal. An average hearth would hold 30 cords or so of partly seasoned wood. This wood would have been cut during the winter months previous to being "coaled" in the early spring, but clear cutting was a year-round event in order to provide sufficient wood for the charring season. The practice was to clear cut, using everything but deadwood. As many as 10 to 12 colliers would be needed to keep a single furnace in blast. An average furnace might consume 600 to 800 bushels of charcoal every 24 hours. This required about 30 to 40 cords of wood (one hearth's worth) from trees 25 to 30 years old.

Some furnaces consumed the yield of an acre of woodland each day. Three cords of wood made enough charcoal to fire a furnace for about two hours and produce one cubic foot of iron. Therefore, it took about 8 cords of wood to produce one ton of pig iron. Assuming that the Shenandoah Furnace could be considered an average furnace, it probably was in operation from May 1 to September 1– 123 days a year. Based on nearly continuous operation, in 2952 hours it would have required 4,428 cords of wood, the approximate yield of 150 acres of woodland. In full operation for twenty years, such a furnace would be the cause for the loss of 3000 acres of Virginia, now West Virginia, forests. Clearly, it is no wonder that Mr. Semple bought 10,000 acres in support of his Keep Tryst operation. It was assumed that after some 30 years of regrowth, the tracts could be "coaled" again.

Eventually the iron works fell victim to the Civil War and was destroyed beyond reclamation. It is not certain whether this was one of the furnaces destroyed by General David Hunter and his Union troops as they swept through the Shenandoah Valley in 1864, but it is clear the site

experienced sorties from both side marching through Shannondale. The operation may have already been near to exhausting the local ore supply although some specimens are still to be found on the ridge next to the river. The environmental impact of fueling iron extraction in Jefferson County was considerable. The forests disappeared rapidly. The work of colliers was seen as a benefit by early farmers who preferred to work land that had already been cleared.

By about the year 1880, the iron "industry" in Jefferson County had virtually collapsed. The Keep Tryst, Shenandoah, and "Vestal's" furnaces as well as others in the Potomac valley had either been destroyed or abandoned. Reclaiming iron and manganese was no longer economically viable. A few furnaces became lime kilns in which limestone from adjacent limestone quarries was calcined to make lime for agricultural or cement plant purposes. However, most lime kiln complexes were built specifically for making lime, for example, the Shepherdstown Natural Cement Plant on the east bank of the Potomac River below Shepherdstown. Thus the story ends with just some stone edifices and some street and stream names remaining as reminders of an era that was most important in the builiding of settlements that became Charles Town and Harpers Ferry and the development of a viable agrarian way of life.

Illustration References

Figure 1 – Cross-section drawn from information provided by Scott Southworth, U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, VA, 1999. Map segment taken from "Harpers Ferry: Iron Crossroads 1740-1861," a map prepared for the author by the GIS Office, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 2000.
Figure 2 – Photograph by the author, 2001.
Figure 3 – Photograph by the author, 2001.
Figure 4 – Drawing by Edwin Tunis, author and illustrator of books on Colonial America.

Additional Reading

Bruce, Kathleen. *Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era*. Doctoral Dissertation Radcliffe College, 1924; The Century Co., N.Y., 1930; reprinted, 1958.
Chard, Jack. *Making Iron and Steel*. Ringwood, N.J. North Jersey Highlands Historical Society, 1995.
Hahn, Thomas F. & Emory L.Kemp. *Cement Mills Along the Potomac River*. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Institute for the History of Technology & Industrial Archaeology, 1994 (Furnaces not used for iron.)
Kemper, Jackson III. *American Charcoal Making*. Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site. Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1941.

Smith, Merritt Roe. *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977.

Final notes:

The Shannondale Club Alumni has a web site that includes a history of the Iron Furnace at Shannondale, a.k.a. Shenandoah Furnace: www.shannondaleclubalumni.org

The maps cited in the article may be observed in the Jefferson County Museum, Charles Town, WV.

The author has prepared an exhibit on iron in the Jefferson County Museum that includes drawings, photographs, rock specimens, and written notes.

Notes and Sources

Charles Town Academy
1852, 1853
Class Rosters

1939.00028-Powers Collection
Clarke County Historical Association

This hard back, school workbook was given to the Association by the family of Philip H. Powers, who was a staff officer for J.E.B. Stuart and later a teacher in the Clarke County schools. This book has been used afterwards as a farm account book for Mr. Powers and members of his family and as scratch paper for penmanship. Some of the names are illegible to the editor, or their meaning is unclear. There seem to be lists for two different schools, one possibly Wickliffe Academy in Clarke County, the other the Charles Town Academy. The listing below is of the Jefferson County school.

Rules and Regulations
(for violations of which demerits...)

School will be opened at 8 o'clock A.M. and each pupil required to be at his post at that time, for violation of which without excuse 1 to 3 demerits according to time of arrival. A recess will be given at 10 1/2 o'clock A.M. during which time no pupil will be permitted to leave the Academy grounds without permission. The morning session will close at or about 1 o'clock, at which time the pupils will be allowed to go quietly to their dinners to return at 2 o'clock for the afternoon session, which will then commence and continue unto the pupils have finished their duties. The pupils on entering the school-room will take their respective seats in an orderly manner, and during the day no intercourse, other than that relating strictly to their studies, will be allowed. No pupil will leave his seat without permission. Defacing desks, walls, or books or in any manner molesting each other, is strictly prohibited, and punished by demerits and if necessary, other and several means. Due deference and respect is demanded for the Principal at all times. The use of tobacco, the use of profane language, and all disorderly conduct strictly prohibited.

September 1852
Charlestown, Jefferson Co.

NAME – AGE – DATE ENTERED – RESIDENCE – PARENT/GUARDIAN – STUDIES

ALEXANDER, CARY G. - 16 - 1 Sep 1852 - County, 3 miles - Dr. Wm.F. ALEXANDER - Latin, French, Math

AISQUITH, CHARLES - 10 - 1 Sep 1852 - Town - Thos. RUTHERFORD - English

BAYLOR, RICHARD C. - No Age - 1 Apr 1853 - Town - Robert BAYLOR - Geography, English Grammar, Arithmetic, History

BLACKBURN, JOHN S. - 14 - 1 Sep 1852 - Town - Dr. R.S. BLACKBURN - Latin, French, Spanish, Math

BROTHERTON, ROBERT - No age - 1 Sep 1852 - Country, 1.5 m - Robert BROTHERTON (Himself) - English

BURNETT, THOS. A. - 13 - 1 Sep 1852 - Town - Mrs. Jane H. BURNETT - Latin, French, Math

BURNETT, WM. - 15 - 1 Sep 1852 - Town - Mrs. Jane H. BURNETT - Latin, English, Math

CONKLYN, Unnamed - no age - 10 Jan 1853 - Mr. CONKLYN

CONKLYN, CHARLES T. - 15 - 10 Jan 1853 - Country - Mr. CONKLYN - English Grammar & Composition, History, Arithmetic

COOKE, BUSHROD - 16 - 1 Sep 1852 - Country, 1 mile - Edward E. COOKE - Latin, French, Math

CORDELL, EARNEST - No age - 1 Jun 1853 - Town - Dr. CORDELL - Geography, Grammar, History, Arithmetic

CORDELL, EUGENE - No age - 1 June 1853 - Town - DR. CORDELL - Geography, Grammar, History, Arithmetic

COWLEY, SAMUEL - 10 - 1 Sep 1852 - Town - John T. COWLEY - Elementary English

CRAIGHILL, JAMES B. - 14 - 1 Sep 1852 - Country - Nathaniel CRAIGHILL - Latin, French, Math

CRANE, JOSEPH- No age - 1 Sep 1852 - Town - John CRANE - English

CHEW, JOHN A. - 14 - 1 Sep 1852- Country - Roger CHEW - Latin, French, Math

DOUGLASS, J. HOGAN? - 12 - 1 Sep 1852 - Country, 1/4 m - Mrs. Margaret DOUGLASS - Latin, French, Math

EICHELBERGER, WEBSTER - 17 - 1 Sep 1852 - Country - Martin EICHELBERGER - Latin, Greek, Math

FOREMAN, WILLIAM - 15 - 1 Sep 1852 - Country - Jacob FOREMAN - English

GALLAHER, CHARLES H. - 13 - Town - Nelson GALLAHER - Latin, Math, English

HOOF, ALBERT - No age - 1 Apr 1853 - Country - Mrs. HOOF - Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Composition
HOWELL, DAVID - 14 - 1 Sep 1852 - Town - David HOWELL - Latin, Math
HOWELL, J.M. - 11 - 1 Sep 1852 - Town - David HOWELL - English
HUNTER, ANDREW - 14 - 1 Sep 1852 - Town - Andrew HUNTER - Latin, Greek, French, Math
HURST, JOHN - No age - 15 Sep 1852 - Town - Cpt. James HURST - English, Latin
ISLER, CHARLES H. - 13- 10 Jan 1853 - Country - No name or study
LACKLAND, E. MORTON/Martin? - 11 - 1 Sep 1852 - Country - Samuel LACKLAND - English
LOCK, WILLIAM M. - 15 - 1 Sep 1852 - Country, 2m - John M. LOCKE - Latin
MC CLOUGHTRY, THOMAS - No age - 1 Mar 1853 - Mrs. McCLOUGHTRY - French, Math, Natural Physics
MANNING, CHARLES - 10 - 1 Sep 1852 - Country, 1m - Cpt. Thomas J. MANNING - English
MOORE, CLEON - 12- 10 Jan 1853 - Town - Thomas. A. MOORE - Latin, Geography, English Grammar, History, Arithmetic
REDMAN, THOS. S. - 7- 1 Sep 1852 - Town - John REDMAN - English
STARRY, JUSTIN S. - 15 - Town - 1 Sep 1852 - No name mentioned - English
WEBB, BAINBRIDGE - No age - 1 Jun 1853 - Town - Mrs. Ann WEBB - Geography, English Grammar, French
WEBB, EDW'D DOUGLASS - 11 - 1 Sep 1852 - Town, Mr. WEBB - English
ZIMMERMAN, JACOB N. - 16 - 10 Jan 1853 - Town, Mr. ZIMMERMAN

Names Listed on Register Without Full Information

WHITE, B. - Feb 1853
WILLIS, N. - Sep 1852
WILSON, W. - Sep 1852

Elementary Geography	**Reading & Spelling**
ANDERSON, W.	ANDERSON, W
BILMIRE, E.	BILMIRE, E.
HARRIS, G.	HARRIS, G.
HARRIS, S.	HARRIS, S.
KIMBAL, T.	KIMBALL, T.
LEAVALL, F.	LEAVALL, F.
McINTYRE, H.	McINTYRE, H.
NORRIS, W.	NORRIS, W.

Elementary Geography

POWERS, A
POWERS, M.
WARE, J.
HARRIS, J.
POWERS, J.
SHEPHERD, A.

Senior Class

BUTCHER, H.
CHAMBERLAYNE, E.
CASTLEMAN, F.
CASTLEMAN, J.
SHEPHERD, S.
NORRIS, W.
LEAVALL, W.
WARE, J.
KNELLER, T.
HURELSBERRY?, J.

Latin

SHEPHERD, D.
SHEPHERD, S.
NORRIS, W.
WARE, S. 2nd
CHAMBERLAYNE, E.
BUTCHER, H.
LEAVALL, W. 3rd
CASTLEMAN, J.
CASTLEMAN, F.
LEAVALL, F.
McINTYRE, W.
KNELLER, T.
POWERS, A.
POWERS, M.
WARE, J.

Reading & Spelling

POWERS, A.
POWERS, M.
WARE, J.
POWERS, J.
HARRIS, J.
SHEPHERD, A.
CASTLEMAN, J.
CATTLEMAN., F.
BUTCHER, F.
LEAVALL, W.
HUNTSBERRY, J.
NORRIS, W.
RODERICK, J.
SHEPHERD, S.
KNELLER, T.

FULL NAME LIST (Incompl.)

CHAMBERLAYNE, Charles
CHAMBERLAYNE, Eugene
(or Charles Eugene)
CASTLEMAN, John S.
HARRIS, Geo. Wm.
HARRIS, Samuel N.
KIMBALL, Theodore H.
LEAVALL, William T.
McINTYRE, William C.
McINTYRE, Harriet E.
POWERS, Alice B.
POWERS, Billie M.
POWERS, Jacqueline S.
NORRIS, William O.
NORRIS, Wormley
WARE, Sigismund S.
WARE, Josiah William

Contributed by Mary Thomason-Morris

Aspen Hill

By Carmen Creamer

On August 4, 2004 the annual Society picnic was hosted most graciously by Mrs. Elizabeth Smith at her home, Aspen Hill, located just north of Ranson on State Route 115. While a brief rainstorm showered down just as the food was being served, Society members scrambled for shelter under the food tent. It's a good thing we all enjoy each other's company! Fortunately for us, the storm ended fairly quickly. After mopping up our chairs, Society members settled back to enjoy the food and fellowship. Mrs. Elizabeth Smith then gave a brief history of the property and construction of the present house to the membership before opening the house for a tour.

A 1-story log structure attached to the two story, L-shaped brick house is believed to be the first house built on the property, possibly sometime in the 1700s. This portion of the house may have been used at a later date as a kitchen. The attached brick house was built in a vernacular Greek Revival style by Captain James W. Hurst around 1830. There is some indication from doorway size and interior elevations that the southwestern portion of the house was built at a different time than the remainder of the house, although the construction of a columned entry porch gives the house a balanced appearance from the exterior. Later changes include a rear frame addition, which serves now as the kitchen for the house; an enclosed porch, which runs along the western end; and a brick two story wing at the "L" of the house, which was constructed to hold two bathrooms. The house stayed in the Hurst family until its sale in 1918.

The Society Board of Directors would like to thank Mrs. Smith for opening her home to us, Magnolia Tree for catering the chicken, barbeque and lemonade, and Boy Scout Troop 42 for helping with parking and Betsy Wells, our Programs Chairman, for arranging the event.