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Magazine of the

Jefferson County Historical Society

Volume XV
December 1949

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Magazine of the

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Volume XV December 1949

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JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Organized May 21, 1947

Headquarters—County Offices Building
Charles Town, West irginia

OFFICERS

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ADDRESSES

(Delivered before the Society since December 1, 1948)

February 18 at Charles Town—Review of Charles Sydnor's Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848, by Dr. Carey V. Stabler.

May 20 at Charles Town—Jefferson County Scenes in Technicolor by Miss Helen Goldsborough.

November 18 at Charles Town—The. C. and O. Canal, by Dr. Henry T. McDonald.

Price of the Magazine—The latest issue, 75 cents a copy; other issues, $1.00 a copy. Copies of the 1937, 1938, 1940 and 1943 issues are no longer available.



ELMWOOD (Northeast View)

ALBUM OF HISTORIC HOMES V

ELMWOOD AND COLD SPRING

Elmwood and Cold Spring, two fine old dwellings two and a half miles south of Shepherdstown along Rattlesnake Run, are truly historic homes. They are on two portions of a large tract of land granted by Lord Fairfax to Edward Lucas II in 1732, on the Elmwood part of which seven generations of Lucases have lived. The two homes have only recently been sold out of the family.

Elmwood was until a year ago the ancestral home of George Lucas and Elizabeth Lucas Sheetz and their mother, Mrs. Rion Lucas. It had come into the possession of Rion Lucas through his mother's Lucas line, going back through Dr. Robert Armistead Lucas to Captain Edward Lucas, who seems to have had undivided ownership of the place after the death of his father in 1809.

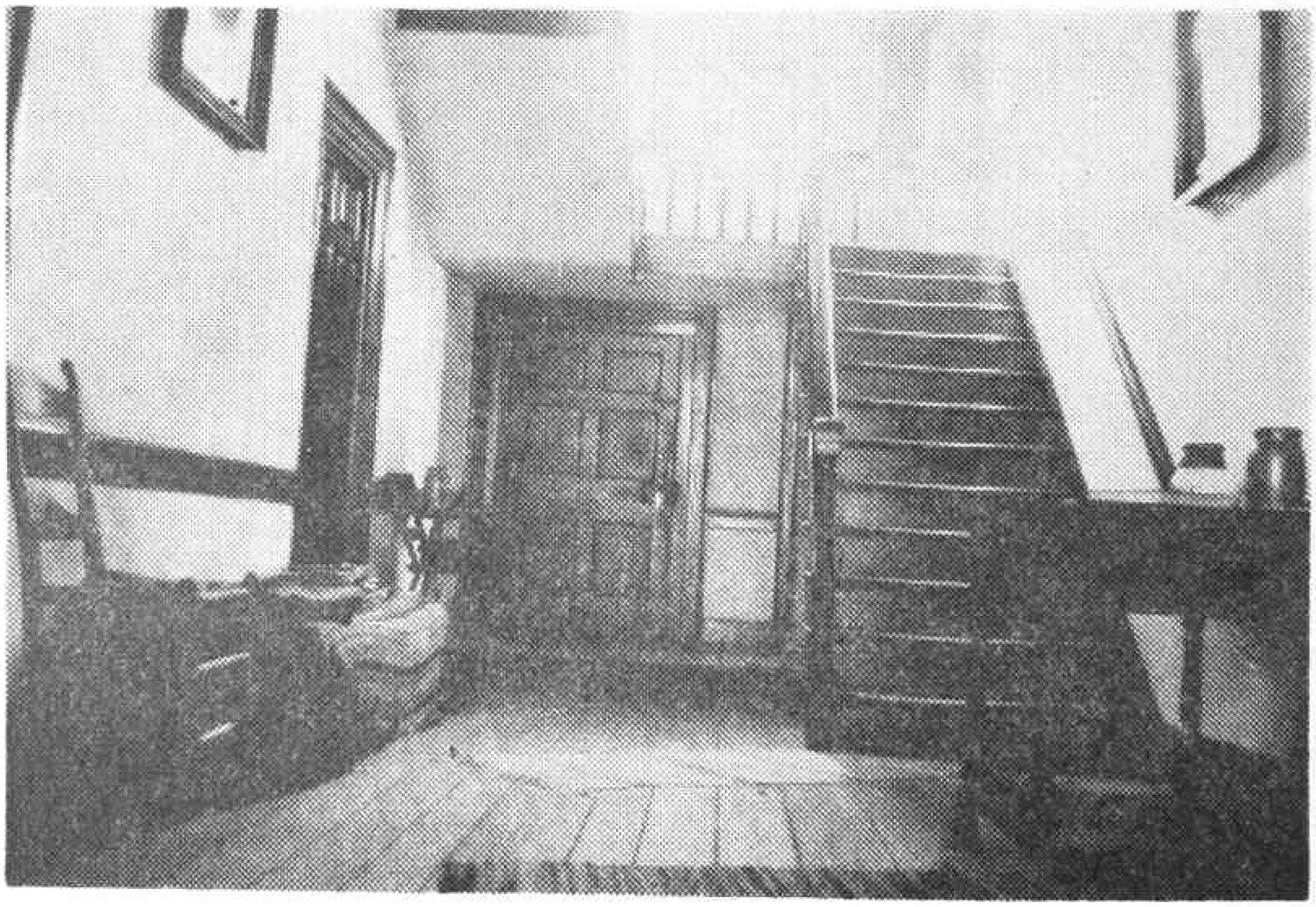
Cold Spring for the past twenty years has been owned and occupied by J. G. Fuss, and before him the last owner to live there was Colonel Robert Lucas, who died in 1880, leaving the place to his nephew, Daniel B. Lucas. Between that date and 1929 Cold Spring was occupied by tenants placed there by successive owners, Judge Daniel B. Lucas, then his wife Lena T. Lucas, and then by his daughter Virginia Lucas, who passed away in 1929, leaving an undivided estate to be sold for the nine descendants of E. W. Bedinger.

Present generation descendants of Edward Lucas II have not been in total agreement as to which home is the older. However, there has been no question about the location of his first home, a log structure within a stockade, at the present site of Elmwood. In the rear of this house is an old burying plot. Unmarked by stones with inscriptions are the graves of Edward Lucas II and his first wife Mary Darke (aunt of General William Darke), Lieutenant Edward Lucas III and his wife Elizabeth Edwards, and Captain Edward Lucas IV. On the same plot

are stones with inscriptions marking the graves of Robert Lucas (1766-1826), Sarah Rion Lucas his wife (1757-1840), Mercie Lucas Wager (1764-), Colonel Edward Lucas (1790-1858), the wife of Edward Lucas IV, Mary Ronemous (1793-1821), and Colonel Robert Lucas, who died in 1880.

Elmwood and Cold Spring were probably built about the same time, in the late 1790's, by Edward Lucas III, a lieutenant in the Revolution, who was born at Elmwood in 1738 and lived there till his death in 1809. Only four of his daughters and two sons reached maturity. For and with the help of these two sons the two fine old houses were erected. Robert, born in 1766, lived at Cold Spring with his wife, Sarah Rion, till his death in 1826. Edward IV (1783-1849), a captain in the War of 1812, who married Mary Ronemous, lived at Elmwood.

Elmwood, built in 1797 as shown on the wall at the left of the front entrance, is a big brick mansion house, as substantial now as when it was first built, with thick well-constructed walls. It is said that some of the bricks, the black ones, were from ship ballast and that the others



HALL AT ELMWOOD

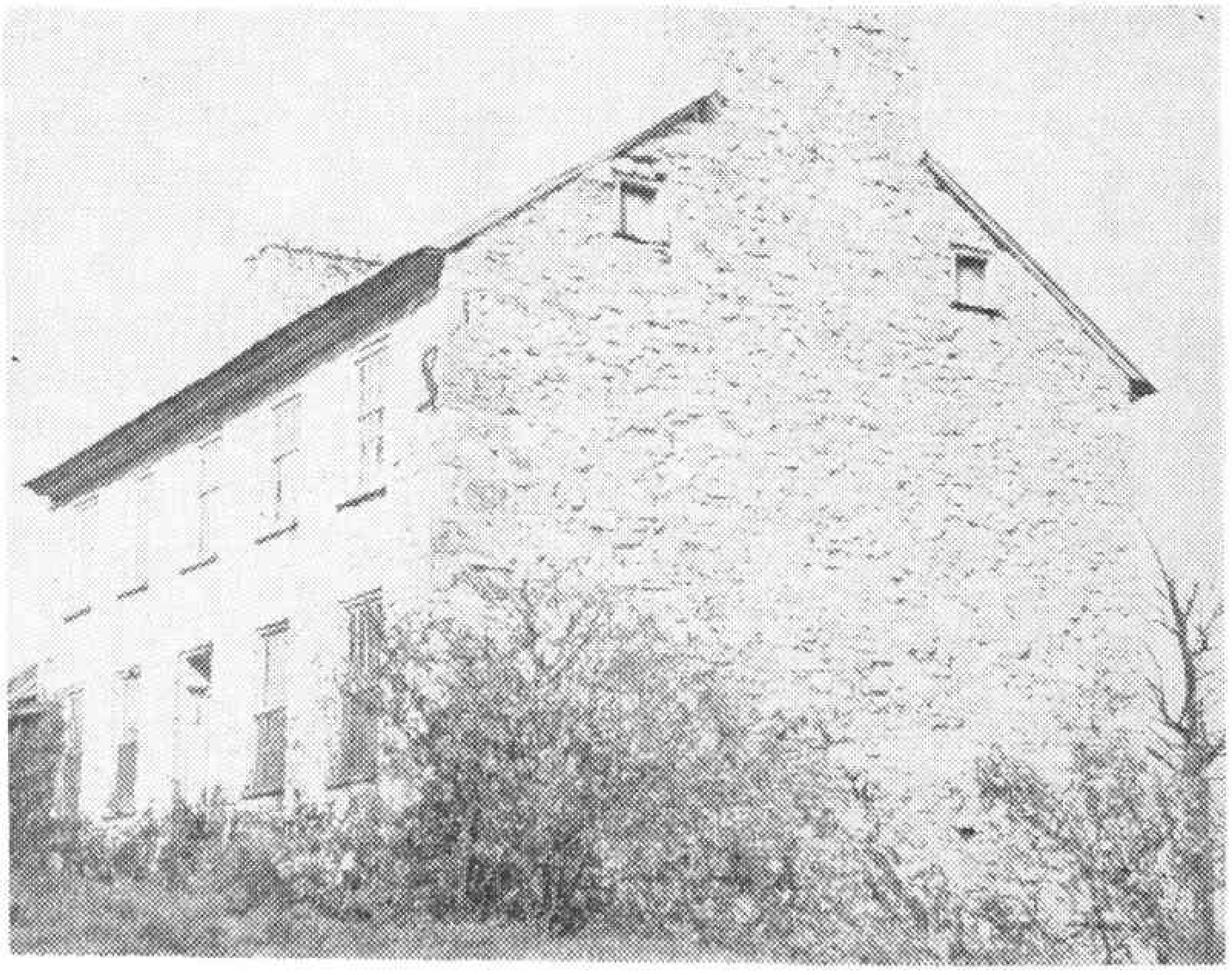
were burnt on the place. The timbers were strong and sturdy, as most of the tract secured from Lord Fairfax was covered with fine old trees—walnut, hickory and oak. The house has eight large rooms, with exceptionally wide halls upstairs and down, with a fireplace and hand carved mantel in each room, the mantel in the living room being like one at Mount Vernon. The windows still have the small panes, twenty-four in each. The basement has a fireplace taking full length cord wood. The doors have handmade locks. The doors in the kitchen and basement have long iron strap hinges; elsewhere the old hinges are in the form of an L or an H. The slave quarters, built of chinked logs, still stand in good livable condition. At present the Elmwood farm, deeded to O. C. Stine by the heirs of Rion Lucas on August 1, 1948, contains 119 acres. It had embraced some 300 acres when set apart earlier from other portions of the Fairfax grant.

Cold Spring is a stone mansion. Its floors are laid on walnut logs and in place of studding split logs were used. Here too there is a fireplace in each room, and one in the basement that is six feet wide. Several of the doors have the original handmade locks, one upstairs with an English stamp on it, and the attic door having a wooden lock. It has wide windows and plenty of them. One of the curiosities of Cold Spring is the porch, built entirely of native stone so that it would never decay or rot down, as a wooden porch was sure to do. Cold Spring now contains 253 acres, the remnant of 500 acres first set apart for it.

It has been stated frequently, but erroneously, that Edward Lucas, the early settler south of Shepherdstown, was the son of the first Lucas to come to America, Robert Lucas, of Deverall, County of Wilts, in England, who arrived April 4, 1679, in the good ship "Elizabeth and Mary." Instead, he was the son of Edward Lucsa I and Bridget Scott, and the grandson of Robert Lucas and Elizabeth, his wife, who followed her husband to America nine months later, when they made themselves a home in Bucks county, Pennsylvania. Robert Lucas became prominent and was in the Pennsylvania Assembly of 1687 and

1688, dying in the latter year. Edward Lucas II then was of the third generation of Lucases who lived in Pennsylvania, where he had married Mary Darke some three years before he settled at Elmwood.

When Edward Lucas bargained with Lord Fairfax for a large tract of land at the headwaters of the little stream now known as Rattlesnake Run, he had an eye for good farming land, for he selected some of the most fertile in all this section. It was covered with magnificent timber; and wild grape vines and berry bushes made a tangled jungle that was not easy to clear. Wild game of every sort was plentiful. Splendid springs of clear water gushed from the crevices of the limestone rock. At the Elmwood mansion house and the Cold Spring house are the finest springs in all this section. The numerous springs and the rich, smooth, rolling land were doubtless features that attracted the first Lucas. He could not have selected a more desirable tract, particularly well adapted to the



COLD SPRING

growing of wheat and corn, a land that is rich and productive to this day—more than two hundred years later.

It is said that the tract was surveyed in part with long grapevines for chains, and it is a family tradition that there was considerable increase in acreage over what was bargained for. One of the original cornerstones may still be seen on the southeast corner of the Elmwood farm, with the date 1732 upon it. About fifty years ago Judge Daniel B. Lucas, desiring to have the stone preserved, had an iron fence built around it.

In a meadow to the east of the Elmwood mansion is a fine spring, which had been from time immemorable an Indian resort. It was a pleasant place, shaded by great oak trees, level and grassy, a favorite spot for the red men. Their arrow-makers left here many arrow-heads and other implements of stone, including a mortar, or hollowed out stone, in which the Indians pounded their corn into meal. It was at this spring, along about 1800, that the very last of the Indians who passed through this section arrived from across Packhorse Ford and camped over night. The Lucases baked bread for them and gave them a sheep, which they killed and cooked over coals from a big wood fire. It is said that they were not as particular as white folks would have been in preparing sheep for food. The following day they started off in a southwest direction, Indian file, on their way to Tennessee where they would not be disturbed by so many white settlers.

In earlier years the Lucases and the Indians were evidently not on such friendly terms, since four of the sons of Edward Lucas, the first of the family to come to Virginia, were killed by Indians and two others badly wounded. Robert was killed near Nashville, Tennessee; Benjamin in eastern Kentucky; David and Isaac in Virginia. Andrew was shot in Tennessee but was still able to make his escape by jumping into a stream of water. Edward was wounded by the Indians near Laurel Hill in what is now West Virginia.

This latter Edward, born at Elmwood in 1738, was a lieutenant in Captain Stephenson's company that set out

from Shepherdstown on the "bee-line" to Boston in July, 1775. Job Lucas, a brother, was a soldier of the Revolution, as was also another brother, Lieutenant William, who was famous as an Indian fighter. William Lucas later established himself farther down Rattlesnake Run, owning Linden Spring, known in recent years as the William J. Knott place, and before that the home of Captain Lee Henry Moler for many years. He was the father of Robert Lucas, who went west and became Governor of Ohio.

The Lucas land grant of 1732 has undergone several subdivisions since the setting apart of Elmwood and Cold Spring in the 1790's, and it would be difficult to follow them all through the will books and deed books of four counties in the two Virginias. However, the Adam Link farm coming down from Robert M. Lucas is a part of the original grant; the Demory place was once part of Cold Spring; and Armistead S. Lucas owns a part which was taken from Elmwood and planted to apples and cherries.

Reference has already been made several times to Rattlesnake Run, at the headspring of which, and along its course for a considerable distance, lay the lands of the pioneer Lucas. The stream was well named, it seems. The meadow land along its course was rich and fertile, but it was marshy. The Lucases decided to have it drained, and Irish laborers were engaged to dig ditches from the headwaters down as far as what has been known as the Cook farm. In digging the ditches, the outlines of which may still be traced, the Irishmen killed scores and scores of rattlers, and so they called the stream Rattlesnake Run. They might be bitten occasionally, but they didn't particularly mind that, for handy to Cold Spring was a still-house where snakebite antidote was to be had for the asking. Summer-red apples distilled into applejack that would counteract any sort of snakebite and brandies from other fruits were great comforters.

LEELAND

The First Leeland

An account of the history of Leeland entails the story of the building of three houses and the acquisition of several plots of land. Unfortunately historical deeds and records do not always bound with accuracy the borders of property over a hundred years old. When a land purchase is described as so many rods, situated between a pear tree in one corner and a large stone in another, one wonders just what land is being referred to. However, another method, perhaps equally inaccurate, of determining facts about the past, is that of word of mouth. The accounts that have been handed down about the early Leeland seem to agree on some salient points.

It is known that the land on which the original house stood was about a twenty-five acre tract, on the west side of the Kearneysville road, next to the cemetery. In 1823 it belonged to Captain Abraham Shepherd, son of the original founder of Shepherdstown. There is reason to believe that Mr. Shepherd acquired the land from the Kerney family.

There is a romantic tale of how this fell into the hands of a Lee and hence became known as Leeland. In the early eighteen twenties, young Edmund Jennings Lee of Alexandria, then the District of Columbia, had graduated from Princeton and was looking for a place to settle in which to practice law. At that time there was an exodus of young men to some of the western borders and Wheeling was chosen by young Lee as a promising place. He also had some land claims to investigate there. Not long before he set out upon his journey, Captain Abraham Shepherd had been in Alexandria for a church convention. Mr. Shepherd met the Lees and invited young Edmund to stop and visit him, on his way west, at the Lower Farm near Shepherdstown. While staying with the Shepherds Edmund met Eliza, the charming daughter of Abraham, and in 1823 they were married. They went to Wheeling and their first daughter Ellen, who later married John

Simms Powell, was born there. They also had a son Charles, born 1826.

After living in Wheeling for a few years they returned to Shepherdstown where Edmund was encouraged to establish a law practice. It was soon after this that the first Leeland was built by Mr. Lee.

Edmund Lee and Eliza lived in this house and had five children. Ellen and Charles were the only two who survived early childhood. When the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was being built some of the workmen contracted cholera. This started an epidemic in Shepherdstown. Eliza Lee was one of the victims and she died in August 1833. The same year the three youngest children died at the ages of five, three and two months..

Edmund Lee continued to live at Leeland with little Ellen and Charles. Rumor has it that one day, when he was looking across the land through his spy glass, he saw the beautiful Henrietta Bedinger, who lived at Bedford almost directly east of Leeland. He and Henrietta were married in 1835.



LEELAND

Five children were born to Edmund and Henrietta at Leeland: Edwin Gray, who became a general in the Confederate Army, and married Susan Pendleton and died without children; Ida, who married Colonel Rust and had eleven children; Henrietta (Netta), who married Dr. Charles Goldsborough and had seven children; Edmund, who married Rebecca Lawrence Rust and had three children, and later married Bessie Neilson; and Henry, who married Lucy Marshall and had seven children.

Unfortunately there are no photographs or drawings of the original Leeland. Henrietta Lee (Netta) described it as a mansion with large pillars and, as was the custom in those days, the kitchen was a building away from the house. It had a large entrance hall, a first floor bedroom and other first floor rooms. There was a stairway leading to a second floor drawing room. It was said to have been a very beautiful dwellnig. It was made of frame. It was approached from the Kearneysville road through an avenue of trees. Those nearest the house were lilacs. One row of these still blooms every spring. There was a circle in front of the house for carriages.

Another road, the present Leeland lane led to Mr. Lee's law office. This was an entirely separate building from the main dwelling. It was of brick and was a two-story, four-room building.

Netta loved to tell her grandchildren of her happy childhood at Leeland. There were many servants. Much of Netta's playtime was spent in the companionship of a little colored girl, "who belonged to Pa. We never called them slaves."

One day when Netta was twelve years old she and her friend Pink Boteler went for a drive in the carriage with her father. They were driving towards Sharpsburg when a man came along who wanted to see Mr. Lee on law business. Netta's father suggested that the children walk back to Shepherdstown and he drove on to Sharpsburg with the man. Soon after he left, they met another man who was frantically looking for Mr. Lee. He said to the little girls, "If you live in Shepherdstown, you had

better hurry home. The whole town is on fire." It was blowing such a gale as the children ran that they opened their coats and Netta said they, "leaned on the wind." As they came to the river hill they saw the smoke and flames and Netta felt sure that it was Leeland. By the time they arrived, there was little left of Netta's beautiful home, for the house was completely destroyed by fire that day, April 12th, 1856.

The following is a copy of the account written in the Shepherdstown Register, dated, April 19th 1856:

ANOTHER FIRE

On Saturday afternoon last, the 12th inst. at one o'clock the citizens of our town were aroused by the alarm of fire, when it was soon discovered that the fine dwelling of Mr. E. I. Lee situated upon a beautiful and elevated site a few hundred yards from the south-west end of this place, was in flames and burning rapidly. Our citizens hastened to the scene of conflagration, but the wind was blowing a perfect hurricane at the time, which urged the progress of the destroying element, consequently nothing could be rescued of any great value with the exception of a desk which contained a quantity of Mr. Lee's valuable papers, everything else, including a quantity of valuable furniture, a large amount of silver-ware, a splendid piano, and clothing of every description were consumed in a few moments with the dwelling. Mr. Lee estimates his loss at $2,000 independent of the $2,000 which his dwelling was insured for in the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. The fire originated from a defect in a chimney.

In consequence of the wind blowing a high gale in a direct course over our town at the time, and the embers flying a great distance, upon several occasions stables, dwellings etc. had taken fire, but the vigilant exertions of our firemen caused the flames to be subdued before they had made much progress. Nothing but the energy and the timely efforts of the firemen saved our town from ruin; they worked with their accustomed zeal and energy for which they deserve the highest meed of praise.

We are requested by Mr. Lee to present his sincere and grateful thanks to those who so kindly and energetically assisted at the burning of his house, and who aided in rescuing and preserving his papers. Though little else was saved, yet all the exertion that men could make, was made, and for it he is truly grateful."

(The Shepherdstown firemen are still living up to this fine tradition!)

It is interesting to note the change in the value of money. The loss of the house that was described as one of the most beautiful in this section seems to have been appraised at a mere $4,000!

After Leeland was burned Mr. Lee moved with his family to Bedford, his wife's old home, which he had bought from his brother-in-law, Henry Bedinger. They lived there until July 19, 1864 when that home was burned during the Civil War.

After the burning of Bedford the Lees went to Clarke County to stay with relatives. Later they returned to Shepherdstown and lived for a while in the Episcopal Rectory. When the war was over the Lees had no home in Shepherdstown. There were the ruins of the house at Leeland and the more recent embers of Bedford. The only building left standing was the law office of Edmund Lee at Leeland.

A Second Leeland is Built

Bricks were gathered and scraped from the foundations of both Bedford and Leeland, and four more rooms and an outside kitchen were added to the law office building. Some of the bricks were also obtained from an old meat house. The salt in the bricks from the curing of the meat is supposed to account for the fact that even to this day the walls in the dining room at Leeland always retain moisture.

Mr. Lee and his family again took up residence on Leeland hill. By this time most of the children were married and away from home. Young Harry was at home and Edmund had returned from the war and came to

Leeland to live. The elder Edmund Lee died at Leeland in 1877.

Young Edmund and Rebecca had three sons, Edmund, Lawrence and Armistead. Rebecca died in 1882 leaving Mr. Lee with the three little boys.

In 1893 Mr. Lee married Bessie Neilson. It has been the tradition that everyone who lives at Leeland builds an addition. After marrying Miss Neilson, Mr. Lee made several "modern" alterations. A bath was installed, one of the first in Shepherdstown. It was the kind with a water tank in the attic and a hand pump in the cellar. One went to the cellar and pumped water from a cistern to the attic tank, which in turn supplied the bath with a very limited amount of water. An inside kitchen was also built, with a bed room above.

Mr. Edmund, as he was affectionately called, died in 1896. His wife Bessie later went to Plainfield, New Jersey to live. From that time until the early nineteen-hundreds Leeland was rented. Mr. Robert Gibson and his wife spent some time there and Mr. Will Hill lived there as caretaker for a while.

Mr. Edmund's son, Edmund, went to China as a missionary in 1902. He later married Lucy Chaplin. Armistead was drowned in 1904. Lawrence, who married Alexandra McDonald, took up the stewardship of Leeland. He and his family spent several summers there.

In 1910 Lee Goldsborough, a son of Netta, rented Leeland and spent two summers there with his family. In 1912 his wife Isabel McCalla died and he brought his two children Lee and Helen to Leeland to live, renting the place from Lawrence Lee. In 1915 he married Charlotte Pendleton and in the same year he bought Leeland.

Since moving to Leeland Lee Goldsborough has made a number of structural changes to the house. In 1930 two rooms and another bath were added. This addition came about rather casually. By that time a new furnace was needed and in order to accomodate the furnace, a larger chimney was necessary. Mr. Goldsborough said

that as long as a new chimney had to be put in, he might as well add the big room he had had in mind for some time. They started to dig the foundation to the south of the house and struck rock. So Mr. Goldsborough told the men to "go west, boys" and hence the beautiful room with a southwestern exposure came into being. A few years after that the front porch was moved to the back of the house and a new and larger front porch was made. There have been other changes as the needs have arisen. The original wing, old Mr. Lee's law office, has been made into an apartment. This was accomplished by the simple addition of plumbing. No change in line was made. Porches, etc. have been added here and there, sometimes with little regard to architectural style but wholly functional, and suited to the needs of the individual members of the family who instigated them.

During the years, while the house was undergoing changes, the acreage of Leeland also changed. In 1889 Mr. Edmund Lee bought from Alexander and Miriam Shepherd, and Fanny Shepherd Allen and Hugh Allen, about fifteen acres, behind the barn, west of town and on the south side of the Martinsburg road. In 1915 Mr. Goldsborough bought from Mr. Allen S. Reynolds eighteen acres across the Martinsburg road, directly opposite the above tract. This land had been planted in apple trees, and Lawrence Lee set out the land behind the barn in apples. The lots adjacent to the town which used to be cow pastures and corn fields have been planted by Mr. Goldsborough in apples and cherries. Now all of Leeland is surrounded by orchards.

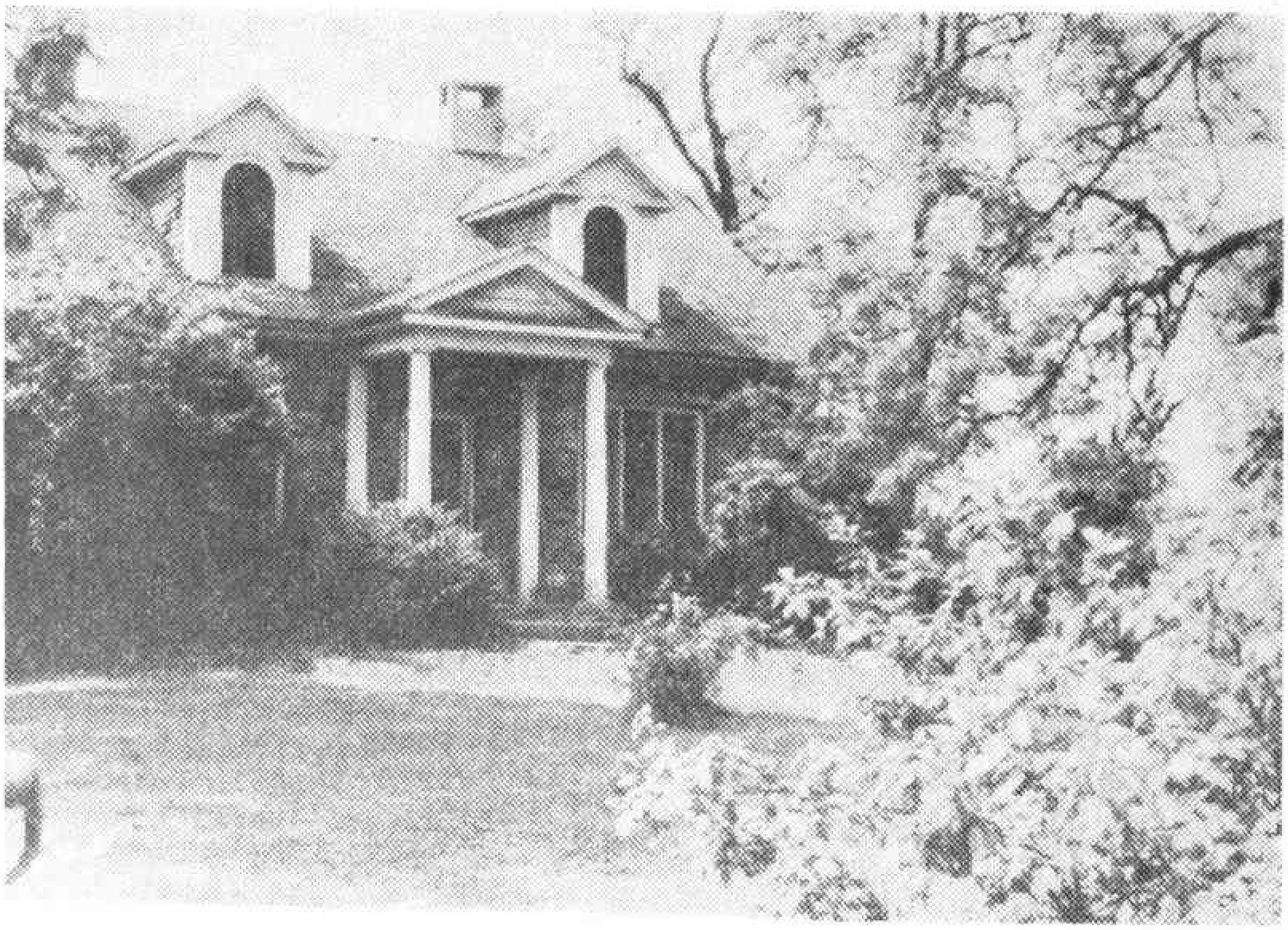
The Third Leeland

In the foregoing account we have gotten a little ahead of our chronological story. While the second Leeland (the old law office and its appendages) was being constructed and lived in, a little Leeland, up the hill and on the site of the original Leeland, was built in 1919 for Netta by her son Lee. This is a stone cottage and it was occupied by Netta and her daughter Henrietta until Net-

ta's death in 1932. Henrietta or Dende, as she was called, lived there until her death in 1944. Since then the cottage has been rented.

This little Leeland has an interesting connecting link to the first home on the same ground. When the men were digging the foundation for the cottage, they came down to the house at Leeland where Netta was staying and asked her if she recognized some candle snuffers and a queer tin box which they had unearthed from the foundation. Netta said, "Why that's my music box. After sixty-five years! At last I have it." And she told this charming tale:

A few months before Leeland was burned, Netta's father returned from a trip with a beautiful little music box which played three tunes, "Home, Sweet Home," "Days of Absence," and another. Netta was enchanted with it and she wanted the music box. Her father put it on the mantel and made a bargain with her. It seems that Netta liked to sleep in the morning and was usually late for family prayers which were held before breakfast.



LITTLE LEELAND

Mr. Lee said that if Netta would be on time for thirty days the music box would be hers. Netta worked hard to earn the little box. She bribed her sister, Ida to awaken her each morning. Their father often played the music box from the mantel in the evenings for the children. A day before the box was to belong to Netta she danced for joy and said, "Just one more day and the box will be mine." Her father reminded her that she still had another day to go, and if she missed even the next morning, all would be lost and she would have to begin again. That last day was the day Leeland burned and Netta was a grandmother before the music box came into her possession. It was a rusted and charred replica of the original box but Netta loved it and kept it on the mantel of the little Leeland, which replaced her childhood home, until the time of her death.

— Helen Goldsborough

RION HALL

The history of Rion Hall is so closely interwoven with the names of Hall and Lucas that this charming old estate can not be depicted without telling something about the interesting personalities who constituted these families and who have contributed to the development of the place over a period of more than a hundred years.

The following quotation expresses to me the historical development of Rion Hall: "Time is a sort of river of passing events, and strong is its current; no sooner is a thing brought to sight than it is swept by and another takes its place, and this too will be swept away." Many history making events have occurred. Numerous improvements have been made over the years; some remain, and others have been swept away. Rion Hall, although showing the effect of age, is in a splendid state of preservation. May its restoration add to community values in Jefferson County!

William Hall, an Englishman, received a land grant in the Valley of Virginia. He willed this land to his son

William Hall II, who married Elizabeth Lucas. Elizabeth's parents were Robert and Sarah Rion Lucas, the daughter of John Rion. From him Sarah Rion and her five sisters inherited the Rion property, which constituted much of the land between Halltown and Harpers Ferry. William Hall II moved to South Carolina and, in turn, deeded his land to his son William III, the latter moving to Ohio and selling all that was left of the Hall acres to Edward and Robert Lucas.

Numerous small tracts of land were added by purchase from time to time. Thus the old estate eventually comprised lands either inherited or purchased from the Halls, Rions, Burnetts and others.

It was one of the sons of Robert and Sarah Rion Lucas, William Lucas, who built Rion Hall in 1836. He was born November 30, 1800, at Cold Spring near Shepherdstown. He practiced law for a time at Shepherdstown, then moved to Charles Town. He was elected to the General Assembly for the 1837-1838 session and in 1839 was chosen a representative in Congress. Two years later he was defeated for Congress, but was again elected for the 1843-1845 term.

The following is an extract from Callahan's History of West Virginia:

> "William Lucas acquired an estate near Hall Town which he named Rion Hall. He took much pleasure in adding to his holdings and at one time owned nearly 2000 acres. His intense love for his home is revealed in the following conversation in Richmond when his name was mentioned for that of Governor: "I am here, gentlemen, with Hunter and Faulkner, at the Constitutional Convention, to do what I can for the old state, but no office for me. I have possessed me of a goodly home on the banks of the Shenandoah in the Valley of Virginia, with the Blue Ridge stretching away to the East and the Alleghany to the West of my estate. In the morning as I stand on my portico I can behold the sun rising through the Gap at Harpers Ferry, where the marriage of the waters of the Shenandoah and Potomac takes place. Thanks, gentlemen, but no office. I wouldn't swap my curtilage and acres for your whole city of Richmond."

After his second term in Congress, William Lucas returned to the farm and to the home he loved so well. He became recognized as an ardent lover of trees and plants. His granddaughter, Virginia Lucas, wrote: "The

enthusiastic owner planted trees, roses, trees and more trees. It was reputed that he had 500 varieties of plants, an arboretum of which the country-side felt proud. Time has swept away many of these." But many have survived and are enjoyed by visitors to Rion Hall.

William Lucas was over sixty when the war broke out. He lived through the unfortunate experience of losing most of his property and seeing the devastation of his country. However, Rion Hall was saved. He spent his declining days in seclusion and died at Rion Hall, August 28, 1877.

Rion Hall was inherited by his son, Daniel Bedinger Lucas, a distinguished son of a distinguished father. He was poet, lawyer and jurist. His was a life of intense human experience, both good and bad, experiences which seemed to enrich rather than embitter. He had a fall in infancy that resulted in a spinal trouble which over shadowed his life. He witnessed much sorrow and had many sad experiences, among the saddest of which was the trial and death of John Yates Beall, a very dear friend. He endured the ravages of war, with a stout heart.

His war experiences inspired the writing of "The Land Where We Were Dreaming," which brought him recognition as a poet and the designation as "Poet of the Shenandoah." This poem has been described as "a war poem that probably expresses better than any other poem has expressed the beauty and heroism and tragedy of the Southern Cause."

Daniel Bedinger Lucas died at Rion Hall in 1909.

Virginia Lucas, his daughter, was willed a life interest in his estate, which included Rion Hall and Cold Spring. She also inherited her father's talent for writing, publishing the following: "The Captain," a story; "Wild Flower," "Dream Circles," and "June" in verse; and a yearbook of sonnets.

The collection of poems in "June" reveals the author as an idealist living in a dream-land. Her tender passion, expressed in verse, for flowers, birds, squirrels, trees, stars, seasons of the year and her surroundings in general, is an

outpouring of a loving heart. She closed her book of poems "June" with a poem entitled "Rion Hall in Love Time." She was intensely devoted to Rion Hall as were her father and grandfather.

Virginia Lucas died at Rion Hall in 1929 and title passed to the descendants of E. W. Bedinger living at the time of the distribution of the property provided for in the will of Daniel Bedinger Lucas. There were five daughters, two granddaughters and two grandsons. Thus ended a golden era at Rion Hall.

It must be remembered that the stories of Rion Hall may be, in part, facts and, in part, legend. Be that as it may, these narratives make interesting reading.

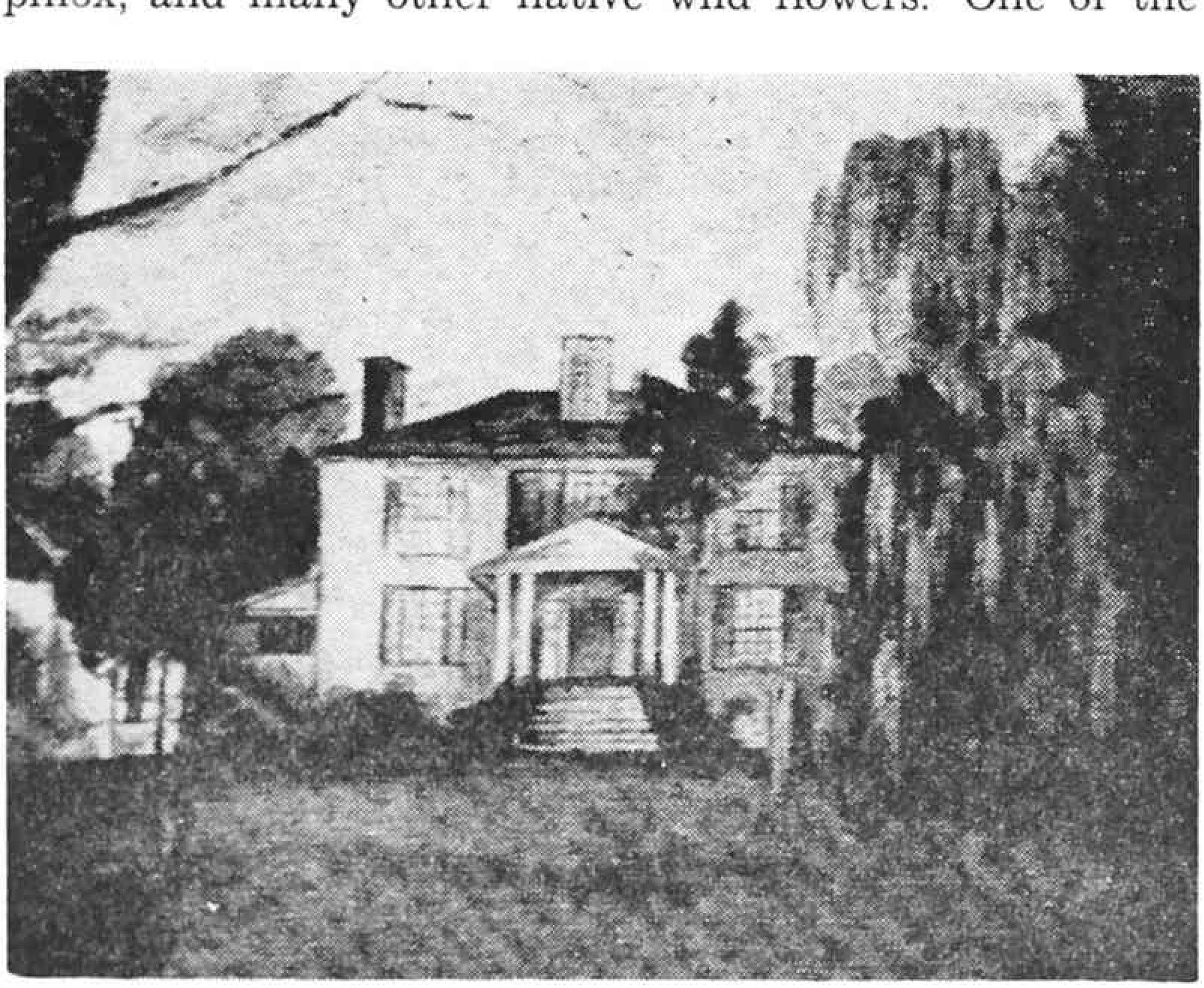
Virginia Lucas in writing about Rion Hall said: "The house was used as headquarters by General Sheridan. An old neighbor, a Mrs. Beck (the Becks were Union and German people, but warm friends and tenants) carried under her hoop skirt the family portraits to her house at the gates, and slept all through the war with them under her featherbed." She described the smashing of mirrors, invasion of sick rooms, searching of wardrobes and bureaus (for concealed soldiery), stealing of watches, etc. "In our parlor the saber cuts on door and mantel still show Sheridan's consulting room. Desecration of the graveyard was prevented by my grandfather's going out and asking if a Colonel Burnett was not one of their officers. 'Well,' he said, when they replied in the affirmative, 'you're violating the graves then of your ancestors, for these Burnetts are the ancestors of the Burnetts of Ohio, whence you have come.' They desisted. Of course, it was hidden treasure for which they were searching, and, alas, there was none." The saber cuts on both mantels of the double parlors remain.

It may interest the reader to know that, recently, Carlina Sheridan Glasgow, granddaughter of General Sheridan, visited Rion Hall.

This old mansion was built on a hill, with a curtilage of about twelve acres, located in the midst of a three-hundred-acre farm, from which one may view the

ever-changing panorama of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It consists of a main house and a small house, both of brick construction on stone foundation, and connected by a double gallery. A third story was added later to the main house, but the little house remained as originally constructed. The main house has a center hall running all the way through with hidden stairway. Two rooms on each side of hall, and fireplaces in all rooms. The smaller house served as kitchen and servant quarters.

Giant hemlock and pine, linden and larch, fir and walnut, towering a hundred feet or more, age old, dot the front yard. A spreading yew, a century old, nestles in the curve of the roadway leading to the house. Three very large magnolia trees, an unusual boxwood tree of great height, a boxwood hedge and flowering shrubs add beauty to the back yard. Acres of ground are covered with thick myrtle and ivy through which spring wild flowers such as dutchman's breeches, anemones, spring beauty, wild phlox, and many other native wild flowers. One of the



RION HALL

most distinguishing of these lovely flowers is the Virginia Blue Bell, which covers a considerable area around the old graveyard back of the house and has spread in all directions. Truly a sight to see in May-time.

There is nothing more unfortunate for a farm than the loss of its owner. For many years after the death of Virginia Lucas Rion Hall suffered. The grounds became a jungle; flowers, ferns, plants, shrubs and boxwood were carried away (so I have been told). The old mansion was vacant, neglected and in need of much repair.

However, a new era has dawned for Rion Hall, and the same love for trees, flowers and all the beauties of nature that surround it has found its way into the hearts of its new possessors.

In 1938 title passed to Charles L. Crane. There was much to be done to make the house habitable. The jungle was to be cleared, roads to be built and many necessary repairs to be made. The Cranes, truly, were the pioneers in the process of restoration.

In 1944 Bonney Youngblood and George W. Bachman became joint owners of Rion Hall. These two scientists devoted their efforts to bringing the land back into cultivation.

In 1946 George W. Bachman sold his one-half interest to Bonney and Lotus Youngblood, who now live at Rion Hall and operate the farm.

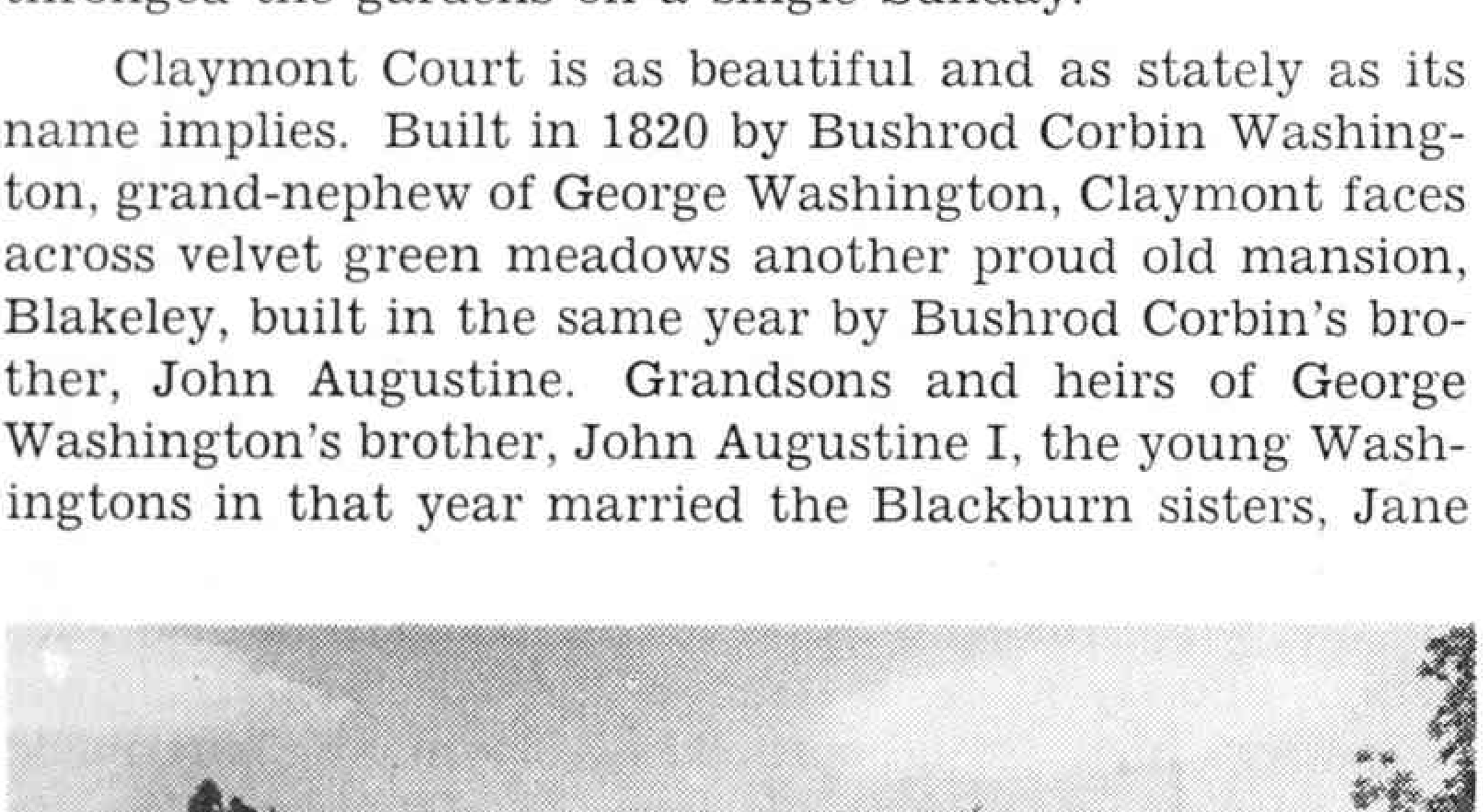
There is an inexplainable charm about Rion Hall, even in its run down condition. What must it have been in its heyday! One is impressed with the "survival of the fittest" among the trees, shrubs and all remaining plant life. Nature has been kind in protecting so many things that were planted by loving hands and given tender care in the beginning. The result, today, is the survival of many, many trees, shrubs, and plants. When I walk among the lovely flowers, or stroll beneath the giant trees, I feel grateful to those of the past for having made it possible for us to enjoy such grandeur.

— Lotus Youngblood

CLAYMONT COURT

On March 10, 1943, Mr. R. J. Funkhouser, West Virginia industrialist and philanthropist, purchased imposing Claymont Court, near Charles Town, for use as his private residence. However, in accord with his sincere interest in the historical wealth of Jefferson County, Mr. Funkhouser has restored the tradition of true hospitality at Claymont Court, along with the restoration of the splendid old Federal mansion itself. Visitors are welcome to walk through the spacious rooms as well as the expansive lawns and gardens, and are availing themselves of the opportunity in numbers increasing each year. During the 1949 tulip season, 4000 tourists and county residents thronged the gardens on a single Sunday.

Claymont Court is as beautiful and as stately as its name implies. Built in 1820 by Bushrod Corbin Washington, grand-nephew of George Washington, Claymont faces across velvet green meadows another proud old mansion, Blakeley, built in the same year by Bushrod Corbin's brother, John Augustine. Grandsons and heirs of George Washington's brother, John Augustine I, the young Washingtons in that year married the Blackburn sisters, Jane



CLAYMONT COURT

Charlotte and Anna Maria Thomasina, and came to establish their gracious homes in Jefferson County.

Bushrod Corbin Washington, in tradition with his heritage, was already a man of consequence in civic affairs. At hospitable Claymont Court, he received guests of international importance, and conducted his affairs as gentleman farmer, considerable land owner, community leader, justice of the peace and representative in the Virginia House of Delegates and the General Assembly.

During his first week of service in the General Assembly at Richmond, Mr. Washington received news of the complete destruction of Claymont Court in a terrific fire originating in the basement of the kitchen building. To quote from the letter of the Honorable Mr. Bedinger, who had been defeated by Bushrod Corbin Washington in the General Assembly election, "Thus has been destroyed the Mansion house which but a few years since cost more than thirty thousand dollars. And I deplore his weakness and folly in erecting such an expensive building."

Mr. Washington promptly rebuilt his home, and later patiently rebuilt after a second disastrous fire, at a probable increase of building costs. In September of 1833, he was faced with another heartbreaking readjustment in his life, when his wife Anna Maria Thomasina died suddenly. Shortly after, a strange and spectacular shower of meteors in the neighborhood of Claymont Court made that autumn a memorable one in Jefferson County. Later, Mr. Washington remarried, his second wife appearing in the old records as Maria P. Harrison.

On February 1, 1849, Bushrod Corbin Washington made his will, leaving Claymont Court and it fertile acres to his son, Thomas B. Washington. His will was proved in the Jefferson County Court August 18, 1851.

Of Mr. Thomas B. Washington, the writer knows very little except that he appears in the records of Jefferson County occasionally in relation to the maintenance of his residence at Claymont Court and certain civic affairs,

and that he created no little confusion for future historians by naming his eldest son Bushrod Corbin. Records and stories concerning this second Bushrod Corbin Washington are frequently confused with those pertaining to his grandfather, Bushrod Corbin the first, builder of Claymont Court.

Mr. Thomas B. Washington died August 3, 1854, and was buried in Charles Town, in the Episcopal graveyard. Deed Book 5, page 571, in the Jefferson County Court House in Charles Town, holds an interesting paper. Bushrod Corbin Washington II, in his own right and as Special Commissioner appointed by the Circuit Court in a suit in which the same Bushrod Corbin Washington, guardian of the infant children of Thomas B. Washington, appeared as plaintiff and the said infant children as defendants, was ordered by the Court to sell at public auction in the interest of said infant children the mansion house situated upon Claymont estate, including 43 acres. On March 24, 1871, he contracted to sell to Clement March, for the sum of $10,000.

Several years following the sale of Claymont, the second Bushrod Corbin moved west with his second wife, Emma E. Willis, whom he had married in 1878. His first wife was Catherine T. Blackburn. By his first wife he had had nine children, who became subject to tuberculosis, and it was in the interest of the health of these children that the family moved west.

The family settled in Washington, at the present site of Grand Coulee Dam, on the Colorado River. On the following Fourth of July a terrible tragedy befell the Washingtons. Picknicking on the banks of the Colorado River, one of the sons of Bushrod Corbin Washington by his second wife, Emma Willis, slipped and fell into the turbulent current. His brother and a sister jumped to his rescue, and all three were drowned. The last of Emma Willis's children, a twelve year old boy, was restrained by his older half-sister from following them into the whirling water, and the two returned to the family home with the horrible news.

The second Bushrod Corbin died in Washington, and was interred at Elmira, where his wife is also buried.

Colonel March, who had purchased Claymont Court from the second Bushrod Corbin, added over a hundred acres to his original purchase, but apparently fell into some difficulty in regard to its maintenance. Deed Book P, page 98, Jefferson County, records a forced sale following a case of chancery of Kennedy vs. March, in which Claymont Court, including the additional tracts, was sold by William H. Travers, Special Commissioner, to Jane M. Van de Walker, June 2nd, 1886. On August 4th of the same year, she sold the property to Charles Dawson and Ida W., his wife.

On June 24, 1899, Claymont Court passed into the hands of one of its most interesting owners, when the Dawsons sold the mansion, 149 acres, 2 roods and 20 perches to the author, Frank R. Stockton, for a consideration of $30,000. (D. B. 87, p. 239)

This popular author, then in the heyday of fame and fortune, moved to Jefferson County from New Jersey. His deed from Pauline Dawson requests the guarantee of "quiet possession" of Claymont Court, "free from all encumbrances," and apparently he found in Claymont Court's pastoral beauty and in the dignity of the old mansion the peace and inspiration he was seeking. He remained there until his death April 2nd, 1902, and during his later years composed at Claymont several of his best-known works, including "Kate Bonnet."

After his death, Claymont Court was sold to William H. Murphy, who paid $52,500 for the estate including 149 acres. It was the Murphy family, according to the remembrance of their friends in Jefferson County, who established Claymont's gardens in the interest and affection of garden lovers. In later years, the house itself, however, fell into disrepair, and at the time it was sold by the Murphy heirs to Mr. R. J. Funkhouser in 1943, (D. B. 158, p. 256, Jefferson County,) it was obviously in need of a restoring hand.

Today, Mr. Funkhouser maintains the old mansion in its lifelong tradition of hospitality and excellent living. It is furnished as a home rather than as a museum, with furnishings chosen for their suitability for family living. The twin drawing-rooms, panelled hall and dining room, and the fine old ballroom, are filled once more with the sound of copious entertaining, as they were in the days of the Bushrod Corbin Washingtons, and their successors throughout the years. Claymont Court, in Jefferson County, West Virginia, is a treasure the whole Valley can point to with pride.

Charlotte Judd Fairbairn

From original papers owned by F. B. Voegele, Pontiac, Michigan

The United States

To Abraham Morgan, Dr.

For Fuel Furnished for the Use of Major General Pinkney

Shepherdstown

1800

Jany 10th	To	1	Cord	Hickory wood	$2 - 50
Jany 10th	To	1	do	oak wood	2 -
Jany 17th	To	1	do	Hickory wood	2 - 50
Jany 24th	To	2	do	do	5 -
Jany 27th	To	2	do	do	5 -
Jany 28th	To	2	do	do	5 -
Feby 5th	To	1	do	do	2 - 50
Feby 8th	To	3/4	do	do	1 - 87½
Feby 8th	To	3/4	do	oak wood	1 - 50
Feby 12th	To	3/4	do	do	1 - 50
Feby 15th	To	3/4	do	do	1 - 50
Feby 17th	To	1	do	Hickory wood	2 - 50
Feby 20th	To	2	do	do	5 -
Feby 26th	To	1	do	do	2 - 50
March 1st	To	1	do	Oak wood	2 -
March 1st	To	½	do	Hickory wood	1 - 25
March 8th	To	1	do	do	2 - 50
					46 - 62½

For the use of Brigadier General Washington & Lt Colo Watts

March 11th	To	2½	Cords	Hickory wood @ $2 50/100	6 - 25
March 11th	To	2½	Cords	Oak wood $2	5 -

For the Use of Lt Walback

March 1st	to	1	Cord	Hickory Wood	2 - 50
					$60 - 37½

Capt Beattey Division Quarter Master will please to pay the above Bill for Fuel furnished for the use of Brigr Genl Washington, Lieut Coll Watts, Lieutt Walback of the Dragoons for

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Major General

Harpers Ferry March 12th 1800 Recd from John Wilkins QMaster Genl sixty dollars 37½ cents in full of the above acct for Thos Beatty D QMaster for duplicates

Abraham Morgan

THE JEFFERSON COUNTY FORTY-NINERS

(From Ella May Turner's research paper on the subject, omitting many incidents and condensing parts.)

The first news of the discovery of gold in California found its way East in a very roundabout fashion through vessels from the Sandwich Islands. In the New York **Daily Tribune** the first reference to the subject is found in the issue of September 15, 1848. On November 22 of that year the **Tribune** published the following comment:

> The mania for gold hunting which seems to have complete possession of California had not in the least abated according to latest advices.

Crowds of gold seekers went to California by way of Cape Horn. In two months — December 10, 1848 to February 10, 1849 — six thousand passengers were carried by various types of boats from New York and Boston, the larger number being from New York. It was estimated that at least two thousand passengers went from other parts of the Atlantic states around Cape Horn. In 1849 nearly sixty-five hundred passengers went to California by way of the Isthmus of Panama, a difficult route but one requiring less time than any other.

Agents were busy organizing trading and mining companies and offered the most extravagant inducements to emigrate.

The gold fever soon became epidemic in Jefferson County. At least three companies of gold seekers were formed — the Charles Town, the Harpers Ferry, and the Shepherdstown companies.

The following notice appeared in **The Spirit of Jefferson**, January 9, 1849:

> Ho! for Californa. It having been determined to organize a company for California whose principal pursuit shall be digging the soil for virgin gold, all who are desirous of joining the expedition will meet at the Law Office of B. F. Washington, on Tuesday the 9th instant, at seven o'clock in the evening.
>
> An opportunity is now afforded to active and energetic young men of bettering their pecuniary condition whilst at the same time they may see the Garden Spot of the World.
>
> The list is rapidly filling and all who may have an idea of the enterprise are invited to join.

The same issue of the **Spirit of Jefferson** contained the advertisement of Signor D'Alvears, who claimed that

he was the first discoverer of gold in California. He offered for sale a copy of The Gold Seekers Guide, or Secret Art of Finding Gold, Silver, Iron, Lead, Copper and other Mineral Riches, and also a Goldometer, which was a magnetic device for locating minerals. It was very light in weight; the Guide was printed on very thin paper. Both would be sent prepaid for the modest sum of three dollars.

On the evening of January 9 a small group of men met in the law office of Benjamin Franklin Washington for the purpose of organizing a company of gold seekers from Charles Town and vicinity.

At this meeting the business dealt with such matters as the supplies that would be needed, the cost per member for the long journey, the number of members desirable for the company, and the organization of the company.

They decided that each member should pay three hundred dollars and set the quota of members at sixty, each member to make a preliminary payment of one hundred and ten dollars by the tenth of February.

The organization meeting on January 22 was attended by a crowd. The committee on membership reported that the quota of sixty members had been filled, and that fifty other applicants who met all requirements had been rejected.

No action was taken on the adoption of the constitution for the company because the final list of members could not be determined until the first payment had been made.

It was agreed that the company would furnish each man a knapsack for clothing, the maximum weight of the clothing not to exceed fifty pounds. Each man had to provide himself with eight good shirts, four pairs of drawers and undershirts, two pairs good pants, one vest, one coat, one good overcoat, three pairs boots or shoes, eight pairs of woolen socks and four coarse towels.

On February 10, 1849, the formal organization of the company took place in the Odd Fellows Hall in Charles Town. The quota of members was increased to seventy. The following officers were elected: B. F. Washington,

president; Robert H. Keeling, first commander; Smith Crane, second commander; Joseph N. Lewis, third commander; E. M. Aisquith, treasurer; Nathaniel Seevers, quartermaster; J. Harrison Keeley, secretary. Dr. Wakefield Bryarly was appointed surgeon of the company.

A committee was appointed to secure thirty rifles and forty double-barreled shotguns. Another committee was appointed to secure information about mining from a Mr. Penman of Frederick County, Virginia.

James McCurdy, Benjamin F. Lewis, Daniel Cockrell, James Moore, and John W. Gallaher were appointed to secure supplies in the East and B. F. Washington, Nathaniel Seevers and E. M. Aisquith were chosen to secure supplies in the West.

The most important matter taken up at this meeting was the adoption of a constitution, a document that was later published in the **Spirit of Jefferson.** David Morris Porter in his introduction to "Trail to California, the Overland Journal of Vincent Geiger and Wakeman Bryarly," says of this constitution that it is one of the few written agreements governing the gold rush companies that have been brought to light, as the agreements of most companies were either verbal or in manuscript form.

Article I, Section 1 of the constitution states the object of the association:

> The members of this association have united in organization and do hereby acknowledge and recognize a joint Co-partnership for the purpose of proceeding to the Territory of California to acquire Gold and other valuable minerals by mining, &c, and to better their pecuniary condition in the most practicable and laudable manner.
>
> Sect. 2. The name and style of this Co-partnership shall be The Charles Town (Va.) Mining Company.

Among the duties of the President were the following:

> Article IV, Sect. 4. At the Diggings he shall by and with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors, divide and subdivide Companies into such parties as may be deemed practicable . . . . .
>
> Sect. 5. The President shall be considered as the General Commander of the Company except at such times — either on the route to California or after arrival — as the Board of Directors may deem it advisable to place the Company under military Discipline — at which time his authority shall be temporarily suspended.
>
> Sect. 6. In case of sudden attack, or other emergency, the President shall resign temporarily, into the hands of the commanders, the control and management of the Company for attack or defense.

Article XIV contains among its provisions regarding funds:

Sect. 4 All the minerals, gold, silver, platina, or ore, or valuable(s) of whatever character, may be gathered, procured or acquired, shall be paid over by each member or detachment into the hands of the Treasurer, to go into the joint funds of the Company.

Sect. 5 The general fund of the Company, embracing all that may have been acquired by the entire membership, shall be equally divided among the members . . . .

By the provisions of Article XV each member was obliged to engage in mining or such other employment as might be assigned by the Board of Directors. He could offer no excuse or exemption from any service except illness or disability, in which case the verbal or written certificate of the Surgeon was necessary.

Article XVI contains moral laws to be observed, such as the recognition of the Christian Sabbath. The penalty for engaging in mining or other work of a profitable character on the Sabbath was the forfeiture of all one may have acquired, together with the average of a two days' income, to the joint fund of the Company. Gambling, whether by cards, dice or other way, was prohibited. The penalty for the first offense was the forfeiture of the average yield of a member's gathering in one day; for the second offense, one week's share in the Company partnership; and for the third offense, expulsion, subject to a vote of the majority of the members. No provision was made for the punishment of such offenses as stealing and disorderly conduct.

Foodstuffs and equipment having been purchased, the main body of the company on March 27 gathered in Charles Town for their departure on a special train to Harpers Ferry. Edward McIlhany, one of the last five to be admitted to the company, said that there were hundreds of their friends to bid them goodbye —

> Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, wives, sweethearts and even old family darkies — all with tears in their eyes, for they knew not our way.

At Harpers Ferry the company took a B. and O. train for Cumberland, where the men spent the night at a hotel. Bright and early the next morning they left in nine stages for their trip across the Alleghenies. One

stage driver under the influence of many "toddies" that cost only six and a quarter cents each, went down the mountain at break neck speed, but no damage was done.

After traveling one hundred miles they reached the Ohio and boarded the steamship Niagara bound for Cincinnati, where they changed boats and continued to St. Louis where they remained three days.

On April 10 they started by the river boat Embassy up the Missouri. On this stage of the trip death suddenly put an end to their high spirits. On the second day out of St. Louis, Tom Washington fell a victim to that great scourge, cholera. He became ill and died at ten the next morning. Before sundown the Embassy drew up near the shore at a point where a cluster of trees shaded a grassy slope. Here Washington's companions dug a grave. The passengers went ashore and stood solemnly with bared heads while the Episcopal burial service was read.

On April 19 the company reached St. Joseph, Missouri, where the advance committees awaited them. In addition to securing supplies and various kinds of equipment, they had purchased one hundred mules, some horses and sixteen wagons. Two of the wagons were made of sheet iron and were shaped like boats. They were made for ferrying rivers and were eventually to be cut up and made into tongs and rockers to be used in mining gold. A small cannon was purchased to be used in case of an Indian attack.

While at St. Joseph the company had the good fortune to engage Frank Smith as a guide. Had it not been for his superior leadership and good judgment, the organization would very likely have broken up before reaching California. Smith had been over the Oregon Trail as early as 1845, but had never traveled over the California Trail from the point where it led to Oregon.

St. Joseph to Fort Laramie

On leaving St. Joseph on May 10, 1849, the Charles Town Company followed the Oregon Trail to what is now the state of Idaho, where they struck out on a diverging

road to California. On May 12 they camped at Bluffs at a spring they called Branding Spring, because it was here that they branded the mules with the initials V. C.

The men soon realized that the wagons were too heavily loaded and therefore threw away a large lot of horseshoes, all the boxes, a large quantity of lard and many other things.

As the Virginians were traveling through the Pawnee country, they put their arms in order and took every possible precaution against an attack.

On May 22, Joseph C. Young, a member of the company, died of typhoid fever. Without "shroud, sheet or coffin" he was buried the following morning on a hill overlooking a beautiful country.

On the evening of the twenty-sixth at a general meeting of the company, the Guide Frank Smith was elected by unanimous vote to full membership in the company. B. F. Washington, the president, and the three commanders then resigned and placed the entire command of the company in the capable and efficient hands of Smith.

When the company reached Fort Kearney a few days later, they abandoned picks, hobbles and every other article that tended to impede travel. They also sold some flour and bacon at the Fort and bought fifteen gallons of whiskey.

On leaving Fort Kearney the twenty-ninth of May they traveled up Platte River, sometimes just on its banks, then off several miles. They passed a government train on the way and exchanged some powder for whiskey, a cannister of powder for a canteen of whiskey.

On one occasion a party went fishing and soon one of the men returned saying that Indians were crossing the river. Captain Smith and several of the men went to the river, prepared to give the Indians a warm reception. The men fell flat on the ground in order to conceal themselves. The Indians swam nearer and proved to be six large elks.

Saturday, June 2, was spent in camp for the purpose of resting the horses and mules. Some of the men occupied time washing clothes and cooking. Others read, wrote, cleaned guns and pistols, shot at a mark, fished and shod horses and mules. As a special treat every mess served lamb's quarter greens, stewed peaches, rice and molasses.

The company met a large party of about 1500 Sioux Indians and traded with them for six ponies giving mules in exchange.

Later in the day the men saw a wolf chasing what they took to be a bear, but which proved to be a fine buffalo calf, which they killed—the first buffalo to be killed by the Virginians. All the messes enjoyed a supper of buffalo meat that evening.

On June 8 they passed Castle Bluffs and two days later Court House Rock, a sand hill with an occasional layer of soft rock. That evening they encountered a terrific hail storm. The hail fell in great masses, terrifying both men and animals. Captain Smith and several of the men were caught out in the storm and were severely bruised by the hail stones.

On June 11 the men camped at Chimney Rock, on which they found many names either cut or painted, among them the name of Captain Smith, cut there in 1845.

They reached Fort Laramie on the fourteenth of June. The fort had been a trading post of the American Fur Company, but had recently been acquired by the United States. The Virginians were now 670 miles from St. Joseph. While at Fort Laramie Samuel Davidson killed an antelope. "Soups, fries, potpies were not hard to take by those who had grown lean on bacon and bread."

Fort Laramie to the South Pass

After leaving Fort Laramie the company passed over the Black Hills and came again to the North Fork of the Platte River, which they crossed just above Deer Creek. Here because of the depth of the water fording was out of the question. They therefore launched the two boat-

shaped sheet iron wagon beds and completed the crossing in about eleven hours.

The country that they passed through was somewhat barren. The days were very hot, the nights decidedly cool.

By the time the company reached Willow Spring on July 23, many of the mules were exhausted because of the heat, lack of water and insufficient grass. The men were very low-spirited over the situation, but the following day they became more cheerful when they came to a plentiful supply of clear cold water. They camped that night near Independence Rock, a huge boulder that has been called "the Great Register of the Desert" because of the thousands of names painted, tarred or cut on the surface.

J. Harrison Kelley, a correspondent for the **Spirit of Jefferson**, wrote of the Devil's Gate located four miles from Independence Rock:

> The most interesting sight in the route is the Devil's Gate, a point in the mountains where the Sweet Water breaks through. The mountains are of solid stone, some three hundred feet in height, through which a perfectly straight cut from top to bottom about thirty feet wide has been made by the rushing of the waters.

The day before reaching the South Pass the Virginians met a party of trappers, some of whom were returning East and carrying back mail with them, charging fifty cents a letter. They gave a discouraging report of conditions farther west. They said the grass became shorter and shorter every day and would give out entirely within five hundred miles, and that teams three hundred miles ahead of the Charles Town group would not get through.

South Pass to Fort Hall, June 29 - July 14

On the twenty-ninth they traveled through the South Pass and by evening reached the dividing ridge from which streams flow down one side to the Atlantic and on the other to the Pacific. The Pass is nineteen miles wide with an ascent so gradual that it is hardly perceptible. The valley was so filled with wagons and stock that it was difficult for the Charles Town Company to find a place to camp.

On July 2 they reached Green River, where they found many wagons waiting their turn at the ferry which was owned by a Frenchman who had started for California with two small pontoon beds and had decided to remain at Green River. He charged eight dollars a load on his ferry and it took three loads for each wagon. The river was one hundred and fifty yards wide and ten feet deep. The current was very strong, as the river was high. Consequently it took the Virginians until sundown to cross in their two boats. After crossing they lent the boats to some men from Missouri.

The company decided to spend the Fourth on the banks of the Green River, where at that time about three thousand persons were camping. The little six-pounder ushered in the day with a terrific noise that shook the earth. A young man from Harpers Ferry was selected as orator of the day. He stood on a large stump and had an Indian pole to steady himself.

McIlhany wrote:

> Being the Fourth of July our quartermaster issued whiskey rations. Some had more or less and some didn't have any. Those are the ones that didn't drink. We hadn't had our little cannon out of the wagon since we started and we concluded that we would take it out that day and chain it to the stump. Moore felt pretty good, feeling the effects of the whiskey, and every time he said anything patriotic would touch the cannon off, and the echo would bellow up and down the valley. The Indians when they heard that cannon would not come anywhere near us.

On July 7 they camped at Bear River Valley and the following morning after traveling about eleven miles they camped along Bear River at the Narrows. Here there was just room enough for the stream and sometimes a road.

As they were only four days from Fort Hall several of the men were sent on the ninth of July to inquire concerning the prospects ahead and to try to purchase flour and horses.

In attempting to swim across Thomas' Fork, a stream only about fifty yards wide and eleven feet at its deepest, Taliaferro Milton was drowned. A friend attempted to rescue him, but came near being drowned himself, as Milton grabbed him and jerked him under the water. Milton,

who was from Jefferson County, was only nineteen years of age. He was loved by every member of the company. Dr. Bryarly said that he was always the first to volunteer his services for anything called for and the last one to give up and cry rest.

After a short time his body was recovered and carried to the camp. There being in the neighborhood no timber with which to cover the grave to protect it from wolves, the body was carried in the sick wagon to the next encampment on Green River, where the burial took place. Dr. Bryarly read the burial service.

On July 11 they reached Soda Spring, concerning which Hoffman wrote:

> This water with the addition of a little soda and vinegar is equal to the best soda. There are several boiling springs at this place, and the steamboat spring is certainly a curiosity. It has constant puffing like the exhaust of a steamboat. In addition there are several poisonous springs here which are said to bring instant death to anything that drinks from them.

They stayed at the Soda Springs until the afternoon, all the different messes having baked enough bread to last several days.

On the thirteenth the company camped at the big spring, six miles from Fort Hall. That evening the men sent ahead returned. They had succeeded in buying seven hundred pounds of flour at eight cents a pound, but had no information as to the road on to Fort Sutter.

Fort Hall to the Sink of the Humboldt, July 15 - August 10

On Saturday, July 15, the company traveled through Fort Hall Valley, renamed by the men Mosquito Valley. The following day they arrived at the American Falls on Snake River. In the late afternoon they left the Oregon Trail at Snake River and struck off to the left on the California Trail.

On the seventeenth the company remained in camp in order to take one wagon apart and use it to repair the other wagons. The days that followed were hot. The men complained that the hot sand blistered their feet.

On the morning of July 23 several teams of oxen drove up and corralled for noon. Soon there was a general

charge upon one of the wagons, upon which was written "Store & Groceries." Brandy at eight dollars a gallon was being offered for sale. "A good time was had by all" until the Virginians received orders to "hook up and be off."

On the twenty-fourth they crossed a range of high mountains forming the eastern rim of the Great Basin. They traveled down Martin's Fork, a tributary of St. Mary's or Humboldt River for about eight miles and spent that night and encamped on the same stream the next night.

Bryarly said that the water in his canteen became so hot that with a little "Essence of Coffee" he had in his pocket he was able to make excellent coffee.

For the remainder of July little water and grass were found and the mules became very weak. One wagon was abandoned in order to have more mules to pull the others. At times in the middle of the day the heat was almost unbearable. One day they rested, and at other times they did not travel for four hours or longer in the middle of the day.

The first week in August conditions did not improve. Moreover, there was dissension among some members of the company and Smith refused to act as captain. It was found that the trouble was caused by a "few sheep in wolves' clothing" and he was persuaded to continue as guide.

On August 8 they reached the Slough of the Humboldt and were overjoyed to find an abundance of grass and water. The animals were guarded by some of the men to prevent their getting into the mire. One of the guards, James Davidson, accidentally shot himself, and although Dr. Bryarly gave him every attention he died early the following morning, after suffering the most acute agony for twelve hours. Hoffman wrote that they buried Davidson in the most respectable manner possible in that solitary country, and that as they raised his mound, life never seemed so drear.

The company remained in camp until Saturday afternoon, August 11, in order to recuperate and rest the mules, and also to make hay to be used while crossing the dreaded Humboldt Desert.

Across the Humboldt Desert and Over the Sierras, August 11-30

Late Saturday afternoon the Virginians passed the sink of the Humboldt and in the evening camped at Sulphur Spring after traveling twenty-three miles.

On Sunday they passed through a barren country and, after a hard trip of twenty-five miles, spent the night at the Hot Springs. The water here when cooled was drinkable but not palatable. A piece of meat when placed in one of the boiling springs cooked in twenty minutes.

Monday, August 13, was a very hard and difficult day. Hoffman says:

> We started at one o'clock this morning and made an effort to get through the desert today. . . It is very heavy sand which is burning hot and there has been great destruction of property for those who have preceded us through this desert. Dead mules are lying around by the hundreds. We encamped this evening on Truckee river, which is a beautiful clear stream of good water, shaded by cotton trees. We now have plenty of good water, wood for fuel and an abundance of grass.

The following day was spent in getting the remainder of the wagons across the Truckee.

On Wednesday, August 15, little headway was made. The company traveled only six miles, as it was necessary to cross the river five times. There was no grass and the animals had only willow bushes for food.

On the following day a little grass was found, but not much progress was made, as in going nine miles they had to cross the river seven times.

On the seventeenth the long dreaded Sierra Nevada Mountains, their peaks capped with snow, made their first appearance. This day the company traveled about fifteen miles and crossed the Truckee ten times. They camped in a beautiful valley where they were detained until Sunday afternoon waiting for the wagon that had been left behind to procure flour and bacon.

On Tuesday, the twenty-first, the Virginians learned that they were within five miles of the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. While they dreaded crossing the mountains they rejoiced that they were so far on their way. Several men were now sent on ahead to the Johnson

settlement and Fort Sutter "to find out the situation and make arrangements for provisions."

On Wednesday, August 22, the company passed Truckee River and came to steep rocks almost impossible to pass over. The animals could barely drag themselves up. Hoffman said they were obliged to double team and pull up with ropes. They all arrived safe at the top a little before sundown.

The men were in great spirits because they had passed the part of the road that they most feared, without loss or damage of any kind.

On Thursday they traveled on a very rough road and on Friday, after a day of rough traveling, they found themselves at night on top of a great precipice.

Hoffman gives a graphic account of the descent into the valley below:

> Saturday 25. We managed to get our mules down, one at a time, after which we attached ropes to the wagons, and by using trees as snubbing posts, we all got down in safety. We then traveled on, jumping from rock to rock and from crag to crag, passing up some tremendous high and rocky places, requiring all hands to the wagons in order to get them up.

Monday the men rested, and on Tuesday traveled thirteen miles and camped for the night where there was nothing for the animals to eat except oak leaves.

On Wednesday, the twenty-ninth, they came to a hill as steep as any they had as yet to descend. They cut down large trees and attached them behind the wagons, where they were allowed to drag with some men riding upon them. By this means the wagons got down without accident.

When everything and everybody had landed in safety, the Virginians decided that they really had arrived in California, for they saw the "Gold Diggings" for the first time. About fifty men were working along a little stream. Some were using rockers and others pans of every description. Their average was from one to one and a half ounces of gold a day.

Dr. Bryarly borrowed a pan, scraped it up full of dirt, washed it out, and got about a dollar's worth of gold.

By the thirtieth of August the mules were so weak that they could scarcely pull up the slightest hill. The men had practically no more than a day's supply of food and that consisted of coffee without sugar and bread without salt or grease or sugar.

The last entry in Hoffman's diary is dated September 1:

> Made another effort today after having traveled twelve miles yesterday with practically no food for man or beast, and by bringing all the energy and courage which both man and beast possessed, and putting same into action, we succeeded in making a march of sixteen miles, reaching the first or Johnson's settlement in the territory of California about night, where man and beast were well fed and taken care of . . .

The Charles Town Company remained at Johnson's ranch for two weeks, more or less inactive. Several factors held them back from a rush to the gold fields. The men were more or less exhausted from the hard trip. The mules were in need of rest and time to recover from the long period that they had had insufficient food. Newton Tavenner was in a dying condition and his companions would have been hardhearted indeed had they deserted him at a time he most needed their care and companionship. He died on the seventh of September. Another reason that the men were detained was that each one had a share in the ten thousand dollars worth of provisions which had arrived in San Francisco via Cape Horn. This matter was settled by the offer of Quartermaster Nathaniel Seevers to buy the entire stock of goods, then stored in San Francisco.

Although it was evident that the company was too large for the men to work together as a group on a single claim, many of the members did not desire to dissolve the organization.

B. F. Washington had left the company at Truckee River with a Mr. Long, who had overtaken the Virginians on August 15. As they used pack mules they expected to arrive at the diggings a week ahead of the other men. Washington presided over the meeting of the Charles Town Company, held in Sacramento City on September 13, when

the vote was 41 to 32 to remain united. The next day the members voted 50 to 19 in favor of dissolving the company.

The Charles Town Company had reason to be proud of its record. It was the largest company that had ever crossed the plains. Many as large started out but separated before reaching California. Kelley wrote:

> Our great bond of strength consisted on having as our guide and captain F. S. Smith, a man of the most indomitable energy and perseverance united with a bland and courteous character.

In a letter published in the **Spirit of Jefferson**, B. F. Washington says that the sale of property held amounted to $129 for each member, exclusive of provisions shipped around and not yet sold will be about $15 per member. The letter continues:

> This makes our expenses about $165 a member. Each member too had a gun, pair of woolen blankets, gum blanket and clothes bag which would reduce our expenses $50 more. Thus far this is pretty well.

After all the property had been disposed of, including the little cannon which was sold for a dollar, the Virginians lost no time in getting to the mining region, although very little could be accomplished so late in the season. The men after the dissolution of the company had formed groups or messes of from six to ten each.

November 1, 1849 Kelly wrote from Weaver Creek a letter of special interest, as it contains the names of the members of the various messes:

> John, James and Henry Moore, Smith Crane, Bradley, Manning and Garnhart are at Weverton. James and Crane have been sick but are up again.
>
> Aisquith, Harrison, Murphy, Boley, Burwell, Marmaduke, McKaran, Bailey, B. F. Seevers and Fagan are in one mess. They have built a cabin.
>
> Jesse and Keyes Strider, Davis, Stonebreaker, Showman, Rohrer, Duke, Cockrill, T. Moore, Joseph and Jacob Engle are in another mess, ten miles above Weverton on Weaver Creek.
>
> Kelly, Purcell, Clevinger, Bowers, Smith, Ferrell and S. Davidson in one mess together with Lupton are 1½ miles below Weverton.
>
> Geiger, Showers, Krebs, Keeling, Slagle and Gallaher are in one together with James, Charles and George Cunningham.
>
> Dr. Bryarly, Hayden, Blakemore, Bender, Thomas, Gittings, McIlhany, Herbert and Lewis are 150 miles from Sacramento on the Sacramento River.
>
> Rissler, McCurdy, Hoffman, Comegys, Wagner and Walpert in one mess started for Mokulune Run.
>
> Allen, Dr. and John Humphreys, Daugherty and McCoy started for the Stanislaus.
>
> N. Seevers went to the middle fork of the America River, as did also Morgan and A. R. Miller.

B. F. Washington with Long, formerly of Berkeley is up on the Sacramento River some 150 miles.

L. B. Washington started for Monteray on the Pacific.

Harper and Donnelly probably went South. Conway and Riely were in Sacramento when last heard from. Poland and Simpson were on Yuba River.

Extracts of Letters from Members of the Charles Town Company

On November 14, 1849 John Murphy wrote to his parents from Jeffersonville:

When we came here there was not a single house — now nine. We have given our village the title of Jeffersonville. It is situated 22 miles southeast of Sutter's Fort and 60 miles from Sacramento city . . . .

Daniel Cockrill of the other party killed 5 deer since we have been here. Walter Burwell killed a deer last week.

Murphy expected to go to the headwaters of the Sacramento or Feather River in the spring, as the diggings at Jeffersonville were not first rate.

On March 6, 1850, J. H. Kelly wrote to the **Spirit of Jefferson** from Weaver Creek.

I believe one half of the miners have made only a bare existence this winter — one fourth expenses and some $200 or $300; one-eighth from $500 to $800; one-sixteenth $1500 upwards.

While in the city I met John Walper by far the luckiest man who came out in our company. He made $2600 — in eleven days he took out $1300. Comegys and Wagner have each made $1,000.

I have seen 47 of the 70 members. As far as I can estimate their gains have averaged only $192 each.

Aisquith's mess is within a mile of here and Strider's mess is well . . .

Jacob Engle to his brother, Weaver Creek, February 7, 1850:

J. Engle, who did not previously belong to this company, I am sorry to relate to you, departed this life, January 22d, 1850 after lingering several weeks.

We have not done much in the way of mining this winter on account of the rainy season, which commenced about the middle of November. It would rain for several days and hold up for a day or so and commence again. It commenced snowing about the middle of last month and snowed for several days . . .

We expect to leave here in a few days and go to the middle Fork of the American River, or in the vicinity of Hangtown which is northwest of this place, where we expect to mine. I spoke of not making much this winter and I expect you would like to know how much we made. We have been working on a bank of Wever Creek where we found a place about fifty feet long and three feet wide where we got one thousand of the pure stuff. I think we will clear besides what we paid for our winter provisions from ten to twelve hundred and we have on hand some provisions yet and we have a team and wagon, which we use to haul our provisions. We have not used much salt provisions this winter, we used principally deer meat. We have killed some twenty deer this winter between the rains . . . I send a small specimen of Uber gold. This is some of the smallest scales.

Joseph Engle to his brother, written at Rough and Ready, Nevada County, Cal., June 3, 1852:

I am still mining on Deer Creek near the same place. But I am not making much at this time. During the past month of May I made only one hundred thirty eight dollars. I think the majority of the miners around here are not making much. The snow is melting very fast in the mountains at this time which keeps the streams up . . . I think another week of warm weather will bring the snow out of the mountains, then I think we can do something better in the beds of the streams.

Jesse Strider and myself are still working together. Daniel Cockrill is on the river and they commenced building their dam, but the rise in the river a few days ago swept away part they had put in, but they think of commencing in a few days.

You said in your letter you had a curiosity to know how much I have made since I have been out here, which I am not prepared to do exactly, as I would wish to look over my manuscript, so I just give you the amount which I have at my demand; leaving out expenses and losses I have at this time about two thousand one hundred and eighty-two dollars and eigthy-eight cents which I have loaned out which I expect to get, so you see I haven't much for all. I am striving to see if I can make a few more dimes before I give a final leave to California . . .

The Shepherdstown Company

The Shepherdstown Company left in the spring of 1849 and arrived in California about the first of October, barely in time to escape being trapped by snow. The president of the company was Dr. Richard Parran.

About the time that the men reached Fort Laramie they broke up into two groups. Dr. Parran and members of one group proceeded on their way with the wagons; the other group went on with pack mules.

On December 26, 1849, Dr. Parran wrote from Sacramento City:

Perhaps some have written to the States giving accounts of our difficulties and hardships, for they were very great indeed. What were called roads were such as no human being ever traveled over before. Some days we would make only three or four miles, and do our very best. Then we were in imminent danger of starving or freezing to death, the distance having been so much greater than any of us had anticipated. After travelling along the Humboldt River full half its length, we left to cross a desert of 50 miles to Fremont's Mud Lake, and then towards the Sierra Nevadas, which we struck about 200 miles north of the old crossing place. Having surmounted these, next we had to cross over and travel along the California mountains some 100 miles, as we did not reach the gold region until the 2d of November. Our wagon was the only one that reached the mines.

Behind our train we left some three thousand persons, most of whom were caught in the snow, and would have perished but for the government having sent a relief train.

I give thanks to the Great God in Heaven, who so mercifully watched over and protected me from the numberless dangers to which I was exposed. The Indians hovered about us for some 300 miles and we could only keep them off by the strictest watch . . .

Kennedy and myself are housekeeping together in this, Sacramento City. Our habitation is 10 by 12 ft. and covered in with canvas. For this spot and this only we pay $900 a year or $75 a month . . .

We reached the mines too late in the fall for work this season. However, we tried a little, though for the whole 4 weeks we were at the mines, we had only seven days of such weather as we could work in. We made $300 in the seven days, but had to spend $200 a barrel for flour, $150 a hundred weight for pork, $6 for a gallon of molasses and $1.50 per pound for cheese . . .

I determined to come to this city and spend the winter. My purpose is to continue here until May, when I intend going to the Uber River to a little place called Uberville at the head of navigation. If that place should grow anything as fast as Sacramento, I shall be pretty sure of realizing something handsome in a short time. Dr. Wilder and myself intend having a trading store and will also practice our profession together . . .

My practice is getting to be quite good, so I hope to rub along until spring, when things will probably be still better . . .

I hope to return to Shepherdstown by the fall of 1851 with the fruits of my harvest.

Harvest was the correct term for Dr. Parran to use if he followed the custom of other doctors who charged the miners an ounce of gold a visit —the equivalent of sixteen dollars.

There were eleven men in the party that went on from Fort Laramie with pack mules, among them Joseph Reinhart, who wrote from Feather River, October 22, 1849:

We traveled on through innumerable hardships and perils to Salt Lake City, where we spent one week. The place is inhabited by Mormons who are not only traitors to the government of the United States, but in other respects at the lowest point of degradation . . .

Dr. Parran and those of the company who continued with the wagons arrived before we left. Parran looks very well. I never saw him look more healthy.

Leapole, Schneibly, and myself purchased a carriage here (Fort Laramie) and traveled together 800 miles to Mud Lake. The other members of the division of the company, Cloth, Miller, Hendricks, Rye, Deloney left Salt Lake one day before we did. I have never heard of them since . . . I presume they are at work south of us. The two Forneys remained in the Mormon city . . .

At Mud Lake our mules gave out, when we sold our carriage and packed our two mules, but did not travel more than two miles before we came to a slough where one of our mules, being exhausted by fatigue, fell into the mud and water with the pack under him. By means of a rope we succeeded in pulling him out — sold him for $17, packed on our backs and the other mule for about 150 miles, when the Indians stole our only remaining mule and left us dependent upon our physical strength.

Schneibly remained to get some four things brought by emigrants, and Leapole and myself proceeded on foot and joined Fort & Walker's company. We traveled together 100 miles, when I gave out and fell into the Boston Pack Company. I proceeded alone for 300 miles, sometimes overtaking trains before night, and sometimes after night. In this distance I was compelled to travel two days on no other provisions than pine gum.

8th October arrived at Lawson's settlement in the valley of the Sacramento river. There I fell in with three other adventurers from Illinois, and traveled with them down the valley 60 miles where we struck Feather river. Here we bought tools and provisions and went to digging gold, but finding ourselves paid off with $2.50 for two days hard labor, we resolved to labor by the day for $14 each which made $280 for our little company for five days.

On November 17, 1849 Joseph Reinhart wrote from Feather River that he and his companions were building a house and a smokehouse to jerk venison for their use in the summer. Also he wrote:

Dr. Parran, Kennedy, Wooltz, Waters, Jones, Fay, Leapole, Schneibly, Mendinall, McKnight, Luce, Light, Stewart, Seymore, May, Davis, Ward and Binix are all on the river.

Cloth, Miller, Headrick, Rye and Deloney have not reported to me since I left the Mormon city, when they took a day's start of us . . .

On June 11, 1850 Reinhart wrote that he was living on the North Fork of Feather River in a log cabin 16 x 20 feet, covered with bark and floored with sand. A few bunks, blankets and cooking utensils comprised the furniture. He and his companions had arrived at the camp in February, piloted by Indians. Everything brought to the camp had to be carried by the men on their backs, until a mule pass was found, after which provisions were brought up for thirty cents a pound.

In a postscript to his letter Joseph Reinhart says that he has heard of the discovery of a golden lake. He has been informed that eight men in company found the lake. Seven were slain by natives. One escaped and brought news of the discovery. He pledged the forfeit of his life for the truth of his statements to a company of twenty-five men who have agreed to go with him.

Reinhart wrote:

I have raised a company of 30 men, chosen for the enterprise to start in a few days, as the report corroborates what has often been told me by Indians here. Before you read this I expect to have my pile made up for old Jefferson.

The report of the discovery of a "golden lake" spread like wild fire among the miners who left the diggings by hundreds in search of great riches. Most of them returned discouraged and emptyhanded. However, some of the men were fortunate enough to find gold in paying quantities, in sections that would have remained unexplored for years, had it not been for the search for the fabulous lake.

The Harpers Ferry Company

The young men of Harpers Ferry organized a company to go the Red River route, under the direction of Colonel Whiting, who had been a Texas ranger. The number of persons in this group was not limited as each member provided his own equipment and supplies.

The Harpers Ferry Company was part of a larger group of adventurers, numbering from six hundred to eight hundred members, each paying Colonel Whiting a fee of ten dollars. The Harpers Ferry agent, George H. Furtney, assured prospective members that the total cost per member would not exceed two hundred dollars. The Harpers Ferry group planned to leave on either the twenty-third or twenty-fourth of February, 1849.

The men who had enrolled by February 20 were Daniel Stipes, Jacob Vanvacter, Ebenezer Marlatt, Charles Holt, David Potts, John D. Stipes, Jonathan Russell and James Riley of Harpers Ferry and Dr. Lambert and David McIntosh of London.

The only mention of the Harpers Ferry Company in letters of the Charles Town group is found in a letter of G. W. Comegys, February 28, 1851:

> We bought two shares of the Harpers Ferry Co., who owned several shares on the river at a good looking place for gold.

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