

Aspenvale Cemetery and Its Place in the History of Southwest Virginia*

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and

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Introduction

The Aspenvale cemetery at Seven Mile Ford in Smyth County is one of Virginia's most noteworthy historical sites west of the Blue Ridge. Aspenvale was an early pioneer settlement, a gathering place for part of the overmountain army (which defeated the Royalist forces led by Patrick Ferguson at the Battle of King's Mountain in October 1781), a stop for westward pioneers on their way to Daniel Boone's Wilderness Road; it is also the burial place of several notable Virginians. Today, the Aspenvale cemetery is designated as a Registered National Historic Site, a Virginia Historic Landmark, and a stop on the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail.

However, despite its historic significance, Aspenvale cemetery has never been the subject of a scholarly article. That neglect is here redressed.

This article is divided into three parts:

The first part presents a survey of historical background to the settlement of Southwest Virginia. After speculating about the first English speakers to be in the vicinity of present-day Aspenvale, we describe the earliest recorded land grants in the region and the subsequent exploration and opening of Southwest Virginia by Scots-Irish pioneers. Large numbers of English speakers first came to and through

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Figure 1. Aspenvale cemetery. This picture was taken from the southeast corner of the cemetery looking towards the northwest. The large monuments in the foreground record (from left) the graves of Charles Henry Campbell Preston, Francis Preston, and Sarah Buchanan Campbell Preston. General William Campbell lies beneath the flat stone to the right. Aspenvale cemetery is surrounded by a well-built stone wall about five feet high and two feet thick. Part of the wall can be seen in the distance.

Seven Mile Ford when the Virginia Regiment participated in, but never fought in, the Cherokee War of 1760–61. It was those military activities that effectively enabled the early family settlement of Aspenvale at a time when it was located in what was still a wild, frontier region.

The second part provides a history of the cemetery from its first interment to modern times. It includes a chain of succession of ownership of the cemetery and tells of the state and national recognition that the cemetery has received. In this second part, the relatively recent cemeteries that adjoin Aspenvale are noted but not described in detail.

The third part of the article lists the persons buried in the Aspenvale cemetery, with their dates of birth and death. Summary biographical information is given for all those persons and additional biographical information is given for historically prominent persons. While the article mentions family relationships among the persons buried in the cemetery, it is not genealogical in character. The article

includes a detailed map of the cemetery and may serve as an on-site guide. The chain of ownership of the Aspenvale land is documented (Table 1) using records held by the Preston family, supplemented by documents from the Smyth County courthouse. An extensive bibliography is provided which incorporates many references to interred persons.

Part I. The Historical Background to the Settlement of Southwest Virginia

The original American Indian inhabitants of Southwest Virginia remain obscure. However, by the opening of the eighteenth century, a vast region of the Appalachians including the Aspenvale property was territory claimed by the Cherokee Indians. The steady shrinkage of this large Cherokee claim to the tiny, present-day, Qualla boundary reservation has been documented by Royce.² Within a large, complicated, and unfortunate (for the Indians) story, the specific instrument that transferred the Aspenvale land to Virginia was the so-called “Treaty of Lochabor,”³ which in 1771 drew a line from Kingsport, Tennessee, to the junction of the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers and ceded to the Virginians the land to the east of that line, including what would become modern-day Smyth County.⁴

The First English Speakers in Southwest Virginia

Although we will never know with certainty, possibly the first Englishman who passed through modern-day Southwest Virginia was the sailor David Ingram. Following the Spanish attack on 23 September 1568 on Sir John Hawkins’ fleet of eight slaving ships at St. Juan de Ulúa, Ingram chose in October 1568 to be set ashore on the Gulf coast of Florida from a terribly overloaded, surviving vessel.⁵ From where he was set ashore, as related by the distinguished historian Samuel Eliot Morison: Ingram “managed to walk by Indian trail all the way to the Maine coast ... hailed a French ship at the mouth of the St. John River, New Brunswick, and returned to Europe.”⁶

Ingram’s walk would likely have brought him up the great Indian path through Southwest Virginia. He told his story on his return to England.⁷ As remarkable as this story seems, a critical evaluation of it, while raising serious questions about its authenticity, does not in the

Table 1. The Succession of Ownership of Aspenvale Cemetery⁶⁶

Owner	How Obtained and Citation
John Buchanan	Grant from George II. Virginia Patents Book No. 31, 1751–1756, 408, April 1753.
Charles Campbell and his heirs and assigns	Deeded by John Buchanan and his wife Margaret Patton Buchanan, 22 March 1755. Augusta County deed book, No. 7, 50.
Margaret Buchanan Campbell	Sole owner following the death of her husband.
William Campbell	Will of Charles Campbell dated 24 August 1761. Will of Margaret Buchanan Campbell dated 13 October 1777. Washington County Will Book No. 1, 7.
Elizabeth Campbell Sarah Buchanan Campbell Charles Henry Campbell	Will of William Campbell dated 8 September 1780. Washington County Will Book No. 1, pages 20 and 125.
Maria T. C. Preston	Deeded by Sarah B. Campbell Preston, 26 October and 26 November 1840. Smyth County Deed Book, No. 3, 38.
John M. Preston, I	By inheritance from his wife Maria T. C. Preston who apparently left no will and died 18 October 1842.
John M. Preston, II Charles H. C. Preston	Became joint owners circa 1861 and divided the land in 1871. John M. Preston II, later became the sole owner of the cemetery. Smyth County Deed Book 1 May 1871, and 27 October 1899. The land encircling the cemetery was sold by C. H. C. Preston to J. L. Vance in 1889 while the cemetery itself and right of access to it was retained by Preston. ⁶⁷
Mary Lewis Cochran Preston	Will of John M. Preston II

Margaret Lynn Preston Woods John M. Preston, III Elizabeth Cummings Preston Gray Sally Buchanan Preston Dean Nelly Cummings Preston Cochran Preston	Will of Mary Lewis Cochran Preston leaving the cemetery to her children and their heirs forever
Mary Preston Gray) Anne Gray Judkins)	Mary Preston Gray and Anne Gray Judkins were the heirs of Elizabeth Preston Gray.
Ellinor G. Preston) John M. Preston IV)	Ellinor G. Preston and John M. Preston, IV, were the heirs of Cochran Preston.
John M. Preston V) Charles D. Preston) Leslie D. Preston)	Heirs of John M. Preston IV

end controvert it.⁸ Ingram was arguably the first English speaker in the future Smyth County.

More than a century after Ingram, and about sixty-five years after the settlement of Jamestown, English-speaking explorers sponsored by the Fort Henry (modern-day Petersburg, Virginia) trader Abraham Wood pushed into western Virginia. The traditional view is that in 1671 Thomas Batts and Robert Fallam traveled near modern-day Southwest Virginia and possibly reached modern-day West Virginia.⁹ Their meager written records are cryptic and severely circumscribed evidence, but do provide what little we know about their routes.¹⁰ It has been conjectured, but not documented, that Wood himself earlier had visited western Virginia in 1654.¹¹ Two or three years after the Batts and Fallam visit, the ranger James Needham, in 1673–74, accompanied by the indentured servant Gabriel Arthur and several Indians, twice reached the future Tennessee,¹² seeking trade openings with the Overhill Cherokees situated along the Little Tennessee and Tellico Rivers. On his second trip Needham was killed.¹³

It was another sixty years after these pioneering explorations before the first English-speaking settlers and land speculators arrived in Southwest Virginia. Long hunters, adventurers of the forest such as Charles Sinclair, traders and planters such as Stephen Holston (Holstein) and Samuel Stalnaker, and the packman Mr. Vaughan¹⁴ of Amelia County were probably there by 1740 — possibly a decade earlier.

The Scots-Irish and the Settling of Southwest Virginia

The Scots-Irish (and Germans) pioneered European expansion into Southwest Virginia,¹⁵ and principal among those Scots-Irish pioneers was James Patton, who had been born in 1692, near Londonderry, into a Scottish Protestant community. He went to sea as a young man and by middle age was a successful ship's captain, making frequent transatlantic passages. On 23 August 1738 a vessel captained by Patton docked at Alexandria, Virginia.¹⁶ Patton remained in America after this voyage, never again to return to Ireland. Also on board was the captain's eight-year-old nephew William Preston. Along with many of their relatives, they were part of a Scots-Irish exodus to America.¹⁷ Behind them lay Londonderry, Northern Ireland, with its history of vicious political and religious strife. Ahead of them lay Augusta County,

Southwest Virginia, and beyond — and to later generations, far beyond — lay the great westward expansion that would in due time power the rise of an America stretching between two oceans.

The details of his rise are opaque, but once settled in Virginia, in the Shenandoah Valley near modern-day Staunton, Patton soon acquired powerful and influential friends.¹⁸ In October 1743, just five years after making America his permanent home, he was petitioning the Virginia Council for 200,000 acres of land in western Virginia — he was the first British subject to claim land anywhere in the Mississippi watershed.¹⁹ It was land that belonged by historic occupation to the natives of the region and under international law to the French. That petition was not granted, but global politics and hostilities among the European powers very quickly changed matters. Following a renewed outbreak of open warfare between the French and the British in 1744,²⁰ Virginians ceased to be squeamish about claiming nominally French territory. On 26 April 1745 the Virginia Council made Patton his so-called “Great Grant” of 100,000 acres of land to be taken up piecemeal in the territory stretching from modern-day Montgomery County, Virginia, to Hawkins County, Tennessee, along today’s I-81 corridor.²¹ From a Virginian, but not French, point of view, this grant provided legal access to the land that would eventually become Aspenvale. Incidentally, Friedenbergh characterized the Great Grant as “obviously a logrolling deal.”²²

In the 1750s, the prevailing political climate in Williamsburg favored western land grants to the Scots-Irish because of their reputation as frontier warriors. The Tidewater elite even made exceptions for the Scots-Irish not made to other religious groups or elsewhere in Virginia. For example, in western Virginia, Presbyterian ministers were authorized to perform marriages, something forbidden in Tidewater Virginia society.²³ Writing of these Scots-Irish who settled the Holston River valleys of Smyth County, where Aspenvale is located, a later Preston wrote rather floridly:

Search the human race and you cannot find purer Anglo-Saxon stock then the descendants of the Scotch-Irish who settled the Appalachian Highlands. They were the true pioneer stock, brave, inured to hardship and dangers, of magnificent physique; nothing could withstand them. In the words of Caesar, they came, they saw and they conquered.²⁴

In April 1748, seventeen months after obtaining the Great Grant, Patton set out from Waynesboro, Virginia, on a well-equipped and well-organized expedition to the southwest to make surveys in his recently acquired land.²⁵ The party explored the Holston Valleys, perhaps as far as the future state of Tennessee and beyond to the Cumberland Gap,²⁶ or perhaps not that far.²⁷ With Patton on that trip²⁸ went his surveyor John Buchanan, who was married to Patton's daughter Margaret²⁹; Charles Campbell, who was married to Buchanan's sister — also Margaret; Dr. Thomas Walker; James Burke; James Wood; and others. Among other land tracts, this party surveyed one at Seven Mile Ford, where they encountered the hunter Charles St. Clair, who had a cabin near present-day Chilhowie.³⁰ It was John Buchanan from that party who later received the patent for the Aspenvale land in April 1753 under a grant from King George II (see Table 1). Around the same time, fellow party member Charles Campbell secured the "Buffalo Lick," nearby at what is modern-day Saltville.³¹ The salt from this lick was to provide prosperity for many generations of Campbell's descendants.

Mary and Frederick B. Kegley called the New River watershed and the upper watersheds of the Holston, Clinch, and Big Sandy Rivers in Virginia "The Beckoning Land on the Western Waters" and labeled it as such on a map.³² Early land surveys in this beckoning land were individually designated as "being part of an Order of Council granted James Patton and others to take up 100,000 acres." The land was taken up as many separate tracts, each of a few hundred acres, which together could not exceed 100,000 acres in total. Extensive details of the early land parcels taken up under Patton's grant are provided by the Kegleys³³ and also by Summers.³⁴

The first well-documented account of a journey through Southwest Virginia is the 1750 journal kept by Dr. Thomas Walker. The journal remained in the possession of the Walker family and was privately published in 1888 and for the public in 1928 and 1929. The published versions have been consolidated and augmented and were recently published on line by Carole Hammett.³⁵ Dr. Walker traveled in company with Ambrose Powell, William Tomlinson, Colby Chew, Henry Lawless, and John Hughs. Walker and his party were in the vicinity of the future Aspenvale about 31 March 1750, and, though his journal makes no special mention of the place, Walker's journal is

the first written account of anyone being there after its 1747 survey by John Buchanan.

As noted above, Aspenvale was patented in 1753. Seven years later, in 1760, the route past the Aspenvale settlement, fording the Middle Fork of the Holston River, had become a military thoroughfare. This opening of a military road, a small part in the great struggle called the French and Indian war by eighteenth-century Virginians, marks the first modest appearance of Southwest Virginia on the world stage. Known in England as the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), this global struggle was called by Winston Churchill “the first world war.”³⁶

With the outbreak in 1760 of the phase of the French and Indian war called the Cherokee War, the British planned a two-pronged military strategy, with the Middle and Lower Cherokee towns in the western parts of the Carolinas to be attacked by British regulars marching from Charleston, South Carolina, while the Overhill Cherokee towns in modern-day Eastern Tennessee were to be attacked via the valley of Virginia. Thus in that year, Colonel William Byrd III led a 600–700-man Virginia provincial force from Fort Chiswell in Wythe County, aiming to open a road to the Long Island of the Holston at present-day Kingsport, Tennessee.³⁷ Byrd and his force did not actually reach the Overhill towns and mount their planned attack,³⁸ and Byrd was widely criticized for failing to relieve Fort Loudoun (south of present-day Knoxville) where the English garrison was wiped out in August 1760.³⁹ One commentator has suggested that the best that can be said on Byrd's behalf was that his presence and threats were possibly a factor in persuading the Cherokees to sue for peace the following year.⁴⁰

The actual making of the road commenced the following year, on 7 July 1761, when Byrd ordered Major Andrew Lewis and 200 men to “open the road to the [the Long Island of the] Holston” from Fort Chiswell. So doing, they passed the future site of Aspenvale, about thirty-five miles southwest of the Fort.⁴¹ The Lewis party opened the road as far at Stalnakers (near modern-day Chilhowie). The fifty-eight miles from Stalnakers to Long Island of the Holston (modern-day Kingsport) was opened a couple of months later by a force under the command of Colonel Adam Stephen.⁴² Stephen concluded a peace treaty with the Cherokee “King and Governor” Conocotocko near

the Long Island at the newly constructed Fort Robinson on 20 November 1761.

In 1769, Scots-Irish settlement began at Seven Mile Ford, when a widow brought five children and made her home there at a place called Aspenvale. The ford was so named, it is usually said, because it lay seven miles on the road beyond the Royal Oak home of Arthur Campbell, in present-day Marion. The hill behind the widow's home became a cemetery. The widow, Margaret Buchanan Campbell — a daughter of Scots-Irish immigrant parents — was the first person buried there. Today, she and seven generations of her descendants lie within its walls. We will return to the widow and her descendants in the second and third parts of this article.

Maps of early southwest Virginia (other than those drawn on a very broad scale) are scarce. The first well-detailed recorded map of the Holston and adjacent Clinch River valleys was made by Daniel Smith in 1774.⁴³ This map was sent by Smith to William Preston (by now 44 years old and a colonel) at Smithfield with an accompanying letter on 8 July 1774.⁴⁴ In the letter, Smith suggested that the building of forts was needed to offer protection to the settlers and encourage them to come to the region.

The Road Past Aspenvale in the Holston Valley⁴⁵

Part of the historic significance of Aspenvale derives from its being a fording place on the great route along which passed the settlers destined for Tennessee and Kentucky, which constituted the first American western frontier.

Today, Seven Mile Ford is a quiet, rustic place. Busy Interstate Highway 81 passes scarcely half a mile to the south, but its traffic leaves the town unmolested. Highway 11, which was a major thoroughfare before the coming of the interstate, is today quiet and little traveled. But the path is a famous one, for the settlers' road in the Holston Valley lay here, and the ford (the Seven Mile Ford) across the Middle Fork of the Holston River once carried a great flow of traffic headed westward.⁴⁶ Figure 2 shows the principal routes of the settlers in the eighteenth century. The southwesterly route crossed the Middle Fork of the Holston at the Seven Mile Ford, passing Aspenvale a few hundred yards below the cemetery on the hill.

Philadelphia was the principal port of entry for Scots-Irish immigrants into America. From there, following the Treaty of Lancaster in 1744, under which the Iroquois Confederacy ceded the right to Virginians to travel their Great Warrior path down the valley of Virginia, the way to the new lands of the south and southwest lay open. The Great Wagon Road⁴⁷ was the route from Philadelphia to Charlotte,

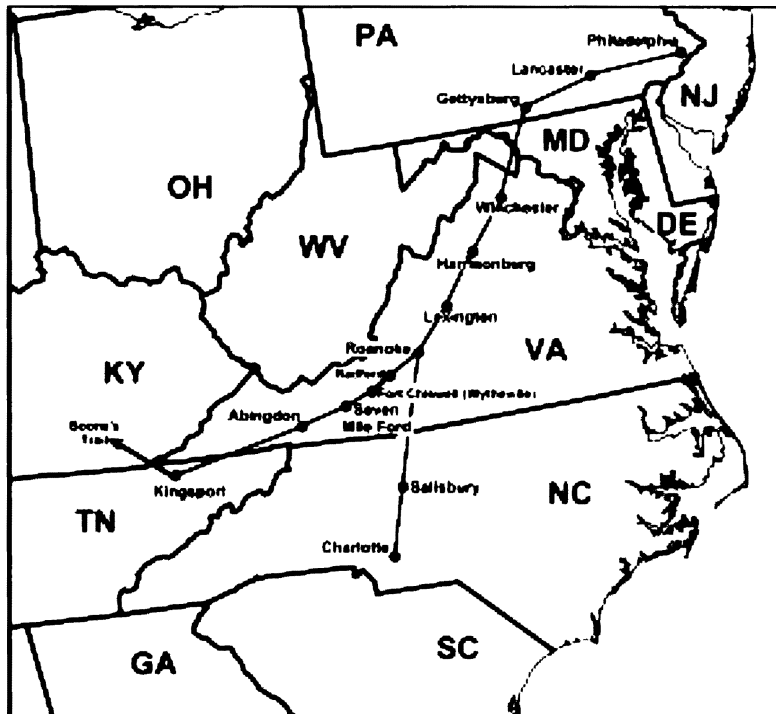


Figure 2. The Great Wagon Road began at Philadelphia and went west through Lancaster and Gettysburg, where it turned southwest down the Great Valley of Virginia, passing near present-day Roanoke (formerly called Big Lick). From there, the road turned south to the Carolinas. After 1775 a wagon road was opened from Roanoke towards the southwest. From a point about ten miles below Wytheville⁵³ to the Long Island of the Holston River (modern-day Kingsport) that wagon road ran in the Holston valleys. From Kingsport, Boone's wilderness trail ran northwest into Virginia and then west through Virginia to the Cumberland Gap and into Kentucky. (This figure shows modern-day place names; Fincastle lies a little northwest of Roanoke, Salem a little southwest.)

North Carolina, via Lancaster, Gettysburg, Winchester, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Roanoke (formerly Big Lick), and Salisbury. In the years 1760–1775 this narrow, rutted highway was “the most heavily travelled road in all America, and must have had more vehicles jolting along its rough and tortuous way than all other main roads put together.”⁴⁸ Beyond Charlotte lay South Carolina and Georgia.

The route to Kentucky opened in 1775 when Daniel Boone cut his Wilderness Road from Kingsport through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky. The opportunity for such a road was instigated by yet another Indian treaty. On 17 March of that year Colonel Richard Henderson at the Sycamore Shoals of the Watauga River near Elizabethton, Tennessee, acquired, by treaty⁴⁹ with the Cherokee chiefs, rights to about three-fourths of the land area of modern Kentucky.⁵⁰ The path to that country had been used by hunters traveling on foot for 15–20 years, but now — for the expected settlers — it needed improving.⁵¹ Anticipating the treaty’s signing by a week, Daniel Boone and a party of thirty armed and mounted axmen departed from the Long Island of the Holston (at modern Kingsport, Tennessee) and cut a path north through the Cumberland Gap to the plains of Kentucky.⁵² When they were done, the Blue Grass State lay open for settlers. Greater Tennessee would open a few years later following more treaties with the Cherokees.

In his history of Seven Mile Ford,⁵⁴ Southwest Virginia historian Goodridge Wilson writes of “a stockade fort capable of housing 400 people [that] was built there in 1776.” Wilson reprints a letter dated 18 August 1776, from William Campbell, then in Williamsburg, sent to “Dearest Betsy” (Madam Russell) at her father’s home in Hanover County, recounting news brought by Samuel Newell, who had just arrived in Williamsburg: “Express in five Days from my house [at Aspenvale].” Campbell’s letter mentions the construction of this fort and tells that a few weeks earlier “Eighteen of our men, two or three women and some children have been killed,” while “Our People scalped 27 Indians and it is thought that many more have been killed.”

Conditions on the Holston section of the path during its early years have been recorded in the story of a party of Baptists who were among the earliest of the Kentucky pioneers. The quotation below from 1781, written by a Minister leading a party of Baptists, tells that in addition to Indians, Tories also posed a threat to travelers. For this

party, leaving Fort Chiswell with about 30 miles to travel to reach Aspenvale:

now came the greatest trial they had yet encountered — they gave up their wagons ... the only homes that had been left to the women, the little children, and the sick. Nearly all the men and some of the women were on foot, the riders being composed in the main of the aged, the delicate and the little children — these last occupying hickory baskets swung to the sides of horses. Such of the sick as were unable to ride were carried along on litters. The men and larger boys, each equipped with a flint-lock rifle, a powder horn, a hatchet, a hunting knife and a cup, and with a wallet containing bullets and bullet molds, wadding, tow, a tinder box and all manner of hunting tools and conveniences, guarded the train, drove the live stock and as far as possible provided wild game for the company. ... The Negroes were variously engaged either in “toting” household “plunder,” clearing obstructions from the miserable road, or leading the packhorses. ... And the road, now that the most of them had to walk, seemed worse than ever. ... Such travelling was especially hard upon the women, and not made any the more cheerful by the reports they had heard at Fort Chiswell of fresh signs of Indians and outlawed Tories, (the Tories upon the waters of the Holston were as dangerous and as hurtful as the Indians) nor by the sight of the solitary graves of murdered settlers which were met with from time to time along the lonely road. ... Every evening the bedding, and a multitude of other things, had to be unloaded from the packhorses only to be loaded again in the morning; [to their] sleeping places which never fully protected them from rain.⁵⁵

The foregoing quotation also reveals that the road past Aspenvale had not yet in 1781 been sufficiently improved to be a wagon road. However, we can deduce that it was improved for wagon travel sometime before 1792, because in that year the Virginia legislature passed “An Act to facilitate the intercourse of inhabitants of this Commonwealth with the State of Kentucky,” which appointed commissioners to plan a wagon road from Anderson’s block house at the western end of future Scott County to the Cumberland Gap.⁵⁶ The Act authorizing construction of that wagon road passed three years later.⁵⁷ With its completion, horse-drawn vehicles could make the entire journey from Fort Chiswell to Kentucky.

Having thus surveyed the historical background to the settlement of Southwest Virginia and placed Seven Mile Ford and Aspenvale in the broader context, we next turn in the second part of this article to a detailed description of the cemetery and the persons who lie there.

Part 2. The First Person Buried at Aspenvale and Her Scots-Irish Antecedents and Progeny

Margaret Buchanan (1718–1777) was the first person to be buried in the Aspenvale cemetery, and she was a classic example of the Scots-Irish role in the settling of Southwest Virginia. She was the sister of surveyor John Buchanan. Her parents were James Buchanan (1698–17??), who had been born in Ireland (one source says possibly in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania) and Jane Sayers (1702–17??), who had been born in Ireland. Margaret Buchanan's parents had a third child in addition to John and Margaret herself.⁵⁸

Margaret Buchanan married Charles Campbell (ca. 1720–1767) about 1744. Internet genealogists agree that Charles Campbell's father was named Patrick, but differ on exactly who that Patrick was. The most compelling of these sources⁵⁹ has it that Charles's father Patrick Campbell (1696–1767) was born at Drumaboden (in County Donegal about 15 miles northwest of Londonderry) and brought his entire family to Philadelphia when Charles was 5–6 years old.

Following her husband's death in 1767, Margaret Buchanan Campbell brought her son and four daughters to settle at Aspenvale. One writer remarked that in coming to the wilderness in such circumstances the widow must have been "a brave and industrious woman."⁶⁰ According to Clara Hill Carner, "Margaret Buchanan Campbell, widowed in 1767, came [to Aspenvale] in 1768 or 1769 to establish a home on a tract of a thousand acres of land located on the Holston River in what is now known as Seven Mile Ford, Virginia. This tract of land was given to Margaret Buchanan by her brother, Col. John Buchanan, a surveyor, as a wedding present when she was married to Col. Charles Campbell. This location has been called "God's Acre" and lies on the hillside 3,500 feet north of the Lee Highway.⁶¹ Carner says that the name Aspenvale was derived from the lush vales where the aspen trees grew. Kegley notes that the original survey and plat for the land was recorded for "John Buchanan, ye little 1000 acres

Figure 3. Coauthor John M. Preston V, son of John M. Preston IV, standing at the grave site of William Campbell in the spring of 2007. Two unengraved stones are behind Preston in the fore and middle ground. The cemetery utility structure is in the background. Photograph by Jim Glanville.



at Asp Bottom on Indian River” on 24 November 1747.⁶² Furthermore, Gordon Aronhime stated that the land called “Aspe Bottom” in later years became know as Aspinville and then Aspenvale.⁶³ So perhaps the cemetery derives its names from rattlesnakes rather than from trees.

The Scots-Irish pioneers of Virginia had large families, and inter-marriage among their members was commonplace. For example, as noted below, Margaret Buchanan Campbell’s granddaughter married William Preston’s son. By the time of that marriage, William Preston had become an important man.

The longer the founder James Patton was in Virginia, the more he came to rely on his nephew William Preston. By the time Preston was thirty, he had become Patton’s assistant, accountant, surveyor, and companion.⁶⁴ After Patton was killed at Draper’s Meadows, in modern-day Blacksburg, in 1755 in a fight with Indians, Preston took over all of Patton’s interests. Eighteen years later, Preston established the Smithfield Plantation near the spot where his uncle had died. At Smithfield Plantation, William Preston’s son Francis grew to manhood.

In 1793, Francis Preston of Smithfield married Margaret Buchanan Campbell’s granddaughter Sarah of Aspenvale and the salt lick, and moved with her to the Salt Works⁶⁵ she had inherited from her father. Sarah was the daughter of General William Campbell and Elizabeth Henry, sister of Patrick Henry. All five of these persons are

buried in the Aspenvale cemetery. Francis and Sarah's marriage founded an important branch of an influential southern political clan. Many descendants of that clan are buried at Aspenvale.

The Succession of Owners at Aspenvale Cemetery

Leaving aside French and American Indian claims to the land on which Aspenvale resides, the English and later American records show a clear and continuous chain of ownership beginning in 1753.

By 1753, Colonel John Buchanan had been for some time James Patton's principal surveyor. In that year he became the first owner of record of the Aspenvale cemetery, which lay within "One thousand acres granted from George II, signed by his lieutenant, Governor of the Colony, Robert Dinwiddie." Starting with John Buchanan, the succession of ownership of Aspenvale cemetery is summarized in Table 1 (pages 90–91).

State and National Recognition of the Aspenvale Cemetery

Stimulus for local people to seek both state and national recognition for the Aspenvale cemetery site came during the planning for the 1982 sesquicentennial celebration of the founding of Smyth County. During the preparations for that celebration, in May 1978, the Smyth County Historical and Museum Society adopted a resolution to provide an adequate road up the hill to the cemetery.⁶⁸ That resolution led to an appeal to various authorities for funding. The appeal was successful, and the road was improved. Simultaneously, the Historical and Museum Society worked with the State of Virginia Historic Preservation Office to prepare a Nomination for the Aspenvale cemetery site to the National Registry of Historic Places, while concurrently making an application for registration of the site as a Virginia Historic Landmark.⁶⁹

Both the state and national registration applications were successful, and a joint ceremony to celebrate both national and state landmark registry of the site was held at the cemetery on 30 May 1982.⁷⁰ Marker plaques noting these registrations were placed on the stone columns at the entrance to Aspenvale cemetery as pictured in Figure 4. The plaques themselves are shown in Figures 5 and 6.

Twenty years after its state and national historic registrations, Aspenvale was awarded the additional designation as a site on the Route of Our Forefathers to King's Mountain⁷¹ or the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. The plaque recording this designation is shown in Figure 7.

The notes for the dedication ceremony program of Aspenvale as a stop on the Overmountain Victory Trail were prepared by Clara Hill Carner and included an historical sketch of Aspenvale cemetery which stated:

Aspenvale Cemetery, this historic site, located at Seven Mile Ford, Smyth County, Virginia, derived its name from the frontier home place of General William Campbell. General Campbell's mother, Mrs. Charles (Margaret Buchanan) Campbell, widowed



Figure 4. The entrance to Aspenvale cemetery. On the pillar to the left of the gate is the bronze plaque recording that the Aspenvale property has been placed on the National Historic Register. On the pillar to the right is the marker that designates the cemetery as a Virginia Historic Landmark. The free standing sign at the lower right designates the cemetery as a stop on the National Historic Overmountain Victory Trail. The three markers are shown individually in Figures 5, 6, and 7. An iron gate and a surrounding stone wall are characteristic of Scots-Irish cemeteries in Appalachia.



Figure 5. The plaque recording that the Aspenvale cemetery has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

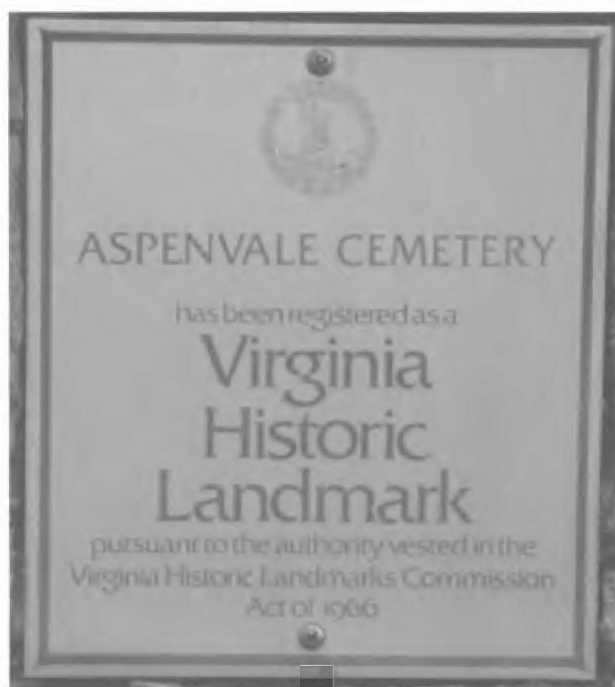


Figure 6. The plaque recording that the Aspenvale cemetery has been registered as a Virginia Historic Landmark.



Figure 7. The marker that records the designation of Aspenvale cemetery as a stop on the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail.

in 1767, came here in 1768 or 1769 to establish a home on a tract of a thousand acres of land located on the Holston River in what is now known as Seven Mile Ford, Virginia. This tract of land was given to Margaret Buchanan by her brother, Col. John Buchanan, a surveyor, as a wedding present when she was married to Col. Charles Campbell. The name Aspenvale was derived from the lush vales where the aspen trees grew. This location has been called "God's Acre" and lies on the hillside 3,500 feet north of the Lee Highway, originally the Great Wagon Road. Soldiers of six wars are buried in Aspenvale, an historic graveyard which is two hundred and twenty six years old. The first grave is that of Mrs. Charles (Margaret Buchanan) Campbell whose death is recorded as 1777.⁷²

The Adjacent Cemeteries

Adjacent to the Aspenvale cemetery are four other cemeteries. The adjacent cemeteries are briefly described in this section and mapped in Figure 8.

We have not made any effort to study these adjacent cemeteries. According to local cemetery aficionados Mack and Kenneth Sturgill, the Rector/Humphry Cemetery, which is presently enclosed by a wooden fence, holds eleven burials. Most of the persons here-interred carry the Rector or Humphreys name, and all the interments date from 1892–1951.⁷³ The Oury/McCready Cemetery, which is presently enclosed by a fence made of horizontal metal pipes, holds thirty burials. Many of the persons interred carry the Oury or McCready name, and all the interments date from 1830–1925.⁷⁴ The Spotts/Thompson Cemetery occupies a large area to the east and south of the other three cemeteries and covers a large, ill-defined, mostly wooded area. It is reported to hold fifteen burials,⁷⁵ most dating from the second

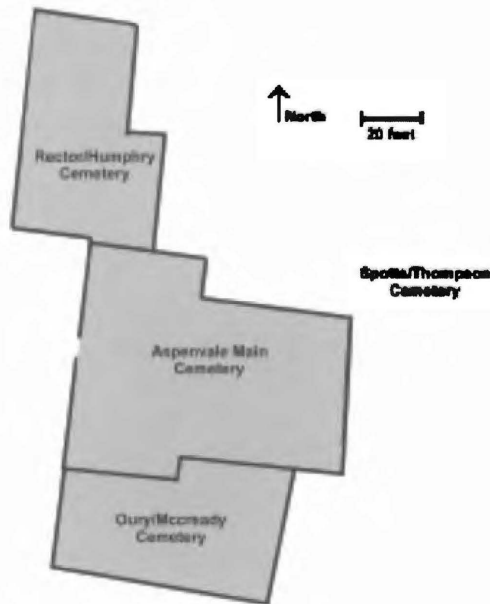


Figure 8. A map of the cemeteries at Aspenvale and their relative locations. There are three family cemeteries adjacent to the Aspenvale. To the north is the Rector/Humphry cemetery, which is presently enclosed by a wooden fence. To the south is the Oury/McCready cemetery. These adjacent cemeteries are related to the Aspenvale cemetery only by their proximity, not by any Preston family bonds.

half of the nineteenth century. A stroll through this cemetery area confirms that in this vicinity there are indeed many growth-obscured, broken, and unreadable headstones.

Part 3: The Persons Interred at Aspenvale Cemetery

A Map of Aspenvale Cemetery and a Summary List of the Persons Buried There

Figure 9 shows a schematic map of the Aspenvale cemetery. The map was prepared using satellite imagery combined with on-the-ground surveys and digital photography. Actual images of the cemetery obtained by satellite imagery can be examined at the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) website managed by the U.S. Geological Survey.⁷⁶ Alternatively, Aspenvale cemetery (which has a mean above-sea-level altitude of 2011 feet) can be studied using any convenient mapping system and entering the global positioning coordinates of latitude 36.8142819 degrees and longitude -81.6398398 degrees.⁷⁷ Summary information about persons buried in the Aspenvale cemetery is listed in Table 2.

Table 2 provides a number or letter for each grave at the Aspenvale cemetery, the person (or, in one case, persons) buried in that grave, and the person's birth and death dates so far as is known. Biographical information about persons buried at Aspenvale is provided in the following section of this article. The numbers on the map (Figure 9) and in Table 2 record the order in which the persons were buried.

The principal, published, authoritative source of genealogical and biographical information about the large and extended Preston family is *Dorman's Genealogy*.⁷⁸ Footnoted references to *Dorman's Genealogy* are provided in the second column of Table 2. Many additional biographical references are incorporated into the individual biographical sketches in the section of this article following the present section.

Biographical Notes about Persons Buried at Aspenvale

The biographical information in this section derives from a wide variety of sources. However, the bulk of it comes from two places: the aforementioned *Dorman's Genealogy* and the family records of coau-

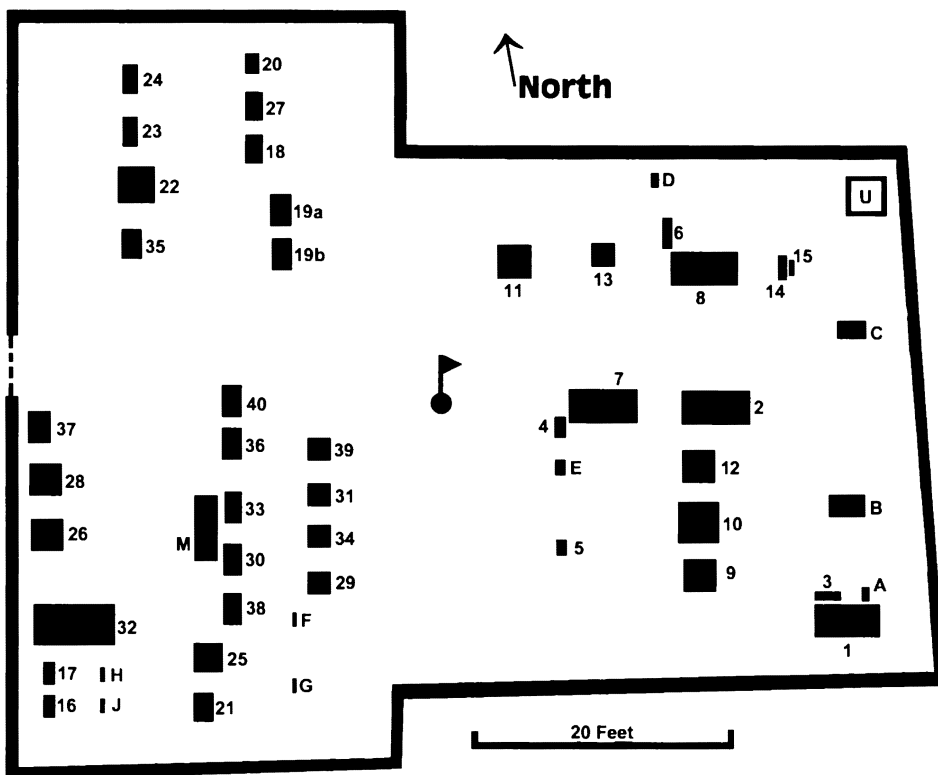


Figure 9. Map of the grave sites in the Aspenvale cemetery. This updated and revised map was prepared for the present article.

thor John Preston. From the family records come a preliminary grave site map, a catalog of summary biographical information prepared by coauthor John Preston,⁹⁸ various family records in his possession, including a family tree prepared by him, and photographs. Internet resources that tell about multiple buried persons are described and evaluated in the immediately following paragraph. Additional information sources for specific individuals are appropriately cited and footnoted below in the descriptions of the persons buried at Aspenvale.

Several internet sources provide information about multiple persons at Aspenvale. Internet sources of biographical information are numerous and potentially both very useful and very problematic.⁹⁹ Two such sites we have consulted are the “Find A Grave” web site that contains links to close-up images of many of the headstones at Aspenvale, but which unfortunately includes a number of persons

Table 2. Summary Information of the Graves at Aspenvale

Grave	Person or Stone	Birth-Death Dates
1.	Margaret Buchanan Campbell	1718–1777
2.	Brigadier General William Campbell	1745–22 August 1781
3.	Charles Henry Campbell	1780–1785 ⁷⁹
4.	Elizabeth Henry Russell Smith	1786–10 October 1804 ⁸⁰
5.	David Coalter	1764/5–August 1821
6.	Peter Byrns	c. 1752–1824
7.	Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell	10 July 1749– 18 March 1825
8.	Ellen Wilson Preston ⁸¹	21 December 1789– 24 August 1831
9.	Charles Henry Campbell Preston ⁸²	13 September 1807– 13 January 1832
10.	General Francis Preston ⁸³	21 August 1765– 26 May 1835
11.	Maria Thornton Carter Preston ⁸⁴	12 December 1805– 18 October 1842
12.	Sarah Buchanan Campbell Preston	21 April 1778– 23 July 1846
13.	John M. Preston, I ⁸⁵	5 August 1788– 14 September 1861
14.	Louisiana Hart Breckenridge ⁸⁶	Died ca. 1826, infant
15.	Virginia Preston Carrington ⁸⁷ and brother	July 1833– 1 December 1893
16.	Mittie Preston	27 October 1875– 31 October 1875, infant
17.	Maria Preston	5 April 1878– 24 July 1878, infant
18.	Mary Woodson Preston ⁸⁸	c. 1840–c. 1878
19a.	Thomas Woodson Preston	c. 1865, 18 months old
19b.	Twin brother of Thomas Woodson Preston	c. 1864, 12 hours old
20.	Katherine Morris Dabney Preston ⁸⁹	16 December 1837–1881
21.	George Moffett Cochran, C. S. A. ⁹⁰	10 April 1843– 8 March 1883
22.	Dr. Charles H. C. Preston	1867–11 May 1890
23.	Lucy Woodford Taylor Preston ⁹¹	22 July 1849– 23 November 1893
24.	Lucy Elizabeth Preston	1893–1894, infant
25.	Dr. Henry King Cochran, C. S. A. ⁹²	5 August 1832– 28 November 1903

Table 2, continued

26.	John M. Preston, II, C.S.A. ⁹³	14 October 1838– 27 September 1928
27.	Charles Henry Campbell Preston ⁹⁴	12 September 1840– 5 July 1931 or 1932
28.	Mary Lewis Cochran Preston ⁹⁵	21 October 1840– 26 April 1932
29.	Robert Gray	10 March 1859– 13 October 1932
30.	Rev. Cochran Preston	9 May 1871–12 May 1935
31.	John M. Preston Gray	16 June 1902– 10 September 1947
32.	Sarah (Sally) Buchanan Preston Dean	1873–1949
33.	John M. Preston, III	17 August 1866– 13 February 1951
34.	Elizabeth Cummings Preston Gray	3 June 1868– 28 August 1956
35.	Blair Dabney Preston.	1877–1957
36.	Sallie Mitchell Preston	22 August 1879– 29 September 1957
37.	Nelly Cummings Preston	1880–1966
38.	Virginia Sayers Graham Preston	10 September 1876– 1 June 1971
39.	Mary Preston Gray ⁹⁶	2 August 1896– 3 February 1992
40.	Ellinor Graham Preston	5 June 1903– 13 March 1997
A.	Unengraved stone. ⁹⁷ Possibly McDowell child.	Unknown
B.	Unengraved stone	Unknown
C.	Unengraved stone	Unknown
D.	Unengraved stone. Breckenridge infant.	Unknown
E.	Unengraved stone.	Unknown
F.	Unengraved stone	Unknown
G.	Unengraved stone	Unknown
H.	Unengraved stone. Possibly foot stone for grave 17.	Unknown
J.	Unengraved stone. Possibly foot stone for grave 16.	Unknown
Un- known	Margaret Lynn Lewis Cochran	1808–1875
M.	Family memorial	
U.	Utility structure	

buried not in Aspenvale proper but rather in one of the adjacent cemeteries.¹⁰⁰ Quite useful, and seemingly fairly reliable, is “Preston’s Page” website.¹⁰¹

Grave 1. Margaret Buchanan Campbell (1718–1777) was the first to be buried at Aspenvale. Her marker stone is inscribed: “In Memory of Margaret Campbell. Born in Buchanan. Died in 1777, this State. This slab placed here in 1854 by her great grandchildren.” She was the sister of Colonel John Buchanan the surveyor, wife of Charles Campbell, and mother of General William Campbell (Grave 2). She is described earlier in this article in the section titled “The First Person Buried at Aspenvale and Her Scots-Irish Antecedents and Progeny.” (page 100)

Grave 2. Brigadier General William Campbell (1745–1781) is widely known as “The Hero of King’s Mountain” (fought 7 October 1780). Campbell is assuredly the most eminent person interred at Aspenvale, and his bibliography is extensive. A biographical article by Riley includes 159 footnotes and references¹⁰⁴; an unfootnoted, general interest biography of Campbell appeared in *Virginia Cavalcade* magazine.¹⁰⁵ William Campbell was the son of Charles Campbell and Margaret Buchanan (Grave 1) and was baptized in Augusta County on 1 September 1745. He attended Augusta Academy in Lexington (the Academy became successively Liberty Hall, Washington College, and Washington and Lee University). Some time between 1768 and 1769 he inherited from his father the Salt Lick site in modern-day Saltville.¹⁰⁶ He married Elizabeth Henry (Grave 7), the sister of Patrick Henry, in Henrico Parish on 2 April 1776. Their children were Charles Henry Campbell (Grave 3) and Sarah Buchanan Campbell (Grave 12). William Campbell contracted disease at Yorktown and was taken to the home of his wife’s half brother, Colonel John Symms, at Rocky Mills in Hanover County, Virginia, where after a few days he died and was initially interred.¹⁰⁷ The circumstances of the return of his remains to Aspenvale are described later. His gravestone is inscribed:

Here Lie The Remains of Brigadier General William Campbell. He was born in the year 1745 and died in the defense of His country in the year 1781 in the camp of General LaFayette near Richmond. By the unanimous election of his brother officers he commanded at King’s Mountain.¹⁰⁸ For his heroism and gallant conduct on that occasion the congress of the United States ten-

Figure 10. William Campbell. Shown at right is the conjectural portrait painted in 1975 by Robert W. Wilson and displayed in the Visitor's Center at the Kings Mountain National Military Park, Blacksburg, South Carolina. No life portrait of William Campbell is known. This one is based on a life portrait of his grandson William C. Preston¹⁰² who was said to look much like his grandfather.¹⁰³



dered to him and the officers and privates under his command the following resolution: "Resolved that congress entertain a high sense of the Spirited and military conduct of Colonel Campbell and the officers and privates of the militia under his Command displayed in the action of October 7th in which a complete victory was obtained over superior numbers of the enemy advantageously posted on King's Mountain in the state of North Carolina and that resolution be published by the commanding officer of the head of his Regiment he brought on the battle of Guilford and was the last to quit on the field. His real talents and services were awarded by high testimonials of his country's gratitude and have inscribed his name on the story of the revolution." His bones were brought hither and this stone erected by the husband of his only child, Francis Preston.

Grave 3. Charles Henry Campbell (1780–1785)¹⁰⁹ was the only son of William and Elizabeth Campbell (Graves 2 and 7), and died aged five, after the death of his father.

Grave 4. Elizabeth Henry Russell Smith (1786–1804)¹¹⁰ was the daughter of Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell (Grave 7) and her second husband General William Russell, and the half sister of Sarah Buchanan Campbell Preston. She married Francis Smith on 10 January 1804. Her twin brother died as an infant and is possibly buried at

Aspenvale. Originally buried in Saltville, the circumstances of the removal of her remains to Aspenvale cemetery are discussed below.

Grave 5. David Coalter (1764/5–1821)¹¹¹ was the father of Maria Eliza Coalter, who was the first wife of William Campbell Preston (who wrote a partial autobiography¹¹²). Coalter died at the Salt Works in Saltville. His grave stone is inscribed “Monument erected by his son-in-law William C. Preston, 1829.”

Grave 6. Peter Byrns (ca. 1752–1824) was a tutor to General Preston’s children and moved from Smithfield Plantation to Saltville with Francis Preston following the latter’s marriage to Sarah Buchanan Campbell. Peter Byrns’ life was conjecturally reconstructed in a recent article.¹¹³

Grave 7. Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell (1749–1825) was a sister of Patrick Henry. She is pictured in Figure 11. She married first General William Campbell (Grave 2) and second General William Russell. She was in later life affectionately known as “Madam Russell” and is regarded as a founding force for Methodism in Southwest Virginia, a faith to which she was converted at the age of 36.¹¹⁴ She lived much of her adult life in Saltville at the Salt Works,¹¹⁵ and spent her last few years at Chilhowie. A biography of her was written by her grandson¹¹⁶ and a semi-fictionalized biography¹¹⁷ of her was written by her descendant Nelly C. Preston, who is herself buried at Aspenvale (Grave 37). Madam Russell is also the subject of a number of scholarly articles.¹¹⁸ She was an important figure in the development of Southwest Virginia. The inscription on her gravestone reads: “Elizabeth Russell, born Elizabeth Henry, by her first marriage wife of General William Campbell, by a second, wife of General William Russell. A devoted and devout member of the Methodist Church. Her life was passed in the love and practice of its doctrine. She died in March, 1825.”¹¹⁹

Grave 8. Ellen Wilson Preston (1789–1831) was the first wife of John M. Preston, I (Grave 13) and mother of Walter Preston, James Preston, and Elizabeth Allen Preston.

Grave 9. Charles Henry Campbell Preston (1807–1832) was the third son of Francis Preston (Grave 10) and Sarah Buchanan Campbell (Grave 12) and was born at the Salt Works in Saltville. He attended Hampden-Sydney College and the University of Virginia. In 1829 he married Mary Beale; they had no children who survived infancy. He



Figure 11 (left): Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell (Grave 7).
From the John M. Preston family files.

Figure 12 (right): Sarah Buchanan Campbell Preston (Grave 12).
From the John M. Preston family files.

was given control of the Salt Works in 1830 but died at the young age of 24 before he could improve them.

Grave 10. General Francis Preston (1765–1835) was born at “Greenfield” near the present town of Fincastle and raised at the Smithfield Plantation in modern-day Blacksburg. He studied law under George Wythe at the College of William and Mary. He married Sarah Buchanan Campbell (Grave 12) on 10 January 1793, moved to the Salt Works and took over their management. In 1810, he and his wife built a frame house¹²⁰ in Abingdon across Main Street from the courthouse. They lived for possibly two years in that house until it burned circa 1812; after the fire they built a second house nearby.¹²¹ Francis’ wife Sarah moved the family back to the Salt Works to be near her aged mother during the absence of her husband on duty during the War of 1812. By 1816 Francis and Sarah were apparently living back in Abingdon, where Francis had established a law office, and their last child (daughter Margaret Buchanan Preston) was born there in 1818. It seems that for some period of time Francis and Sarah maintained residences both in Abingdon and at the Salt Works. Eventually, in 1832 she moved with her husband to the large, newly-constructed family mansion in Abingdon. In 1830, the General and his wife began a large mansion outside of the town limit of Abingdon, into which they moved in 1832. The mansion was later used as a Methodist girls college and is today the Martha Washington Inn, lo-

cated across the street from Virginia's Barter Theater.¹²² He fathered 15 children, 14 with his wife. He died in Columbia, South Carolina, at the home of his son William C. Preston, and his wife had his body removed to Aspenvale three years later. He enjoyed an active public life; his monument is inscribed:

General Francis Preston, Who was born 2nd August 1765 [and] Died May 26th 1835. Whose public virtues were recognized and rewarded by many public trusts confided to him through a long series of years — during which he was elected to *Congress* to the *Senate of the State*, and many times to the *House of Representatives*. He was also *Brigadier General* and served one campaign during the war with England — His private virtues were eminent — His integrity honor and spirit were conspicuous — for the manifestation of which an ample estate furnished frequent opportunities — He was largely and honorably connected with the establishment and development of society in this region.

Surprisingly, there is no scholarly biographical work devoted to Francis Preston. The three extant works are by family members. His son Thomas L Preston wrote a short article about his father for the family record,¹²³ and mentions his father many places in his book of reminiscences.¹²⁴ Elizabeth C. Preston Gray (Grave 34) published a sketch of Francis Preston that was read before the Washington County Historical Society on 19 April 1938.¹²⁵

Grave 11. Maria Thornton Carter Preston (1805–1842) was born at the Salt Works and was the sixth daughter of General Francis Preston (Grave 10) and Sarah Buchanan Campbell (Grave 12) and the second wife of John M. Preston, I (Grave 13), whom she married in 1837 when a Preston married an unrelated, or possibly very distantly related, Preston. She was the mother of John M. Preston, II (Grave 26) and Charles Henry Campbell (Grave 27). She died as the result of the miscarriage of her third child, who is buried with her.

Grave 12. Sarah Buchanan Campbell Preston (1778–1846) was born at the Aspenvale property at Seven Mile Ford. She is pictured in Figure 12. She was the heiress to the Salt Works and was specifically so-designated in her father's will.¹²⁶ She was the wife of Francis Preston (Grave 10) and the mother of fourteen of his children. She lived first at the Salt Works and later in Abingdon, with some going back and forth as described in the discussion of her husband's homes under

“Grave 10” above. She died at the family mansion in Abingdon. Her inscription reads:

In memory of Mrs. Sarah B. Preston Who was born 21st April 1778 Died 23rd July 1846 Wife of General Francis Preston and only surviving child of William Campbell of Kings Mountain. She was of a very elevated character of vigorous understanding of high principles — and exercised within a wide social sphere both by precept and example a most benign influence just in her opinions, benevolent in her feelings, dignified in her manners, and liberal in all her sentiments and conduct. She was the object of general respect and affection and of the profoundest love of her numerous family.

Her bringing back for reburial in the Aspenvale cemetery of several of her relatives is discussed below.

Grave 13. John Montgomery Preston I (1788–1861) was born in Green Springs in Washington County, the son of Walter Preston and Ann Montgomery. He was a merchant and banker in Abingdon, Virginia. He served as a Justice of the Peace and in 1834–35 as Mayor. He married first Ellen Wilson and had three children. He then married Maria Thornton Carter Preston (Grave 11). In 1842 he built “Heroden” at Seven Mile Ford, which began as a tavern and was later a residence. He was an early and significant contributor to Emory and Henry College in Glade Spring. He was the father of John M. Preston II (Grave 26) and Charles Henry Campbell (Grave 27).

Grave 14. Louisiana Hart Breckenridge, who died circa 1826, was the infant daughter of Rev. R. J. Breckenridge¹²⁷ (a nephew of William Preston) and his wife, Sophonisba Preston, the sixth child of General Francis Preston (Grave 10) and Sarah Buchanan Campbell (Grave 12).

Grave 15. This small gravestone, which stands very close to Grave 14, is marked “V. P. C and Brother.” Possibly this is the grave of Virginia Preston Carrington (individual 3325 in *Dorman’s Genealogy*), daughter of Eliza Henry Preston and Edward C. Carrington¹²⁸ who were married in 1820. Family records note this grave as that of Virginia *Plearrington* Carrington, with those parents. These same parents lost two children (an unnamed daughter and a son named Francis Preston Carrington) in infancy in 1828 and 1830 (individuals 3322 and 3323 in *Dorman’s Genealogy*), but it is not documented whether

or not these infants were laid to rest at Aspenvale. More research will be needed to clarify this presently unclear situation.

Grave 16. Mittie Preston (1875–1875) was the infant daughter of John M. Preston, II (Grave 26) and his wife Mary Lewis Cochran Preston (Grave 28).

Grave 17. Maria Preston (1878–1878) was the infant daughter of John M. Preston, II (Grave 26) and his wife Mary Lewis Cochran Preston (Grave 28).

Grave 18. Mary Woodson Preston (c. 1840–c. 1878) was born in Goochland County, Virginia, and was the first wife of Charles Henry Campbell Preston (Grave 27). She was the mother of Dr. Charles H. C. Preston (Grave 22).

Grave 19a. Thomas Woodson Preston (ca 1864–1865) died in infancy aged 18 months. He was the second son of Mary Woodson Preston (Grave 18) and Charles Henry Campbell Preston (Grave 27).

Grave 19b. Unnamed Preston, the infant son of Mary Woodson Preston (Grave 18) and Charles Henry Campbell Preston (Grave 27) and the twin brother of Thomas Woodson Preston (Grave 19a). He died ca 1864, and was just 12 hours old as recorded on his tombstone.

Grave 20. Katherine “Kitty” Morris Dabney Preston (1837–1881) was born in Campbell County and was the second wife of Charles Henry Campbell Preston (Grave 27). She was the mother of one son, Blair Dabney Preston (Grave 35).

Grave 21. George Moffett Cochran (1843–1883), C. S. A., was born in Charlottesville, Virginia. He was the son of John Cochran and his wife Margaret Lynn Lewis. He fought in the Civil War and was wounded at Spotsylvania. His gravestone is inscribed: “He served faithfully fours years in Carrington’s battery, C. S. A. Erected by J. C. C.”

Grave 22. Dr. Charles H. C. Preston (1867–1890) died “in the 23rd year of his age” unmarried and childless. He was the son of Mary Woodson Preston (Grave 18) and Charles Henry Campbell Preston (Grave 27).

Grave 23. Lucy Woodford Taylor Preston (1849–1893) was born in Caroline County and was the third wife of Charles Henry Campbell Preston and the mother of four daughters with him.

Grave 24. Lucy Elizabeth Preston (1893–1894) was the infant fourth daughter of Lucy Woodford Taylor (Grave 23) and Charles Henry Campbell Preston (Grave 27).

Grave 25. Dr. Henry King Cochran (1832–1903) was an assistant surgeon, C.S.A. He was the third son of Margaret Lynn Lewis (1808–1875), who was born near Sweet Springs, now West Virginia, and is buried in Charlottesville,¹²⁹ and John Cochran (1793–1883) who was born in Augusta County. Henry King Cochran was a student at the University of Virginia and graduated from Jefferson Medical College in 1856. After the War he established a medical practice at Seven Mile Ford, where he died after he “took chills” in Wilmington, N. C.

Grave 26. John M. Preston, II (1838–1928) was the son of John M. Preston, I (Grave 13) and Maria Thornton Carter Preston (Grave 11) and the child of a Preston–Preston marriage. He was born in Abingdon and was educated at the University of Virginia. He was a Captain in Company B, 48th Virginia Regiment, Stonewall Brigade, C.S.A., during the Civil War. He fought at Gettysburg and was twice wounded, once almost mortally. He married his cousin Mary Lewis Cochran Preston (Grave 28) in 1864 and they had eight children. He was invalided out of the army on 11 March 1865 and signed the Amnesty Oath on 19 July of that year. Later he lived at Seven Mile Ford and farmed in Smyth County. After 1880 he served for forty-eight years as an elder of the Seven Mile Ford Presbyterian Church. He sits in pride of place in the photograph shown in Figure 13.

Grave 27. Charles Henry Campbell Preston (1840–1931 or 1932¹³⁰) was educated at the University of Virginia and served as a lieutenant both in the infantry and cavalry during the Civil War until he was captured in December 1864 near Glade Spring, Virginia. His tombstone notes: “Capt. Co A 37th Regt C. S. A.” He later inherited the Aspenvale property and farmed there until 1918, when he moved to Goochland County, Virginia. He married successively Mary Woodson Preston (Grave 18), Kitty Morris Dabney (Grave 20), and Lucy Woodford Taylor (Grave 23). He had one son with his first wife, one son with his second wife, and four daughters with his third wife. He was the father of Dr. Charles H. C. Preston (Grave 22), Blair Dabney Preston (Grave 35), and Lucy Elizabeth Preston (Grave 24). He is cited as individual 3382 in *Dorman’s Genealogy*.

Grave 28. Mary Lewis Cochran Preston (1840–1932) was the daughter of John Cochran and Margaret Lynn Lewis. She had eight brothers and one sister and grew up in Charlottesville. She grew up to

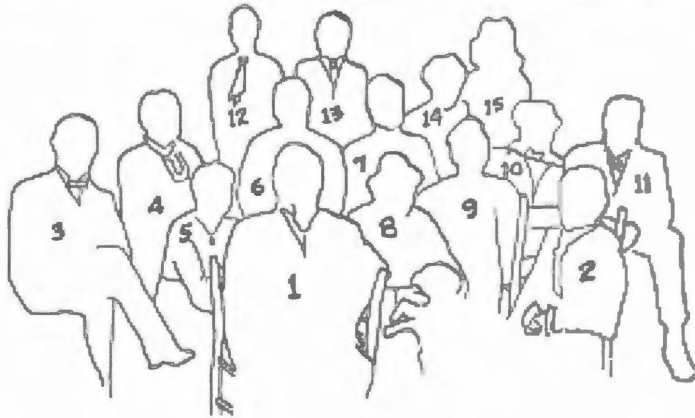


Figure 13: The Golden Wedding Anniversary gathering on 3 February 1914, of John Montgomery Preston, II, and Mary Lewis Cochran Preston. Photograph from the John M. Preston family files.

1. John M. Preston, II; 2. Mary Lewis Cochran Preston; 3. Reverend Cochran Preston; 4. Virginia Graham Preston; 5. Anne Montgomery Gray (Judkins); 6. Sarah (Sally) Buchanan Preston (Dean); 7. Elizabeth Cummings Preston (Gray); 8. Nelly Cummings Preston; 9. Margaret Lynn Preston (Woods); 10. Sallie Mitchell Preston; 11. John M. Preston, III; 12. John M. Preston IV (aged 7); 13. John M. Preston Gray; 14. Mary Preston Gray; 15. Ellinor Graham Preston (aged 10).

Thirteen of the individuals pictured here are buried at Aspenvale. Missing are only numbers 9 and 12.

be a “university belle” and a staunch Presbyterian.¹³¹ She married her cousin John M. Preston II (Grave 26) in 1864, and they had eight children. After her marriage she lived at Seven Mile Ford for almost seventy years until her death. She was the mother of John M. III (Grave 33), Elizabeth (Grave 34), Cochran (Grave 30), infant Mittie (Grave 16), infant Maria (Grave 17), Sarah Buchanan (1878–1949), Nelly (Grave 37), and Margaret Lynn. The six living children of Mary Lewis Cochran Preston became joint owners of the Aspenvale cemetery on the death of their mother in 1932.

Grave 29. Robert Gray (3 June 1859–28 August 1932) was born in Harrisburg and died in Bristol. He was the husband of Elizabeth Cummings Preston Gray (Grave 34).

Grave 30. Reverend Cochran Preston (1871–1935) was born in Charlottesville, the son of John M. Preston II (Grave 26) and Mary Lewis Cochran (Grave 28). He was raised in Seven Mile Ford and graduated from Hampden-Sydney College in 1892 and returned two years later to attend Union Theological Seminary (then at Hampden-Sydney). He married Virginia Sayers Graham (Grave 38) of Pulaski County in 1898. He was the father of two children, Ellinor Graham Preston (Grave 40) and Dr. John M. Preston IV (who is buried in Columbia, South Carolina). He was for many years a minister in the Presbyterian Church. He was paralyzed by a stroke in May 1932 while pastor of the Smyrna Presbyterian Church in Newberry, South Carolina. He returned to Seven Mile Ford, where he died three years later. He was the grandfather of coauthor Preston of this paper.

Grave 31. John M. Preston Gray (1902–1947) was the son of Robert Gray (Grave 29) and Elizabeth Cummings Preston (Grave 34).

Grave 32. Sarah (Sally) Buchanan Preston Dean (1873–1949) was a daughter of John M. Preston, II (Grave 26) and Mary Lewis Cochran (Grave 28) and the wife of Alvin Dean of South Carolina. After the death of her husband she was left a considerable sum of money and took her sister Nelly Cummings Preston (Grave 37) on a trip around the world. She published the book that her sister wrote about that trip.

Grave 33. John M. Preston III (1866–1951), the oldest child of John M. Preston II (Grave 26) and Mary Lewis Cochran (Grave 28) the husband of Sallie Mitchell (Grave 36).

Grave 34. Elizabeth Cummings Preston (1868–1956) was the second child and first daughter of John M. Preston II (Grave 26) and Mary Lewis Cochran (Grave 28). She was the wife of Robert Gray (Grave 29).

Grave 35. Blair Dabney Preston (1877–1957) was the son of Katherine Morris Dabney (Grave 20) and Charles Henry Campbell Preston (Grave 27).

Grave 36. Sallie Mitchell Preston (1879–1957) was the wife of John M. Preston, III (Grave 33).

Grave 37. Nelly Cummings Preston (1880–1966) grew up in Seven Mile Ford and was the youngest child of John M. Preston II (Grave 26) and Mary Lewis Cochran (Grave 28). She was the author of two books. The first, titled *Hitching Posts for Memories*,¹³² describes a round-the-world pleasure trip she undertook in the late 1930s with her sister Sarah Preston Dean (Grave 32). The second, titled *Paths of Glory*,¹³³ is a semi-fictionalized biography of Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell (Grave 7).

Grave 38. Virginia Sayers Graham Preston (1876–1971) was born in Mercer County, West Virginia, orphaned at the age of five, and reared by two aunts in Draper Valley in Pulaski County. She taught school until her marriage to the Rev. Cochran Preston in 1898. She was the mother of Ellinor Graham Preston (Grave 40) and John M. Preston, IV, the father of coauthor Preston of this paper.

Grave 39. Mary Preston Gray (1896–1992) was the daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Gray.

Grave 40. Ellinor Graham Preston (1903–1997) was the daughter of Cochran Preston (Grave 30) and Virginia Sayers Graham (Grave 38). She attended high school in Lexington and graduated with a mathematics major from Randolph-Macon Woman's College in 1925. She never married. She lived in Richmond for many years and rose to become Supervisor of Libraries for the Richmond Public schools. She was the aunt of coauthor Preston of this paper.

Grave A. An unengraved stone said to possibly mark a McDowell child.

Graves B and C have unengraved stones.

Grave D is possibly that of a Breckenridge infant who died circa 1830 and possibly the child of Rev. R. J. Breckenridge (a nephew of William Preston) and his wife, Sophonisba Preston, who was the sixth

child of General Francis Preston (Grave 10) and Sarah Buchanan Campbell (Grave 12).

Graves E, F, and G have unengraved stones.

Graves H and J have unengraved stones which are possibly footstones for known graves.

Grave Unknown. Margaret Lynn Lewis Cochran (1808–1875) is said by Preston family records to be buried at Aspenvale. Dorman (page 282), on the contrary, states that she is buried in Charlottesville and cites a headstone as evidence.

Sarah Campbell Preston and the Reburials

Sarah Campbell Preston arranged the reburials at Aspenvale of at least four of her relatives who had died earlier at places distant from the cemetery.

In 1832 she arranged for her father's remains to be brought back from Hanover County, where they had lain for 51 years, and to be reburied at Aspenvale. An eye-witness account of that event exists.¹³⁴ In 1838, three years after he had died (as mentioned above), Sarah Campbell Preston had her husband's remains brought back from South Carolina.

At a date that is not certain, but perhaps in 1842,¹³⁵ she arranged for the remains of her mother, Madam Russell, to be brought from the Salt Works to Aspenvale, and there is reason to believe that at the same time she arranged for the remains of her half-sister, Elizabeth Russell Smith, also to be brought from the Salt Works to Aspenvale.

There is a sharp disagreement among descendants of Madam Russell about where that lady wanted to be buried. Her grandson stated "Mrs. Elizabeth Russell departed this life the 18th day of March, 1825. She lay five weeks and three days of an illness caused by a fall. She met her death with Christian composure, after living an exemplary life of seventy-six years, and was buried by her request at Aspenvale."¹³⁶ On the other hand a descendent of Madam Russell's second husband states

Mrs. Russell died March 18th, 1825, having survived Gen. Russell thirty-two years. Her life-long attachment to her home at the Salt-Works remained to the end, and she desired to be buried there; on the "Sugar Loaf" hill, where was already interred her daughter Elizabeth Henry Smith. In obedience to her request

she was there buried; but some years later her daughter, Mrs. Preston, had her remains removed to Aspenville [sic], together with those of Mrs. Smith.¹³⁷

We will not be able to resolve here the controversy of where Madam Russell wanted to be buried. Here's the considered opinion of long time Saltville resident and local historian Roger Allison:

I [visited] the top of the 'Sugar Loaf' last summer, the first time I had been up there in 25–30 years. Since my previous trip the place has become overgrown with briars and trees so that nothing could be seen, but there was nothing to be seen there 25–30 years ago either. There are only two recorded burials on the Sugar Loaf — Madam Russell's and Elizabeth Russell Smith's — but there could have been at least one other. Shortly after moving to Saltville in 1788, Madam Russell gave birth to twins, Patrick Henry Russell and Jane Robertson Russell. Patrick Russell died within a few weeks of his birth while Jane Russell survived to produce the only descendants of the marriage of Gen. and Madam Russell. There is no marker for Patrick Russell at Aspenville, and no way of knowing where he was buried. The reburial of Elizabeth Russell Smith at Aspenville makes no sense unless it was done at the same time as the reburial of her mother.¹³⁸

Newspaper Articles about Aspenville and a Website

This final, brief section notes a handful of additional publications about Aspenville that have not been referenced in any of the preceding sections.

Newspaper articles that have appeared over the years describing the Aspenville cemetery include one by Goodridge Wilson¹³⁹; a poorly identified article from the *Roanoke Times*¹⁴⁰; an article in the Smyth County paper¹⁴¹; and a fairly recent article describing the current owners of the surrounding property and the neighbors of Aspenville cemetery, Gary and Linda Sutherland.¹⁴²

On the web, Aspenville finds notice in connection with a Methodist Heritage landmark.¹⁴³

Discussion and Conclusions

Aspenvale and the history of the persons there interred provide a useful and interesting insight into the development of Southwest Virginia. The information presented here answers many of the questions that a curious observer might ask about the cemetery and its occupants. However, some questions remain perplexing and some are destined never to be answered.

The opening of the road that made the Aspenvale property accessible was a concomitant of Virginia's aborted military involvement in the Cherokee War in 1760–1761. Although the road turned out not to have immediate military use, it made Southwest Virginia available for settlement by Europeans. Less than a decade after the opening of the military road, Margaret Campbell brought her family to a wild and barely civilized frontier.

The occupants of the Aspenvale cemetery testify to the dynamic role of the Scots-Irish pioneers who were the dominant ethnic group to settle Southwest Virginia. Despite the best efforts of the internet genealogists, the authors are not totally convinced as to exactly which families in Northern Ireland were the antecedents of the Smithfield Prestons. However, the Prestons of Greenfield and Smithfield and the Prestons of Walnut Grove near Abingdon (who descended through the probably unrelated Scots-Irishman Walter Preston) were joined in 1837 by the marriage of John Montgomery Preston I and Maria Thornton Carter Preston.

There are at least nine graves with stones (labeled A-J in Table 2) whose occupants are either in doubt (graves A, D, and E), or completely unknown (graves B, C, F, and G), or unknown if they are not foot stones (graves H and J). Perhaps the most likely candidates for unmarked graves are the four children of Francis and Sarah Preston who did not survive early childhood and whose grave sites are unknown. They are Francis Smith Preston (b. 21 January 1798, d. 21 January 1801), Jane Robertson Preston (b. 30 June 1804, d. August 1804), James Madison Preston (b. 18 May 1811, d. 22 January 1812), and Robert Gamble Preston (b. 9 October 1815, d. 18 December 1815). Other conceivable occupants of the unmarked graves are an infant child of the McDowell family, and, in a possibility which has

been raised here, Patrick Russell (who died in infancy), Jane Russell's brother, may have been interred or re-interred at Aspenvale.

Future Work

The work reported here is a useful beginning for the proper, academic assessment of the Aspenvale cemetery. Various additional lines of research can be suggested. Obviously, we may hope and expect that an even better understanding of the cemetery and its occupants will be achieved through additional work by the genealogical community and further investigative work in the various documentary records of Southwest Virginia. For example, persons interested in genealogical studies of the Preston family and related families will find much original material in the Anne Hager papers in the Special Collections division at Newman Library at Virginia Tech — a collection that we have examined only cursorily.¹⁴⁴ An anonymous referee made the useful suggestion about the grave stones that they be examined for makers' marks, something we have not done. An obvious line of future research will be to attempt to identify the occupants of the graves with unengraved stones (the likely identifications of some of whom we have suggested above) and to locate possible graves whose stones have been lost or decayed. Useful questions to be asked include: Were any slaves buried at Aspenvale? Probably not, but it's possible. Cemetery specialists and aficionados will be interested in comparing Aspenvale with the cemeteries of similar-status families in Southwest Virginia and trying to ascertain when the stone walls of the cemetery were constructed. On a minor point, it would be interesting to more precisely ascertain the dates of the changes of residence of Francis and Sarah Preston between the Salt Works and Abingdon over the course of their long marriage.

Clearly, much remains to be done.

Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge the help of Tod Owens, reference librarian at the Smyth-Bland regional library in Marion; Gary and Linda Sutherland, the present neighbors and fine custodians of Aspenvale; the Interlibrary loan office (ILLIAD) staff in Newman Library at Virginia Tech; Melissa Watson at the Abingdon office of

the Washington County Historical Society; and Carole Rosenbaum of Adwolfe for her diligent work in searching the files in the Clerk of Court's office in Marion. We thank several anonymous referees for their constructive criticisms and useful suggestions. One of us (JG) thanks Roger Allison for many helpful discussions; we thank him jointly for his valuable comments on an almost-final draft of the article. We thank our wives Deena Flinchum and Elizabeth Preston for their generous support.

Endnotes

1. Coauthor Preston is a seventh-generation descendant of Sarah Margaret Buchanan Campbell. He and his two brothers are the present joint owners of the Aspenvale Cemetery, as detailed in the cemetery's succession of ownership in Table 1. He is pictured at Aspenvale in Figure 3. His address is 1140 Venice Road, Knoxville, TN 37923 <prestonjohnliz@bellsouth.net >
2. Charles C. Royce, *The Cherokee Nation of Indians* (Chicago: Smithsonian Institution Press/Aldine Publishing, 1975; originally published in 1887 as a report of the U.S. Bureau of Ethnology).
3. Virginia Legislature (no individual author stated) "Treaty with the Cherokees at Lochabor, SC, 1770," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 9 (1902), pp. 360–4. The correct spelling is actually "Lochaber." Lochaber was the plantation home of British Cherokee agent Alexander Cameron in present day Abbeville County, S.C. Of course, European pioneers had already been settled on the land formally ceded by the Cherokees in the Lochaber treaty for 30–40 years.
4. Royce, *The Cherokee Nation*, p. 262. Here he describes and shows in maps the successive treaties by which Indian land was claimed by Europeans. The site of the Aspenvale property is shown on the map on this page
5. J. H. Parry, *The Age of Reconnaissance* (New York: Mentor Books, 1963), pp. 199–202. See also, John Sugden, *Sir Francis Drake* (New York: Touchstone, 1992), pp. 23–38. The 1567 fight at St. Juan de Ulúa (near modern day Veracruz in the southwest corner of the Gulf of Mexico) was the first battle in the New World in which English speakers were engaged.
6. Samuel E. Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages A. D. 500–1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).
7. David Ingram, *The Relation of David Ingram of Barking, in the Countie of Essex, Saylor, of sundry things which he with others did see, in traueiling by land from the most Northerly partes of the Baie of Mexico (where he with many others were set on shoare by Master Hawkins) through a great part of America, vntill he came within fiftie leagues or there abouts of Cape Britton* (London: 1589). Reprinted in George Parker Winship, *Sailors Narratives of Voyages Along the New England Coast, 1524–1624* (Houghton, Mifflin, Boston, 1905).

8. Charlton Ogburn, "The Longest Walk: David Ingram's Amazing Journey. He was the first Englishman to give a detailed description of the North American wilderness. Was it a pack of lies?" *American Heritage*, vol. 30 (1979). On line at www.americanheritage.com/articles/magazine/ah/1979/3/1979_3_4.shtml
9. Clarence Walworth Alvord and Lee Bidgood, *The First Explorations of the Trans-Alleghany Region by the Virginians 1650–1674* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1912). On line at <http://www.ls.net/~newriver/va/eta.htm>
10. The standard work on the subject is Alan V. Briceland's *Westward from Virginia: The Exploration of the Virginia Frontier, 1650–1710* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1987). Reviews of Briceland's interpretations include those of Brent Tarter (*Journal of American History*, vol. 74 [1987], pp. 1042–3); Warren Billings (*William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 45 [1988], pp. 372–3); and James H. O'Donnell III (*American Historical Review*, vol. 93 [1988], pp. 765–6).
11. Mary B. Kegley and F. B. Kegley, *Early Adventures on the Western Waters: The New River of Virginia in Pioneer Days, 1745–1800*, volume 1 (Orange, Virginia: Green Publishers, 1980), p. 1.
12. Abraham Wood, "The Travels of James Needham and Gabriel Arthur through Virginia, North Carolina, and Beyond, 1673–1674," contained in a letter from Abraham Wood to John Richards, 22 August 1674 and edited by R. P. Stephen Davis, Jr., *Southern Indian Studies*, vol. 39 (1990), pp. 31–55.
13. Various authors, *Tennessee: A Guide to the State* (Nashville: State of Tennessee, 1939). Compiled and written by the Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for the state of Tennessee.
14. John Haywood, *The Civil and Political History of the State of Tennessee, from its Earliest Settlement Up to the Year 1796; Including the Boundaries of the State* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1891; originally published 1823), p. 40. Haywood writes: "Mr. Vaughan, who lived as late as the year 1801, in the county of Amelia, in Virginia, was employed about the year 1740, as a packman to go to the Cherokee Nation with some Indian traders. The country was then but thinly inhabited to the west of Amelia; the last hunter's cabin that he saw was on Otter River, a branch of Staunton, now in Bedford County, Virginia... [passed] Seven Mile Ford, on the Holston."
15. James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch Irish, A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), pp. 200–10.
16. Patricia Givens Johnson, *James Patton and the Appalachian Colonists*, 3rd. ed. (Charlotte, North Carolina: Jostens, 1983), pp. 12–13.
17. James Webb, *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America* (New York: Random House, 2005), chapter 4 ("Londonderry. The Boyne. Exodus."), pp. 102–19; David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 605–39.
18. Daniel M. Friedenbergl, *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Land: The Plunder of Early America* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1992), pp. 101–13.
19. Patton wrote "I was the first British Subject that had petitioned for Land on said Waters which I Discovered at vast Expence." Cited by Johnson, *James Patton*, p. 67.

20. From 1744 until 1748 England and France were engaged in "King George's War." This was the American phase of the larger War of the Austrian Succession, which is dated from 1740 to 1748.
21. Johnson, *James Patton*, pp. 67–71.
22. Friedenberg, *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Land*, p. 101.
23. Patricia Givens Johnson, *General Andrew Lewis of Roanoke and Greenbrier* (Blacksburg, Virginia: Walpa Publishing, second revised edition 1994), pp. 15–16. Johnson notes, however, that despite their official sanction, marriages by Presbyterian ministers were often not recognized, and that some Presbyterian couples would travel long distances to be wed by a minister of the Established Church.
24. Thomas W. Preston, *Historical Sketches of the Holston Valleys* (Kingsport, Tennessee: Kingsport Press, 1928).
25. Ida R. Greever, *Sketches of Burke's Garden* (Radford: Commonwealth Press, 1974). As quoted in *Pathfinders*, p. 64.
26. Johnson, *Patton and the Colonists*, pp. 71–2.
27. Goodridge A. Wilson, "Dr. Thomas Walker Explorer," *Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia, Bulletin* 17 (1950), pp. 313–25. Wilson points out that no member of the 1748 exploring party that included Walker kept a written record that has survived, and that later family opinions that this party went as far as the Cumberland gap are not accepted by some historians.
28. Elizabeth Lemmon Sayers, *Smyth County, Virginia, Volume 1, Pathfinders and Patriots: Prehistory to 1832*, edited by Joan Tracy Armstrong (Marion, Virginia: Smyth County Museum and Historical Society, Inc., 1983), p. 64
29. Johnson, *Patton and the Colonists*, pp. 85–6.
30. *Ibid.*, p 73.
31. Mack Blackwell, Jr. *The Preston Salt Works: A Vital Link to Southwest Virginia's Industrial Beginning* (Abingdon, Virginia: Published by the author, 1992), pp. 2–3.
32. Kegley and Kegley, *Early Adventures*, p. 4.
33. Kegley and Kegley, *Early Adventures*, pp. 1–52.
34. Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746–1786, Washington County, 1777–1870* (Johnson City, Tennessee: Overmountain Press, reprint edition 1989, originally published 1903), pp. 43–54.
35. Carole Hammett, Consolidated electronic edition of *Dr. Walker's Journal* with all footnotes (Republished on line at <http://www.tngenweb.org/tnland/squabble/walker.html>). Hammett's on line publication draws on the print versions of Walker's journal by Lewis Preston Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia, 1769–1800* (Abingdon, Virginia: Self Published, 1929), pp. 8–26, and William Cabell Rives, *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country* (Johnson City, Tennessee: Watauga Press, 1928), pp. 165–74, and includes the footnotes of both these authors along with Hammett's own.
36. Colin G. Calloway, *The Shawnees and the War for America* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2007), p. 26. The quote comes originally from Churchill's *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*.

37. Fred Anderson, *The Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001). See also Preston, *Historical Sketches*, p. 182.
38. Under criticism for failing to save the Fort Loudoun garrison, Byrd soon grew completely disenchanted with his prospects for a successful attack and wrote, "If Colonel Grant with his formidable power [driving northwest from South Carolina into Cherokee country] could only burn fifteen towns & overrun the country below the mountains, not more than seventy miles from his advanced post I do not imagine it can be expected that I can with my pittyful number proceed thro' a wilderness two hundred miles from my advanced post, which is one hundred and thirty miles above the inhabitants, to attack thirty two towns in the remotest part of the Nation, defended by their united force, with the most distant probability of success." Quoted by Johnson, *General Andrew Lewis*, pp. 118–19. A few weeks after writing the foregoing, Byrd resigned in frustration and turned his command over to Adam Stephen.
39. Lawrence J. Fleenor and Dale Carter, *The Forts of the Holston Militia* (Big Stone Gap: published by Lawrence J. Fleenor, 2004), pp. 2–3. These authors write that Byrd "resigned in a huff."
40. Wayne E. Lee, "Fortify, Fight, or Flee: Tuscarora and Cherokee Defensive Warfare and Military Culture Adaptation," *Journal of Military History*, vol. xx, pp. 713–70. See page 766.
41. Johnson, *General Andrew Lewis*, p. 117.
42. Harry M. Ward, *Major General Adam Stephen and the Cause of American Liberty* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), pp. 71–2.
43. Walter T. Durham, *Daniel Smith: Frontier Statesman* (Gallatin, Tennessee: Sumner County Library Board, 1976), plate 14, "Map of Upper Clinch and Holston Rivers."
44. Daniel Smith, letter to Col. William Preston with accompanying sketch map of Southwest Virginia (Draper MSS, 3QQ57), pp. 69–72 in Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds., *Documentary History of Dunmore's War* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1905).
45. The proper name for the wagon road through Aspenvale is a prickly and somewhat controversial subject. The tourism industry designation of "Wilderness Road" has been argued against by prominent local historian Mary Kegley on the grounds that the section from Radford to Tennessee was not so-named until the late nineteenth century. See: Paul Dellinger, "Historian Questions Wilderness Road Brochure: Mary Kegley says some information is mythology not fact," *Roanoke Times*, 5 September 2007, *New River Current* section, p. 5; and Thomas Speed, *The Wilderness Road* (J. P. Morton and Company, Louisville, 1886, Reprinted New York: Burt Franklin, 1971). Compounding the matter, David Hackett Fischer and coauthor James C. Kelly in *Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000) designate as the "Wilderness Road" both the section from Fort Chiswell to Tennessee (map, p. 134) and the traditional Boone's trail from Kingsport northwest into Tennessee (map, p. 154). Kegley summarized her arguments in her recently

- published book, *Finding Their Way from the Great Road to the Wilderness Road, 1745–1796* (Wytheville: Kegley Books, 2008), which also provides useful historical insights into a region and time period not well treated in conventional Virginia histories.
46. Robert L. Kincaid, *The Wilderness Road: The Path of Empire in the Conquest of The Great West*, 3rd ed. (Middlesboro, Kentucky: Publisher not stated, 1966). The map on page 69 shows Seven Mile Ford.
 47. Parke Rouse Jr., *The Great Wagon Road: From Philadelphia to the South* (Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, 2001, reprint edition). Originally published by McGraw-Hill, 1973.
 48. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Myths & Realities: Societies of the Colonial South* (New York: Atheneum Press, 1970), p. 130. Originally published by Louisiana State University Press, 1952.
 49. This so-called Transylvania Purchase has been described as the largest private or corporate real-estate transaction in U. S. history. It was not recognized by the states of North Carolina or Virginia, and was of dubious legality.
 50. *The Cherokee Nation*, map on p. 262. See also John Mack Faragher, *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992), pp. 110–14.
 51. Neal O. Hammon and Richard Taylor, *Virginia's Western War, 1775–1786* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2002), p. 3.
 52. Kincaid, *The Wilderness Road*, pp. 99–101. See also Hammon and Taylor, *Virginia's Western War*, pp. 3–9.
 54. Goodridge A. Wilson Jr., *Smyth County History and Tradition* (Smyth County; Virginia: Centennial Celebration Committee, 1932; facsimile reprint, Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, 1998), describes Seven Mile Ford on pages 364–73, and reprints Campbell's letter to his "Dearest Betsy" on pages 61–3.
 55. George W. Ranck, *The Travelling Church: An Account of the Baptist Exodus from Virginia to Kentucky in 1781 under the Leadership of Rev. Lewis Craig and Captain William Ellis* (Louisville, Kentucky: Press of Baptist Book Concern, 1891). Available on line at on line at http://www.geocities.com/baptist_documents/travel.church.html
 56. "An Act to facilitate the intercourse of inhabitants of this Commonwealth with the State of Kentucky," William Waller Hening, *The statutes at large: being a collection of all the laws of Virginia*, 13 volumes (Charlottesville: Jamestown Foundation and the University of Virginia, 1969 [1823]), vol. 13, p. 544.
 57. "An Act for opening of a waggon road from the Blockhouse in Washington to the Cumberland mountain in the county of Lee," Samuel Shepherd, *The statutes at large of Virginia, from October session 1792, to December session 1806* [i.e. 1807] inclusive, three volumes (New York: AMS Press, 1970 [1835]), vol. 3, p. 316.
 58. freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~mysouthernfamily/myff/sources/sou0015.html#S1650 checked 03/21/07. <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~jlopp/janebuchananancestry.htm>, checked 03/20/07.

59. Website www.marchant-thomas.com/html/d0001/g0000073.html#I4959, checked 03/21/07.
60. Sayers, *Pathfinders*, p. 114.
61. Clara Hill Carner, "Aspenvale Cemetery," An address given to the Smyth County Historical and Museum Society, Marion, Virginia, 1978. Manuscript (5 pp.) on file, Marion Branch, Smith Bland Regional Library, Marion, Va.
62. Frederick B. Kegley, *Kegley's Virginia Frontier, the beginning of the southwest, the Roanoke of colonial days* (Roanoke: Southwest Virginia Historical Society, 1938), p. 123. Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia*, p. 62, has this as "Wasp" Bottom.
63. Gordon Aronhime, "Early Surveys Over Bristol Area Show Strong Historical Significance, *Bristol Herald Courier*, 28 October 1979, pp. 5a–c. Copy on file at the Washington County Historical Society, Abingdon, Virginia.
64. Johnson, *Patton and the Colonists*, p. 86.
65. This place was first called the Salt Lick, later the Salt Works, and still later the present-day town of Saltville.
66. According to family records in the possession of coauthor Preston and records in the Clerk of Court's office in Smyth County, Virginia. Present neighbors Gary and Linda Sutherland purchased the land adjacent to and surrounding the cemetery on 12 June 1998.
67. The land transfer of the encircling land from C. H. C. Preston to J. L. Vance (Smyth County Deed Book 27, pp. 116–17) records "The said party [Preston] reserves and excepts from the operation of this conveyance, so much of the grave yard, as is enclosed by the stone wall, with a right of ingress egress thereto, said enclosure supposed to contain about ¼ acre." This deed of "bargain and sale" was presented to the court on 16 April 1900 which ordered that the deed be recorded.
68. Resolution to provide an access road to the Aspenvale cemetery. Copy on file at the Smith–Bland Regional Library, Marion, Virginia.
69. Tucker Hill, *National Register of Historic Places: Inventory Nomination Form for Aspenvale* (Richmond: Virginia Historic Preservation Office, 1980). Copy on file at the Smith-Bland Regional Library. Marion, Virginia. Nomination certified by the State of Virginia Historic Preservation Officer, and signed by Tucker Hill, Executive Director, dated 16 September 1980.
70. Smyth County Sesquicentennial Commission (1832–1982). Dedication program of Aspenvale as a Virginia Historic Landmark and a National Historic Landmark. Ceremony held 3:00 p.m. on 30 May 1982. Copy on file in the Smyth-Bland Regional Library, Marion, Va.
71. Program notes for the ceremony of dedication of a Site on the Route of Our Forefathers to King's Mountain. Aspenvale Cemetery, 24 September 2003. Copy in the file of coauthor John Preston.
72. Clara Hill Carner, "Historical Sketch of Aspenvale Cemetery." In the program notes for the ceremony of dedication of a Site on the Route of Our Forefathers to King's Mountain. Aspenvale Cemetery, 24 September 2003. Copy in the file of coauthor John Preston.

73. Mack H. Sturgill and Kenneth L. Sturgill, *Smyth County Cemeteries*, volume 1 (Marion, Virginia: Self-Published, 1993), p. 11.
74. Sturgill and Sturgill, *Smyth County Cemeteries*, vol. 1, pp. 10, 21 burials; *Smyth County Cemeteries*, volume 2 (Marion, Virginia: Self-Published, 1994), unnumbered page, 1 burial. *Smyth County Cemeteries*, volume 4 (Marion, Virginia: Self-Published, 1998), p. 213, 8 burials.
75. Sturgill and Sturgill, *Smyth County Cemeteries*, vol. 1, p. 12.
76. United States Geological Survey, "Aspenvale Cemetery," Reston: U. S. Geological Survey Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). On line at <http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic>
77. Manuel Street, Personal communication, 2007. Street is the Global Information/imaging System (GIS) expert for Smyth County. That system was accessed for this article by addressing the Smyth County website at www.smythcounty.org and linking from there to the Smyth County GIS system.
78. John Frederick Dorman, *The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield in Virginia* (Louisville: The Filson Club, 1982).
79. The dates for C. H. Campbell in the table (1780–1785) are those stated by Thomas L. Preston in *A Sketch of Mrs. Elizabeth Russell* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1888; reprinted by Jerry W. Catron, Saltville, Virginia, 1999), p. 7. The tombstone records the year of death as 1786.
80. Anna Des Cognets, *William Russell and His Descendants* (Lexington, Ky., Printed for the family, by S. F. Wilson, 1884), p. 63, gives this date of death. Reprinted without the originally appended genealogical records and with new material and footnotes by Jeff Weaver (Pikeville, Kentucky, and Saltville, Virginia: Twin Commonwealth Publishers, 2005).
81. Dorman, p. 207. She was the first wife of John M. Preston I.
82. Dorman, pp. 209–10. This Charles Henry Campbell Preston is individual 339 in Dorman.
83. Dorman, p. 52. Some sources cite 1836 as Francis Preston's year of death. He is individual 33 in Dorman.
84. Dorman, pp. 206–8. Maria Thornton Carter Preston is individual 338 in Dorman.
85. Dorman, p. 207.
86. Dorman, p. 108. Louisiana Hart Breckenridge is individual 1272 in Dorman.
87. Dorman, p. 206. Virginia Preston Carrington is individual 3325 in Dorman.
88. Birth date from Dorman, p. 208.
89. Second wife of Charles Henry Campbell (1840–1932). Dorman, p. 208.
90. Dorman, p. 285. George Moffett Cochran is individual 3978 in Dorman.
91. Dates from Dorman, p. 208.
92. Dorman, p. 284. Henry King Cochran is individual 3973 in Dorman.
93. Dorman, p. 207. John Montgomery Preston, II is individual 3381 in Dorman. He married his cousin Mary Preston Lewis Cochran.
94. Dorman, p. 208. This Charles Henry Campbell Preston is individual 3382 in Dorman.

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95. Dorman, p. 207. Mary Preston Lewis Cochran is individual 3977 in Dorman on page 285.
96. Wife of Robert Gray, Dorman, p. 208.
97. The unengraved stones are typically in poor condition. Some may have once had legible engravings, but nothing can be now discerned on them.
98. John Preston, *A Visitor's Guide to the Aspenvale Cemetery* (n.d., ca 2002). A three-page, photocopied handout frequently distributed to sightseers by cemetery neighbors Gary and Linda Sutherland. One purpose of the present article is to expand and update that handout prepared by coauthor Preston.
99. The surge of interest in internet genealogy in recent years is both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing in that many obscure family records have become available that would otherwise have never become accessible. It is a curse because normal standards of academic scholarship are rarely if ever applied, and much of the posted information is wrong. Additional difficulties in dealing with internet information arise because websites come and go, identical information shifts from one website to another, and information is copied from one site to another without attribution and possibly modified. Thus, despite its occasional considerable value, all internet-derived information must be treated with caution and suspicion.
100. S. G. Thompson, "Aspenvale Cemetery." On line at <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gsr&GScid=49283>, information posted September 2004. The information here requires cautious handling. Thompson omitted eight or more graves inside Aspenvale Cemetery and included four graves from outside. However, his provision of many headstone photographs is welcome and useful. Additional photographs can be found in the Virginia Tech Newman Library Special Collections data base, on line at <http://imagebase.lib.vt.edu/index.php>, where searching for "Aspenvale" recently produced 15 images, 13 of which were Aspenvale gravestones.
101. Fred Preston, Lufkin, Texas, "Preston's Page" at <http://people.consolidated.net/preston/index.html>. See particularly the linked pages [.../fpreston/walpres.htm](http://people.consolidated.net/fpreston/walpres.htm) and [.../net/fpreston/johnmon2.htm](http://people.consolidated.net/fpreston/johnmon2.htm)
102. E. T. Crowson, "Colonel William Campbell and the Battle of King's Mountain," *Virginia Cavalcade*, vol. 30(1), pp. 22–9.
103. Thomas L. Preston, *Sketch of Elizabeth Russell*, p. 44. T. L. Preston tells that William C. Preston on a journey to South Carolina was accosted by an old woman who demanded to know his name. Apparently, her Tory husband had been among those hanged by William Campbell after the Battle of King's Mountain. By being a Preston, and not a Campbell, he escaped her wrath.
104. Agnes Graham Riley, "Brigadier General William Campbell 1745–1781," *Historical Society of Washington County, Bulletin*, Series II, Number 22 (1985), pp. 1–32.
105. Crowson, "Colonel William Campbell."
106. Blackwell tells (*Salt Works*, pp. 2–3) that in 1753 Lord Robert Dinwiddie in the name of King George II granted, for the sum of thirty-five shillings, to Charles Campbell 330 acres of land, originally surveyed in 1747 as the "Buffalo Lick"

- and by then renamed the "Salt Lick." When developed as the salt works, this lick became the basis for great wealth for the Preston family following the marriage of Francis Preston to William Campbell's only living child.
107. Thomas L. Preston, *Sketch of Elizabeth Russell*, p. 21.
108. It has recently been established for the first time by belated eyewitness evidence that William Campbell himself received the sword of surrender at the battle of King's Mountain. See: Hubert Gilliam and Jim Glanville, "An Unexpected Enemy and the Turn of the Tide: Andrew Creswell's King's Mountain Letter," *The Smithfield Review*, vol. 10 (2006), pp. 5–20.
109. Thomas L. Preston, *Sketch of Elizabeth Russell*, p. 7.
110. Des Cognets, *Russell and His Descendants*, pp. 29, 61, 63, 66, 68, and 71.
111. Dorman, p. 202.
112. William Campbell Preston, *The Reminiscences of William C. Preston*, ed. Minnie Clare Yarborough (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933).
113. Hubert Gilliam and Jim Glanville, "To Refrain from Drinking Ardent Spirits: The Bet Between Peter Byrns and Francis Preston," *The Smithfield Review*, vol. 11 (2007), pp. 17–28.
114. Elva Runyon, "Madam Russell, Methodist Saint" (M. A. Thesis, University of Virginia, 1941). See also Greg McMillan, "The Establishment of Methodism in Southwest Virginia and the Spiritual Conversion of Elizabeth Henry Russell," *Historical Society of Washington County Bulletin*, Series II Number 43 (2006), pp. 55–61; and Douglas Summers Brown, "Elizabeth Henry Russell Campbell: Patroness of Early Methodism in the Highlands of Virginia," *Virginia Cavalcade*, vol. 30 (1981), pp. 110–17.
115. Elizabeth A. Moore, "Archeology in Saltville: The Madam Russell House Site," *Virginia Explorer*, vol. 8 (1992), p. 22.
116. Thomas L. Preston, *Sketch of Elizabeth Russell*, p. 7.
117. Nelly C. Preston, *Paths of Glory: A simple tale of a far-faring bride, Elizabeth, sister of Patrick Henry* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1961).
118. For example, see: Janie C. French, "Madam Russell," *Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia, Bulletin* 6 (1941), pp. 58–63; Mrs. J. H. Mongle, "Early Methodism in Southwest Virginia," *Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia, Bulletin* 7 (1942), pp. 65–71; and Gladys Stallard, "Madam Russell: Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell," *Appalachian Quarterly*, vol. 1 (1996), pp. 12–15.
119. Today, the inscription on her gravestone is scarcely legible. However it was recorded more than sixty-five years ago by Runyon in *Methodist Saint*, p. 62.
120. Gray, "General Francis Preston," p. 11.
121. Nanci C. King, *Abingdon, Virginia, 1778–1880* (Abingdon, Va.: Nanci C. King, 1989).
122. L. C. Angle. "The Story of Martha Washington Inn," *Historical Society of Washington County Bulletin*, Series II, Number 28 (1991), pp. 1–36.
123. Thomas Preston, "A Brief Sketch of General Francis Preston, Written for the information of his descendants by His Youngest son, Thomas L. Preston on the Verge of his Ninetieth Birth-day." Not dated, but by inference from the internal evidence must date from 1902. Copy in Preston family records.

124. Thomas L. Preston, *Historical Sketches and Reminiscences of an Octogenarian* (Richmond: R. F. Johnson, 1900).
125. Elizabeth C. Preston Gray, "General Francis Preston," *Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia*, Bulletin 3 (1938), pp. 9–13.
126. Blackwell, *Preston Salt Works*, p. 5.
127. Dorman, p. 106. Breckenridge was a lawyer and later a Presbyterian minister.
128. Dorman, p. 205, gives biographical information about Edward C. Carrington.
129. Dorman, p. 282. Margaret Lynn Lewis Preston is individual 397 in Dorman.
130. Family records state the year of his death as 1931 and that is the date on the tombstone. Dorman (page 208) states his date of death as 5 July 1932 in Goochland County, Virginia.
131. White M. Ryburn, Ellen S. Bowen, and J. W. Walker, *Women of Old Abingdon* (Pulaski, Virginia: Women's Auxiliary of the Abingdon Presbyterial, 1937), pp. 159–63 describes the Seven Mile Ford Presbyterian Church.
132. Nelly Cummings Preston, *Hitching Posts for Memories: Being the travel tales of two American women, who went out to see the World, and having seen many things, wish thus to corral some of their impressions and experiences* — "privately printed by Sarah Preston Dean for distribution among their friends" (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1939).
133. Nelly Preston, *Paths of Glory*.
134. Tabitha Campbell, "Letter to David Campbell, 31 August 1832," David Campbell Papers. Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Copy on file at Smyth-Bland Regional Library, Marion. The letter includes the following: "[I] will now relate to you some of our domestic occurrences of which the most prominent is that of our going to the interment of General William Campbell the Hero of Kings Mountain who was removed by his daughter Mrs. General Preston from the place where he died and was first buried in Hanover County this state on the fifty-first anniversary of his death which was the 22nd of this month to Aspenvale the family burying ground."
135. Tabitha Campbell failed to comment that General Campbell was reburied next to his wife, suggesting that Madam Russell was not yet re-interred at Aspenvale in 1832. According to apparently eyewitness testimony (Thomas L. Preston, *Sketch of Elizabeth Russell*, p. 32), Elizabeth Russell Smith was reburied at Aspenvale in 1842. If Roger Allison's speculation quoted in the text is correct, then 1842 was also the date of Madam Russell's reburial.
136. Thomas L. Preston, *Sketch of Elizabeth Russell*, p. 40.
137. Des Cognets, *Russell and His Descendants*, p. 68.
138. Roger Allison, personal communication, March 2007.
139. Goodridge Wilson, "Obscure Graves of Famous Dead," *The Roanoke Times*, 8 December 1929.
140. Anonymous, "Old Graveyard Steeped in History," ca 1962. Copy in Preston family files hand annotated "Roanoke Times @1962."
141. Sally Brickey, staff writer, "Many Untold Stories 'Sleeping on the Hill.'" Picture credit: "NEWS Photo by Gene Dalton," *Smyth County News*, 9 January 1973.

142. Joe Tennis, "Couple purchases land with gravesites bearing names like Campbell, Preston, and Henry to find themselves ... Buried in History," *Bristol-Herald Courier*, 26 February 2004, Empire Section, p. 1.
143. United Methodist Church. On line at http://www.gcah.org/Heritage_Landmarks/Keywood.htm. The Keywood Marker, Glade Spring, Virginia.
144. The Anne Hager Papers, 1828–1990, n.d., Ms95-008, Digital Libraries and Archives, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Hager was the granddaughter of Elizabeth Preston Cummings Gray (Grave 34). Finding aid on line at <http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaead/published/vt/vibl/v00042.document>