

Chapter Three. Methodology

A review of literature was conducted to determine if public houses existed along the Wilderness Road, specifically in Montgomery County, before 1823. Documentation of goods and services offered in lodgings, costs levied, relevant state regulations, number of license holders, and location of public houses in Montgomery County were included in the search. Data collection was conducted at the following locations:

1. Montgomery County Courthouse Records, Christiansburg, Virginia
2. Special Collections Division of Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia
3. Roanoke Historical Society records, Roanoke, Virginia
4. Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia
5. Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia
6. Wilderness Road Museum, Dublin, Virginia
7. Salem Historical Society records, Salem, Virginia
8. Roanoke City Library, Roanoke, Virginia
9. Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia
10. Virginia Historical Society records, Richmond, Virginia
11. Montgomery County Museum, Christiansburg, Virginia

Books, journals, almanacs, and newspapers were reviewed at each location. Primary sources included the following:

1. Court Order books
2. Tax records
2. Deeds
3. Wills and Appraisals

4. Journals
5. Virginia almanacs
6. Maps
7. Photographs
8. Virginia newspapers
9. Survey forms

Information was collected in a systematic format. Documents at the Montgomery County Courthouse located in Christiansburg, Virginia were reviewed including Court Order books, deeds, wills, appraisals, surveys, and tax records. Tables were developed with names of people issued licenses in a given year, and the number of years a license was held by each individual. General descriptions of the locations, operation, time lines, and journal entries helped document the type and quantity of early public houses between the years 1773 to 1823.

Interviews were conducted with the following professionals with background knowledge of travel accommodations and the history of Southwest Virginia and Montgomery County:

1. Scott Sarver, Director of Construction, at Virginia's Explore Park, Roanoke, Virginia, supervised the restoration of the historic Brugh Tavern.
2. Hank Brown, Registered Architect, Charlottesville, Virginia, has interests in the area of historic travel accommodations.
3. Gibson Worsham, an Architect, in Blacksburg, Virginia, has interests in the area of historical research.
4. Roberta Ingles Steele, owner of the Ingles public house, located in Radford, Virginia.
5. Current homeowners of Jesse Hall's public house, located in Elliston, Virginia.

Scott Sarver, Director was interviewed for his knowledge of the historic Brugh Tavern. This former tavern was once located in Botetourt County, Virginia, a county located in the western part of the state just north of the city of Roanoke. Brugh Tavern can be currently toured at the Virginia's Explore Park. Though Brugh Tavern was not located in Montgomery County, it was originally located on the Wilderness Road, thus it provided information on design, materials used, and construction techniques that were useful for this study. Extant examples of public houses are rare; therefore, Brugh Tavern was a valuable resource for comparative purposes.

Hank Brown, an architect, was interviewed concerning his area of expertise in historic public houses located in Virginia. The interview was conducted at his office in Charlottesville, Virginia. Floor plans from the Brugh Tavern project were analyzed for similar characteristics that were representative of public houses in Southwest Virginia.

Gibson Worsham was questioned as to his knowledge of early travel in Southwest Virginia, accommodations available, and more specifically about the design and construction of lodgings. His familiarity with Montgomery County history and early architecture aided in identifying the possible locations of travel accommodations selected for this study.

An interview was conducted with Roberta Ingles Steele, owner of Ingles public house, located in Radford, Virginia. The topic of discussion was her knowledge of the historic public house which still stands. The Ingles public house is another rare example of early travel accommodations, and was a valuable resource for comparative purposes.

The current homeowners of a former public house, Jesse Hall's residence, were interviewed concerning the architectural aspects of the structure. Discussion included building techniques, house plan, and the location of the home in relation to the

Wilderness Road. The house is another fine example of early public houses located in Montgomery County, Virginia.

The review of literature also included theses, dissertations, and books on the topic of early taverns and ordinaries, in particular those relevant to the history of Virginia. For example, Anne-Rachael Hedges' thesis on Richmond taverns was important to this study for comparative purposes. The author identified all the major public houses located in Richmond between 1775 to 1810, and documented the importance of these establishments to the early history of the capital city. Architectural aspects, food and entertainment offered, and the personal history of the public houses were also examined. This study was used for a comparative analysis of city and rural public houses in Virginia.

Historic maps were used to determine the location of public houses in Montgomery County, Virginia. County records of personal property licensed for lodging by individuals aided in identifying locations of these establishments. The Virginia Gazette, a newspaper, and Virginia almanacs dating between the years 1773 to 1823 were reviewed. A search included the following topics:

1. Advertisements of public houses that might provide names of establishments and/or owners, locations of public houses, and the number of accommodations available within Montgomery County.
2. Advertisements for group expeditions travelling through Southwest Virginia along the Wilderness Road. Advertisements for expeditions might indicate the number of persons travelling through Montgomery County and thus the potential demand for accommodations.

Summary of Procedure

The search for and documentation of travel accommodations located in Montgomery County, Virginia, between the years of 1773 to 1823, were followed in this order:

1. Review of Literature.
2. Identification of public house license holders in Montgomery County, Virginia, between the years 1773 to 1823.
3. Review of historical documents, books, surveys, etc., for information pertaining to early public houses.
4. Search for newspaper advertisements for public houses within Montgomery County, Virginia.
5. Interview of professionals with specific knowledge of restoration, of historic public houses, and history of Montgomery County, Virginia.
6. Comparison of home furnishings of public houses and other private houses located in Montgomery County, before 1823.
8. Comparison of public houses located in Richmond, Virginia to those located in Montgomery County, Virginia, between the years 1773 to 1823.